

## **Gospel of John Study**

### **Session 36**

In the last session we witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. John gave us plenty of evidence that proved that Jesus actually died on the cross. While doing so, and even after He died, Jesus was fulfilling the prophecies concerning the Messiah, proving He was the Deliverer God had promised since ages past. One of the reasons John gave such evidence about Jesus' death also dealt with a heresy known as Gnosticism that was erupting at that time in history. It claimed that Jesus did not have an actual physical body but was just a spirit. John put that heretical thought to death throughout his gospel but especially in the account of Jesus' crucifixion. We also looked at some of the implications of the crucifixion to see what theologically changed after the death of Jesus for our sakes. Then at the end of the session, we saw the body of Jesus buried hastily under the care of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

Had the narrative of Jesus ended in chapter 19, we'd find the book unexceptional. All biographies end with the death of the subject. The difference is that this one doesn't. Death is not the end of the story for Jesus as He rose from the dead which is a far cry from the ending of all other religious leaders' lives. Now in this session we are going to witness the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The resurrection is the foundational truth that proves Christianity as true. This is actually the last chapter of the gospel (though there is an epilogue that ends the book in the next session). We will see the climax of all John has been leading up to in this book come to fruition in the closing verses of this chapter as well as John giving us the very purpose he wrote the book in the last two verses (which we examined back in the first session of this study). One thing we'll notice is that John doesn't give us, the readers, a lot of "evidence" for the resurrection as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century person might desire. John's "evidence" rests in his accounts of how Jesus' resurrection influenced different people. The early church often followed John's lead in that they saw the resurrection as the fact that was the foundation of our faith. Those who were eyewitnesses were changed by the event and that was the evidence of its reality. It is also the very act that brought the faith out from under the Mosaic covenant to the covenant of grace. We'll be studying those people in this session and see what the resurrection means for us today.

#### 1. The witness of Peter and John

##### **[John 20:1-9]**

Q: On what day did these events happen? (*v.1 - The first day of the week, Sunday. All four of the gospels record that the resurrection took place on Sunday.*)

This shows that God was doing something new. Under the old covenant and the law, the important day of the week was the Sabbath, or last day of the week. Jesus was dead on the Sabbath but He rose to new life on Sunday. This marks a new beginning and new era for the people of faith. It is also one of the reasons Christians celebrate and worship on Sundays. Not only did Jesus rise from the dead on the first day of the week, the Holy Spirit was also poured out upon believers on the first day of the week (Acts 2 on Pentecost). It shows that our first through, our first action of the new week is to praise and worship the Lord and then worship every subsequent day as well. This is a major shift in relating to God. No longer did worship come at the end of a week of keeping the law but instead at the beginning of a new celebrating the new

life granted by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was an outward sign that grace had arrived and the law was obsolete.

Q: Who does John say came to the tomb? (*v.1 - Mary Magdalene*)

Q: What time of day did Mary come to the tomb initially? (*v.1 - early in the morning, before dawn*)

Q: What did she notice was odd about the burial site? (*v.1 - the stone sealing to tomb had been rolled away. The tomb was open.*)

Q: What did Mary do and what did she not do at this point in the narrative? (*v.2 - she ran away to tell Peter and "the other disciple whom Jesus loved" about the tomb being open. This other unnamed disciple was John. She did not actually go and look inside the tomb itself.*)

Now John mentions only Mary Magdalene as going to the tomb early on Sunday morning. However, that's not how Matthew and Mark record the event.

#### **[Mark 16:1-6]**

Q: What are the differences between this account and the one in John? (*A - there are multiple women mentioned in Mark, B - the sun had risen in the Mark account, C - In Mark the women entered the tomb and saw an angel*)

You need a good Harmony of the Gospels to put the four accounts together. Remember, each gospel writer is writing to not only show who Jesus was but also for other themes that prove and further the gospel message. It's important not to get tripped up over these various accounts as they are all speaking of the same set of events surrounding the resurrection.

First, John only mentions Mary Magdalene. He only mentions her by name and does not mention the other women. It was a common practice to only mention the principle actor or personality of the narrative and assume that others were there. It's like in our world when we speak of a political investigation but only mention the name of the lead investigator and not the hundreds of others working the case. Notice the pronoun in v.2 when she's talking to Peter and John - she says "we". The other women were present at the tomb and according to Luke, they were also present at the reporting to Peter and John.

#### **[Luke 24:9-12]**

The next difference is even easier to explain. The women met and began their trek to the tomb just before dawn. En route, the sun rose.

The account of seeing the angel in the tomb comes in John but in v.12. Again, Mary was not alone at this point but was still with the other women at that time. But as she was the principle speaker and will again be the only one speaking in that passage, she is the only one mentioned. What is important to realize that in the Hebrew (and really much of the ancient world) the order or precise chronology was not usually the important part of the story. The order in which the author listed the events often was done to emphasize or de-emphasize an event.

When we tell a story, we like to hear it in chronological order, that's the modern, western way to tell a story. But in the ancient world, and especially in the middle east, the components of the story were more important than the chronology and could be rearranged by the author to make the point with more clarity.

What is important to John in writing this account is that Mary went and told Peter and John. In Jewish law, the word of a woman was not admissible in court as evidence. Remember that according to **Deuteronomy 19:15** two or more witnesses had to establish a fact as true. Those witnesses had to be male in order to be admissible as genuine evidence. So by telling this story of Mary coming and fetching Peter and John and then they run and see the empty tomb, this establishes in the mind of Jews that this event actually happened - the event was that the tomb was unsealed and empty.

Q: In v.2, when Mary Magdalene is reporting the empty tomb to Peter and John, she says, "They have taken away the Lord..." Who does the "they" refer to? (*She is thinking that grave robbers have snatched the body of Jesus. It would be the enemies of Jesus, maybe the Jewish leaders or the Romans or someone who didn't like Jesus - but a grave robber.*)

Now Mary Magdalene was not thinking very straight at this point in time as she was overwrought with a flood of emotions and hysteria. We'll give her that. She wasn't so concerned about who took the body but rather that the body was missing. In the ancient world at this time, grave robbing was big. It was a lucrative act that done all the time. People would be buried in expensive linen cloths and expensive spices and possibly personal property such as jewelry. There was a lot of money to be made off the practice. It got so out of hand that the Emperor Claudius actually designated it a capital offense during his reign to curb the illegal activity.

Peter and John were not the only ones who went to check out the women's claims of the tomb being empty. Many of the early followers of Jesus heard and checked out the tomb for themselves as well. Here's an account of two men who did this as they were walking to Emmaus later that day.

#### [Luke 24:22-24]

Notice the language in v.24, "*some of those who went with US to the tomb...*" These two men and others had investigated the situation for themselves and found it as the women described it. We do not know the time when they did this.

Q: So back to Peter and John running to the tomb, who got there first? (v.4 - John)

Running was considered an undignified act and respectable men did not run, except in case of dire emergencies, such as escaping from a wild animal or fire. It was "bad form" to be seen running. (This is why the scene in the Luke 15 with the father of the prodigal son is so powerful because the father runs to greet his son when he returns home. It isn't dignified but it is motivated by a powerful love for his son and he doesn't care how it looks to his servants.) Peter and John were not concerned about appearances. They were motivated by powerful emotions and

didn't care how this looked.

Q: What did John do when he arrived at the tomb? *(v.5 - He stopped at the entrance to the tomb. There are several reason John may have not entered the tomb. He could have feared ceremonial uncleanness if he ended up in the presence of a dead body. He also could have been showing proper respect for the tomb site by remaining outside of it. He would not want to see the Lord's body naked if the linen wrappings were missing as they would be shameful.)*

Q: What did Peter do when he got to the tomb? *(v.6 - He ran right into the tomb)*

Peter lacked John's inhibitions. His impetuous nature pushed him to rush right into the tomb.

Q: What did Peter see upon entering the tomb? *(v.6-7 - He saw both the burial cloths and the face covering. He saw the face covering only after entering the tomb.)*

Q: Where was the face covering? *(v.7 - it was not lying with the linen wraps but rather separated from it. It was still rolled up)*

There is some significance to the face covering being neatly rolled up. It shows us two things. First, Jesus did this in an unhurried manner. He wasn't rushed into doing this so as to beat any grave robbers from attempting to snatch His body. Also, it showed He was coming back. In Jewish culture of that day and time there was a custom during a meal that dealt with one's napkin. If the person eating a meal left the table and left the napkin crumbled up, then it was a sign that he was completely done eating, he wasn't returning to the table. However, if he left the table but folded his napkin first and left it neatly at his place at the table, it meant he'd be back and was not done. By doing this, Jesus was signifying that He was returning - to life. He was back from the dead and done with death but was ready to resume His life again.

John is using this scene to contrast it with the resurrection of Lazarus back in chapter 11. When Lazarus emerged from the tomb alive, Jesus ordered those around him to take off the burial clothes he was in as they were restricting his movement. On the other hand, by the placement of Jesus' burial cloths, it shows that Jesus merely passed through them when he arose. The cloths were all laying where they were laid but without a body in them any more. This is the picture John is painting for us and how it differed from Lazarus' being raised from the dead.

Q: After Peter entered the tomb, John followed him inside. He saw the same things as Peter. Based on what we learned earlier, what does this mean that they both saw the empty tomb and the linen cloths and the face covering? *(That this was admissible in court as evidence. The empty tomb and the things in it were a verified fact. Remember, John is writing to Jews and proselytes to come to Christ. He wants to make sure that what he is saying will hold up in the court of their minds as they read his gospel.)*

Q: What is the conclusion John comes to after entering the tomb? *(v.8 - He believed that Jesus had risen from the dead. John had simple, early faith in Jesus' resurrection even though he has not yet seen the risen Lord. He also has not coupled with the Scriptures to understand that it had*

*to happen but he did possess faith that Jesus was somehow alive.)*

Most of the early Christians came to faith not because of an empty tomb or missing body but rather because they saw the risen Lord. John came to faith before he saw the risen Jesus. John came to faith based on what he hadn't seen. All he saw was grave clothes without a body in them. Think of it, that's how everyone after the ascension of Jesus came to faith in Jesus as well, through belief - not sight.

### **[I Corinthians 15:1-8]**

**[Luke 24:12]** - Peter probably didn't come to faith at that moment like John did based on the fact that he was still marveling or wondering what happened. He was still confused about the tomb being empty but hadn't put the pieces together quite yet.

It appears that John is using the word "Scripture" to mean all of them - the collection of God's Word rather than any one verse. However, if one verse is meant, it would probably be this one.

### **[Psalm 16:10]**

The resurrection was theologically important for several reasons but one of them is because it distinguishes what happened to Jesus from sheer immortality. The Jewish leaders, who orchestrated the execution of Jesus, could not ever find the body of Jesus. They certainly wanted to find it as it would expose the resurrection as a hoax. It would put an end to the claims of the disciples. The empty tomb was their worst nightmare come true. But the empty tomb meant that Jesus wasn't truly dead any longer, His body was resurrected and meant there was a continuity between His pre-death body and His post-resurrection body. He wasn't just an immortal being but He was brought back from the dead. (We know that Jesus was truly immortal in the sense that He is eternal God but the incarnation, His body, actually died and was brought back.) This becomes important in that Jesus is the first fruits of those who were resurrected and as such gives us hope that we too, who are certainly not immortal, will follow in Jesus pattern and be brought back to life after our bodies die.

### **[I Corinthians 15:20-26]**

The resurrection also proved Jesus identity, the one John has spent his entire gospel presenting.

### **[Romans 1:1-5]**

Q: Through what was Jesus declared the Son of God? *(v.4 - through God's power in the resurrection of Jesus. The resurrection vindicated the life and ministry of Jesus and proved to the world who He truly was. Think of it this way, we go to church each and every Sunday to celebrate the resurrection. If it didn't happen, we would just be going through empty motions but since it did happen, we celebrate wholeheartedly knowing that our Savior and God lives.)*

## 2. Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene

### **[John 20:10-18]**

Q: After the disciples left the scene of the empty tomb and returned home (which by the way proves what we read in the last session about John having a home of some sort in Jerusalem in which to care for Mary, Jesus' mother) what did Mary Magdalene do? (v.11 - *she stayed at the tomb weeping*)

This shows us that Mary returned to the tomb for a second time. She might have been hoping Peter and John would have found some clues as to where Jesus' body had been taken. Now she was alone and hoping to glean some information on her own or run into someone who knew where the body had been taken. She was still operating under the assumption that Jesus' body had been taken, probably stolen. Notice that Mary finally stooped down to look into the tomb. This was the first time she actually looked in the tomb.

Q: What did she see when she poked her head in the tomb? (v.12 - *two angels*)

This is another point that is a sticking point for skeptics. Matthew and Mark only speak of one angel being present while Luke and John speak of two angels being present. This is the same thing as Mary Magdalene being the only woman named in the group of women who went to the tomb. There were two angels but only one of them spoke - thus only one of them was the principle in the story. The important aspect of each gospel account is that angels are present.

Q: Why do you think that angels are present in every account of the resurrection? (*Angels announce God's will, His plans, and His works. The angels are there to show that this tomb is empty because of God's power at work. Their presence dismisses the notion of grave robbing or the body being moved. It has also been suggested that the arrangement of the angels on the slab gives it the appearance of the ark of the covenant - the place where God would be among His people. In this, it would show that God is now among His people again. See Exodus 25 for image of the ark.*)

Q: What do the angels ask Mary? (v.13 - *Why are you weeping? She is still thinking that with the body missing, the opportunity to give Jesus' body a proper burial had been taken from her.*)

The angel really isn't asking a question here. He is not looking for a response from Mary. It is actually a gentle rebuke. His question could be phrased, "*Why haven't you grasped what really happened here yet?*"

In v.14 Mary becomes aware that she is not alone and that someone else is with her outside the tomb in the garden. She assumes it's the gardener who tends to the entire property. If anyone knows where the body is, he should know.

Q: Who does this other person turn out to be? (v.14 - *It is Jesus yet she does not recognize Him.*)

Q: What are the two questions Jesus asked Mary Magdalene? (v.15 - 1) *Why are you weeping?*,

## 2) *Whom are you seeking?*)

Like the angel's question, Jesus' first question is actually a mild rebuke. How can you be crying when I've just come back to life? But the second question gets to a major point that John is making about Jesus. This question is really, "*What kind of Messiah were you expecting?*" It's an invitation to ponder a deeper truth about Jesus because her estimate of Jesus was too small. Mary doesn't understand the questions at all. In fact, she ignores them and moves ahead with her fears and ignorance based on her wrong assumptions. She is still seeking a dead body. She thinks this stranger is the gardener. She offers to take the body so she can give it a proper burial. Now think about the devotion Mary has for Jesus in this. She has no idea how to move a full grown man's dead body from the garden to anywhere else. Don't bother her with details, that can be figured out later. Are we ever like Mary? God desperately wants to show us something and yet we are so absorbed in our own thinking and planning and activities that we fail to realize the glory of God right in front of our faces.

Q: How does Jesus get Mary to recognize Him? (v.16 - *He says her name. While she didn't recognize Jesus appearance at that moment, she did recognize His voice.*)

### **[John 10: 3-4]**

In astonishment and joy she wheels around and falls to the ground to honor Him and clutches Jesus' feet. She calls Him "teacher" which is what she called Him during His pre-cross life. Notice that John translates the word for those who don't speak Hebrew, as he's done elsewhere in the gospel.

V.17 is very difficult to interpret correctly. This is due to the nature of the words Jesus chose to use here but also in putting the meaning in a way that fits the context. The word translated "clinging" can mean a variety of physical touches or contacts such as touching, grabbing, holding, fasten to another. The literal phrase Jesus uttered would be "touch Me not". The reason for the prohibition is that Jesus is telling Mary about a new plane His relationship with His followers would be on from this point forward. They were now His brothers (and sisters).

**[Mark 3:31-35]** - Those who do the will of God are Jesus' brothers and sisters. They are children of God adopted into the family of God by their faith in Him. Jesus acknowledges His followers as His brothers and sisters here. We share in His Sonship.

### **[Hebrews 2:11]**

But remember, Mary is seeing Jesus alive now and is clinging to Him for fear He may disappear again. Here's a way to put Jesus' response that gets the idea across of what He's truly saying,

*"Stop holding Me. I have not yet ascended to the Father so you don't have to worry about Me disappearing permanently. This is a time for joy and sharing the good news that I am alive, not a time for clinging to Me. So, go and tell My disciples I am in the process of ascending back to My Father and My God who is also your Father and your God."*

Mary is told not to cling to Him because she doesn't yet get it fully. She doesn't understand that Jesus had to come back from the dead and what it means yet. She needs another revelation first to understand what's actually happening. Jesus is telling her though that His God is her God. She's part of this new family based upon faith in Him.

### **[Acts 1:9-11]**

After the resurrection Jesus would still appear to His disciples from time to time but not remain with them as He had done during His earthly ministry. After the ascension though, Jesus would not appear very often at all. The ascension marked the time of His exit back to heaven so that the Holy Spirit would come and indwell believers. The issue was that as long as Jesus kept showing up after His resurrection, they would assume that He might show up at any time. They would not break free from dependence upon His physical presence, which was going to be essential after the ascension. The ascension closed the book on such appearances. John is stating that Jesus was in the process of ascension.

John tells us that Mary Magdalene did as she was instructed but John doesn't tell us how the disciples responded to the news.

### **[Luke 24:9-11]**

Thus far we've seen Peter and John as witnesses to the empty tomb and John has come away with a fundamental faith in Jesus' resurrection based upon what's seen and not seen. Mary has actually seen Jesus alive yet hasn't put the pieces together yet as to what it means. John now progresses the story forward one step.

### 3. Jesus appears to His disciples

#### **[John 20:19-23]**

Q: When did this happen? *(v.19 - evening of the first day. It's still the first day)*

Q: What was the condition of the room the disciples were meeting in at that time? *(v.19 - the doors were all shut/locked)*

Q: Why do you think the disciples locked the doors? *(News of the empty tomb had gotten out to the public and the Jewish authorities. They were afraid for their lives. If those who orchestrated Jesus' death found them, they might be inclined to have them executed as His followers, too.)*

Q: What unusual and unexpected event happened during this meeting? *(v.19 - Jesus appeared in the room with them.)*

Q: What was Jesus' greeting to His disciples? *(v.19 - Peace be with you)*

Jesus wanted to let His disciples know He was alive. The tomb was empty because He rose from the dead. He was not stolen. Also, the idea of peace was something He stressed in His

farewell speech to them just a few nights earlier - on the eve of His crucifixion. Here's the very last sentence in Jesus' farewell speech.

**[John 16:33]**

Q: What did Jesus show to His disciples? (*v.20 - His scars - those on His hands and side. The scar on His side would be unique to Jesus. Everyone crucified would have scars on their hands and feet where they were nailed to the cross but only Jesus had the spear thrust through His side. It was another positive identification that this was truly Jesus.*)

Q: What does this tell us about Jesus' new body? (*That is shares continuity with the pre-cross body. It is new in many ways but also shares with it aspects of the physical life before it died.*)

While Jesus' new resurrected body shared the same scars He'd been given on the cross, the new body was very different in several ways from the pre-cross body. As we saw with Mary Magdalene, it wasn't always recognizable. This was also the case with the followers of Jesus along the road to Emaus as well as what we'll see in the next session in the epilogue when the disciples don't recognize Jesus. Also, this body can just seem to disappear and re-materialize at will. The description of the linen strips show us that Jesus just passed through them. He didn't need anyone to help Him unwrap Himself or that there was any effort applied on His part to get out of them. Also, He just showed up in a room full of others where the door was locked. Again, with the followers who walked to Emaus, after revealing who He was to them, He simply vanished. It shows us that the resurrected body will be different in many ways from this body we now possess.

**[I Corinthians 15:35-44]**

His disciples are overjoyed that He is alive. Jesus gives His disciples a commission in v.21. This builds upon the part of the High Priestly Prayer (17:18) where Jesus prayed, "*As You sent Me into the world, I have also sent them into the world.*" Jesus was sent into the world to do the will of His Father. He perfectly obeyed His Father. This will was to save the world from their sins. Now the disciples are being sent out into the world, a world they are no longer a part of due to their faith in Him, to bear witness under the power of the Holy Spirit to God's redemptive plan. Jesus repeats the "peace" phrase to reassure them that He wants them to be at peace. All four gospels contain a commission to go out into the world and carry out God's will to point people to Christ and build them up into disciples. What this tells us is that there is no excuse for being an idle Christian. This is a broad mission we are undertaking in the leadership and power of the Spirit.

Q: What did Jesus do to the disciples after giving them this commission? (*v.22 - He breathed on them and said "receive the Holy Spirit"*)

This is a living parable or illustration similar to the foot washing. (Foot washing pointed forward to the spiritual washing which would be achieved when the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world died for the world.) Jesus is pointing forward to a time when the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon them. (Which comes in Acts 2 - 40 days from this day.) This

builds anticipation for an event that this gospel doesn't discuss but was readily known about by the time it was written.

Q: What is the reception of the Spirit linked with in v.23? (*The forgiveness and retention of sins*)

This verse throws many believers off track and into the weeds but it is actually fairly simple in its interpretation. Keep in mind, Jesus was just speaking of the Holy Spirit and how when they received the Holy Spirit they would be able to fulfill the commission He just gave them. The verb tense of "forgive" and "retain" are both perfect passive. Passive means someone is acting upon another person. Literally these could read "they stand in a state of forgiveness" or "they stand in a state of retaining their sins". In this case, God is either forgiving or not forgiving the sins of people based upon their reaction to the disciples proclamation. The disciples are not the ones doing the forgiving. They are just the messengers of the forgiveness. A person when confronted with the gospel has a choice; they can either accept it and be forgiven by God or reject it and retain their sins. The focus is on evangelism and it shows the results of preaching the gospel to the lost world. Jesus said the same thing back at the end of the account of healing the man born blind. In short then, this passage (vv.21-23) is a unit. Jesus commissioned His disciples to be witnesses of His death and resurrection and the gospel that brings forgiveness of sins. This will be done when the Holy Spirit comes upon them (in the near future). The Spirit will then lead those who hear the disciple's teaching to a decision: either those who hear will believe and then receive forgiveness of sin or they will not believe the message and retain their sins.

#### **[John 9:41]**

To the blind, Jesus gives sight and faith. But to those who claim that they already see, He declared that "Your guilt remains". V.23 is just a rehashing of that same idea. It does not ever mean that we are the one forgiving sins.

#### 4. The confession of Thomas

#### **[John 20:24-29]**

Q: What did Thomas want to see before he would believe the other disciples' report about Jesus being alive? (v.25 - *He wanted to see the imprint of the nails and the spear and put his hand in those imprints - thus he wanted to see and touch Jesus*)

Notice that Thomas had heard the evidence but didn't believe it. He wanted personal and concrete evidence. But he does come to some truth early here. He knows from the disciples account of the last week that Jesus' new resurrected body shares continuity with His old pre-cross body. He knows that seeing the scars will still be present if it is truly Jesus. The other disciples kept telling him their story. "Saying to him (v.25) is in the imperfect tense. He remained obstinate despite their pleadings.

Q: When did Jesus show Himself to the disciples again? (v.26 - *the next Sunday - eight days later meant the next time it was that day of the week*)

Q: What did Jesus say to His disciples when He showed up this time? (v.26 - *the same thing - peace be with you*)

The circumstances of this visitation were identical to the last one. Thus, Jesus was confirming the testimony of the disciples in a way that would confirm their testimony and cause Thomas to see that they were telling the truth.

Q: What does Jesus invite Thomas to do? (v.27 - *to reach in to touch His scars on His hands and side*)

Q: What does this show us about the resurrected Jesus that we didn't know before? (*That He can hear His disciples even when He is not present. He knows what we say, even when we don't see Him.*)

We don't see Thomas actually take Jesus up on the offer and touch Jesus. The appearance removed any doubt and any other possible grounds for disbelief. Thomas utters a critical confession of awe and reverence and belief after Jesus spoke to him.

Q: What was Thomas' confession? (v.28 - *"My Lord and my God"*)

This confession is the climax of the entire book of John. This shows that he now believes the revelation of who Jesus truly is. The biggest skeptic utters the most profound confession of Jesus' identity. Here's two reasons why this is the anticipated climax of the entire book.

1 - Thomas's confession is an example of what it means to honor the Son as the Father is honored. Thomas is the living picture of what Jesus wanted to see in humans.

### **[John 5:22-24]**

2. The reader is expected to articulate the same confession as v.29 implies. Thomas' faith is what saving faith looks like. Throughout the entire book of John, John has been showing us who Jesus is. Some people get it and others don't but Thomas gets it fully at this point. Both Lord and God are title of deity and for a Jew to say either of them to a human would be blasphemy but to say them to Jesus is accurate and worship. This is where John wants his readers to get to in their faith journey. When a person agrees with Thomas' confession, then he or she has arrived. This is why this is the climax to the book. It's what everything else has led up to and now can be expected. Thomas' confession presents faith that accepts the truth of what Jesus did and taught and also the reality of who He is.

Jesus first gives Thomas a mild rebuke. *"You had to see Me to come to belief that I would rise again as I told you I would."* Jesus' next statement to Thomas alluded to a time when the sort of tangible evidence that Thomas had access to won't be available. (Everyone who comes to faith after the ascension.)

Q: According to Jesus, what is the state of those people who believe without seeing Him? (v.29 - *blessed. Blessed means more than just happy, it also means accepted by God. The person who believes in Jesus without seeing Him is accepted by God.*)

**[I Peter 1:8-9]**

**[Romans 10:17]**

Thomas' confession is the same confession all make who come to Jesus by faith for salvation.

5. The purpose of the book

**[John 20:30-31]**

We spent a good deal of time on this passage back in session 1. In it John is explaining what the purpose of his gospel is.

Q: How many signs did Jesus perform? (*More than are contained with in the book of John*)

Q: Why did John share the signs that he did in this book? (*He wanted others to have the knowledge of Jesus so that they could express belief in Jesus. This was John's strategy. He selected the signs to illustrate Jesus' character and power they related to His mission as our Deliverer.*)

Q: What did John want people to believe about Jesus (*v.31 - that He is the Christ, the Son of God*)

John's purpose is evangelism and his book answers the big question of "Who is Jesus?" Jesus is the subject of the book from the introduction to the ending. John presents Him as mankind's only hope to break free from our bondage to sin and spiritual darkness.

The title Son of God would appeal to the Gentiles who read John and the title Messiah would appeal to the Jews who read the book. Either way, John's goal was to get people to accept Jesus for who He truly is and come to new life by whole heartedly believing in Him.

So while this is the climax of the book, it isn't the end of the book. John writes an important epilogue which actually closes out the gospel. That's the next and last session.

Q: Do you have any questions, comments, rebukes or rebuttals?