

# Gospel of John: Chapters 20–21

## Student Handout

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All Scripture quotations from the English Standard Version (ESV)

## Chapter Twenty — The Resurrection — Appearances and Confessions

### SLIDE 3 — John 20:1–10

#### The Empty Tomb

- Mary Magdalene comes while it is still dark — the last darkness before the dawn; grief that cannot stay away from the place of loss
- Peter enters first; the Beloved Disciple sees and believes — the race to the tomb and the different responses: action vs. perception
- The linen cloths lying there, the face cloth folded apart — not the scene of body-snatching but of an ordered, sovereign departure
- They did not yet understand the Scripture — belief precedes full comprehension; the Beloved Disciple believes before he understands why
  - **othonia:** linen cloths, burial wrappings — the grave clothes lying undisturbed in the tomb; the resurrection body passed through them; the old wrappings were left behind

### SLIDE 4 — JOHN 20:11–18

#### Mary Magdalene: Rabboni

- Mary weeping at the tomb — angels appear, but she cannot see past her grief; she mistakes the risen Lord himself for the gardener
- The first resurrection appearance is to a woman, the least likely witness in first-century culture — the Gospel's logic subverts human rankings
- Jesus speaks her name — the Good Shepherd calls his own sheep by name (10:3); recognition comes through the voice, not the eyes
- “Do not cling to me” — the old mode of physical presence is ending; the new mode of Spirit-mediated union is beginning
  - **Rabboni:** my Teacher, my Master — an Aramaic title of great intimacy and honor; Mary's cry is both personal recognition and the first post-resurrection confession

## SLIDE 5 — JOHN 20:19–23

### Peace Be With You

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- The doors locked for fear — the disciples are gathered but imprisoned by fear; the risen Jesus passes through locked doors and locked hearts
- “Peace be with you” — the promise of the Farewell Discourse (14:27) is now given by the risen Lord in person; the peace is the peace of finished work
- He shows them his hands and his side — the risen body is the crucified body; the wounds are not erased but glorified; this is not a different Jesus
- The great commission: “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you” — the mission of the Son becomes the mission of the church
- **eirēnē**: peace — the risen Lord’s first word to the disciples fulfills the Farewell Discourse promise; shalom: wholeness, right relationship, completed redemption

## SLIDE 6 — JOHN 20:24–31

### My Lord and My God

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- Thomas’s condition: “Unless I see... I will never believe” — the most explicit demand for physical evidence; Jesus meets him exactly on his own terms
- Eight days later — the risen Lord does not abandon the doubter; he returns for the one who was absent; no disciple is written off
- “My Lord and my God!” — the highest Christological confession in the Gospel; echoes “the Word was God” in the Prologue; resurrection produces fullest recognition
- The Gospel’s purpose statement: “that you may believe... and that by believing you may have life in his name” — the whole Gospel in one sentence
- **kyrios kai theos**: Lord and God — Thomas’s double title is the climax of Johannine Christology; the confession that opens the Gospel (1:1) is now spoken by a witness to the risen Christ

## Chapter Twenty-One — Restoration, Commission, and Witness

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## SLIDE 8 — JOHN 21:1–14

### The Miraculous Catch of Fish

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- Peter: “I am going fishing” — the disciples return to the familiar; a night of labor catches nothing; apart from Christ even the experienced produce nothing
- The Beloved Disciple recognizes Jesus first: “It is the Lord!” — love perceives what competence cannot; recognition comes before comprehension
- Peter throws himself into the sea to reach Jesus — the impetuous love of Peter is still there; the failure of the cross has not extinguished the fire
- The charcoal fire on the beach (*anthrakia*) — the same word as at 18:18; the stage is deliberately set for restoration to answer denial
- **anthrakia**: charcoal fire — appears only twice in John (18:18 and 21:9); the verbal echo is intentional: the fire of Peter’s denial is answered by the fire of his restoration

## SLIDE 9 — JOHN 21:15–19

### Do You Love Me?

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- Three questions, three answers — the number matches Peter’s three denials; the risen Christ systematically undoes the failure; restoration is as explicit as the fall
- The shifting of the verb for love (agapaō / phileō) — on the third question Jesus meets Peter where he is; the grace is precise and tender
- “Feed my lambs / tend my sheep / feed my sheep” — three commissions restoring Peter to pastoral leadership; the denier becomes the shepherd
- The prediction of martyrdom: “when you are old... another will carry you where you do not want to go” — full restoration includes the full cost
- **agapaō / phileō**: two Greek words for love — the interplay in vv. 15–17 marks the emotional texture of restoration; Jesus meets Peter where he is and raises him to where he must go

## SLIDE 10 — JOHN 21:20–25

### The Beloved Disciple and the Gospel’s Purpose

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- Peter asks about the Beloved Disciple’s fate — restored disciples still compare; Jesus redirects: “What is that to you? You follow me!”
- The misunderstood saying corrected — the community received a garbled version; the Gospel itself corrects the error; the text is self-aware about transmission
- The Beloved Disciple as the Gospel’s eyewitness author — “we know that his testimony is true”; the Gospel is not myth but attested historical witness
- The world cannot contain all the books — the closing hyperbole: the life of Jesus exceeds all telling; what is written is sufficient, but the reality is inexhaustible
- **martyrōn**: bearing witness — the Gospel closes as it opened: with testimony; the Beloved Disciple’s eyewitness account anchors the community’s faith across every generation

## SLIDE 11 — KEY THEMES: CHAPTERS 20–21

### Key Themes: Chapters 20–21

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- The resurrection is bodily and historical — the empty tomb, the grave clothes, the wounds, the charcoal fire; John insists on physical reality, not spiritual symbol
- Recognition of the risen Jesus requires more than eyes — Mary hears her name; the Beloved Disciple sees and believes; Thomas needs the wounds; each comes by a different path
- Thomas’s confession “My Lord and my God” is the Christological climax of the Gospel, answering the Prologue’s “the Word was God” with a witness’s testimony
- The restoration of Peter (21:15–19) is as deliberate and structured as his denial — the risen Christ does not merely forgive; he reinstates and recommissions
- The Gospel ends with testimony — the Beloved Disciple’s witness grounds the community’s faith; the Gospel is not biography but proclamation