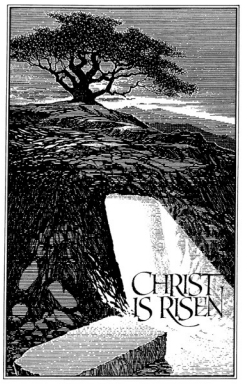
Authentic Signs of a Risen Savior

John 19:38-20:31
11-9-2025



Introduction: Note John's Theme in 20:30-31

**** The Resurrection of Christ is one of the most irrefutable facts of history***

Observe several evidences for the resurrection of Christ:

I. The <u>Unquestionable Death</u> (19:34-37)

II. The <u>Witnessed Burial</u> (19:38-42)

III. The <u>Empty Tomb</u> (20:1-2)

IV. The <u>Folded Grave-clothes</u> (20:3-10)

V. The <u>Numerous Appearances</u> (20:11-31)

A. His Appearance to <u>Mary Magdalene</u> (20:11-18)

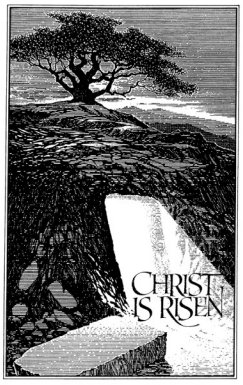
B. His Appearance to the <u>Disciples</u> (20:19-25)

C. His Appearance to <u>Doubting Thomas</u> (20:26-31)

Conclusion: What are the practical ramifications of Christ's Resurrection?

Authentic Signs of a Risen Savior

John 19:38-20:31
11-9-2025



Introduction: Note John's Theme in 20:30-31

**** The Resurrection of Christ is one of the most irrefutable facts of history***

Observe several evidences for the resurrection of Christ:

I. The _____ (19:34-37)

II. The _____ (19:38-42)

III. The _____ (20:1-2)

IV. The _____ (20:3-10)

V. The _____(20:11-31)

A. His Appearance to _____(20:11-18)

B. His Appearance to the _____ (20:19-25)

C. His Appearance to _____ (20:26-31)

Conclusion: What are the practical ramifications of Christ's Resurrection?

Authentic Signs of a Risen Savior

John 19:38-20:31
11-9-2025

Introduction: Note John's Theme in 20:30-31

Romans 1:4 states that Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead."

"The real and actual physical resurrection (cp. Lk. 24:39-43) of the Lord is the greatest and most undeniable evidence of the truth of all that Jesus ever claimed to be and to do. It is absolutely vital to any Biblical concept of Christianity." (Doug Bookman notes).

SEE: MacArthur (Matthew Commentary), p. 317-319 on the theories which deny Christ's resurrection.

Christianity is irrefutable; it can't be explained away, because of one simply fact of history: the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**** The Resurrection of Christ is one of the most irrefutable facts of history***

Observe several evidences for the resurrection of Christ:

I. The <u>Unquestionable Death</u> (19:34-37)

v. 31
"The preparation" – the preparation for Passover. Because the Jews could not work nor require others to work during Passover (and the Law stated that a body could not remain on a cross overnight – Dt. 21:22, 23), they request Pilate to hasten their deaths by breaking their legs. Such would lead to their suffocation as they would not be able to lift themselves up to grasp air with broken and disjointed knees.

v. 33
After cracking the joints of the criminals to hasten their death, they come to Jesus and notice that He had already died (Pilate was surprised by His quick death).

v. 36
Just as not one bone of the Passover lamb was to be broken (Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12), so Jesus (the ultimate Lamb – Jn. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7) must have no bone broken at His death.

v. 34
"Dr. W. Stroud ("Physical Cause of the Death of Christ") argues that this fact proves that the spear pierced the left side of Jesus near the heart and since blood mixed with water came out, this proves that Jesus died literally of a broken heart" (Robertson, paraphrase of p. 305)

SEE: Zech. 12:10, 13:607; 14:1-9

II. The <u>Witnessed Burial</u> (19:38-42)

v. 38
"A disciple of Jesus" – He was a follower of Jesus, but a secret follower due to worries about his own people doing harm to him or his position in the Sanhedrin. After Christ's resurrection and the advent of the Holy Spirit, however, a new boldness would fill such believers.

Proverbs 29:25
The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

The Bible has a lot of good things to say about Joseph of Arimathaea. He is called an "honorable counselor" (a respected member of the Sanhedrin) (Mk. 15:43). . . one who "waited for the kingdom of God" (Mk. 15:43) (he was therefore a spiritual man who had faith in a literal kingdom to come). He is called a "good man, and a just" (making him an honest, moral and righteous man) (Lk. 23:50). And he is called a "rich man" (Mt. 27:27).

Jesus would <u>not</u> be placed in a common grave (although those who were crucified typically were), but to fulfill Isaiah 53:9, He would be buried in a rich man's grave.

"Pilate gave him leave" (permission) after he had verified from the Roman centurion that Christ was indeed already dead (Mk. 15:44-45).

v. 38b
Joseph would take the body of Jesus down from the cross (Lk. 23:53) and with the help of Nicodemus would prepare it for burial.

v. 39
"There came also Nicodemus" – Just as the Law stated that in the mouth of "two or three witnesses" every word would be established, Nicodemus serves as a witness to the physical death and literal Jewish burial of Jesus Christ.

Not only were Joseph and Nicodemus witnesses to Christ's burial but the two Mary's (Mt. 27:61) were as well. In addition, Roman soldiers were sent to guard the tomb (lest the body be stolen) (Mt. 27:62-66).

Nicodemus, evidently due to fear, had come to Jesus in John 3:1 at night to inquire more about Him. It was to this religious leader that Jesus said, "You must be born again" (Jn. 3:3). Evidently, Nicodemus had been! For no unbelieving Jew would want anything to do with Jesus Christ.

What is interesting about Nicodemus is that he also was a "ruler of the Jews" (a high-ranking leade3r of the Sanhedrin; who, with Joseph, was part of an elite group of 70 elders who taught the Law to the nation of Israel. Note: it was the Sanhedrin who had condemned Jesus to die earlier that morning (Lk. 22:66 – 23:5).

"Myrrh and aloes" – aromatic powders from fragrant sandalwood dust that would be applied in between each layer of cloth to disguise the odor of a decaying body.

[NOTE: Christ's body would not decay or "see corruption" since He would arise early on the third day and fulfill Psalm 16:10, which said that God's "Holy One" would not be left in the grave nor see corruption (Peter cites this resurrection text in Acts 2:27-32).]

"An hundred pound weight" – a Roman "litra" weight – about 12 ounces. A hundred litras would weight 1,200 ounces of spice. "A lavish expression of devotion) (BBC, cited by Rogers, The Linguistic Key to the Greek N.T., p. 225).

v. 40
The Jewish custom was to wrap a dead body in long strips of linen, mixing the fragrant spices with the new cloth as a deodorizer (Lazarus of Bethany had also been buried this way – Jn. 11:44).

v. 41
The Garden Tomb, located near "Gordon's Calvary" just north of the old city of Jerusalem, fits the description of the possible location of this sepulcher. Note the closeness of the sepulcher to the crucifixion site (v. 42) as well as the archaeological evidence of the Garden existing near the new Tomb, gives support that they may have discovered the very location where Jesus was crucified and buried.

"A new sepulcher" – This was apparently Joseph of Arimathaea's own tomb, as he had cut out his own tomb (Mt. 27:60) out of limestone rock to make advance preparations for his own burial someday. He instead gave it for his Lord's burial.

v. 42
"The Jews' preparation day" – Friday's preparations for the Sabbath. The Jews would prepare for Saturday on Friday, so as not to work on Saturday. Hence, the work of burying a dead body would have to take place quickly so that Jesus would be buried before 6:00 that night when the Sabbath would begin.

Note: This being the case, Jesus would be dead for three days – Friday (from 3 – 6 Jewish time), Saturday, and part of Sunday.

III. The Empty Tomb (20:1-2)

v. 1
"The first day of the week" = Sunday (the firstfruits of the new week).

Note: Christ was crucified to fulfill "Passover" (He is the Lamb of God – Jn. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7); He was buried to fulfill "Unleavened Bread" (he saw no corruption; leaven being a symbol of corruption – cp. 1 Cor. 5:7; Acts 2:27-31); and He was resurrected to fulfill the Feast of "Firstfruits" (he is the "firstfruits of them that slept" – 1 Cor. 15:20).

Note: Firstfruits was a Jewish holiday which began on Sunday! (the day after the Sabbath) (Lev. 23:11).

"Mary Magdalene" – the woman out of whom Jesus had cast 7 demons. Now that the Sabbath was over, she (along with Mary the mother of James and a woman named Salome [Mk. 16:1] and other women came before sunrise to the tomb to anoint Christ's body with some more "sweet spices" (Mk. 16:1).

As Mary approaches the Tomb, she had wonder3ed who might be available, able and willing to roll the stone away (Mk. 16:3); but when she arrived, she found it not merely rolled away but "**taken away"** from the Tomb. Apparently, the stone was lifted up (*airo)* out of its groove and rolled away (Linguistic Key, p. 225). No man could lift the stone (for it was enormous – Mk. 16:4); but it had been supernaturally removed by an angel of the Lord (Mt. 28:2).

The angel did not roll away the stone so Jesus could get out. He was already out (and could walk through walls – cp. Jn. 20:26). The angel rolled away the stone so that people could see for themselves that the tomb was empty, that Jesus was not there!

v. 2
In shock and bewilderment, Mary Magdalene runs to Peter and the unnamed disciple (obviously, John, the beloved and humble writer of this Gospel).

"They have taken away the Lord" – Mary thought the Body had been stolen.

The empty tomb was an important point that even the angel emphasized.

Matthew 28:6
He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

IV. The <u>Folded Grave-clothes</u> (20:3-10)

v. 3 – 6
John outruns Peter but evidently out of respect does not enter the tomb. Brazen Peter, however, went right into the open tomb, and he sees the linen burial cloths lying right where the Body had been. It's as if Christ's body lifted right out of the clothes, leaving them in the position of the Body on the burial slab.

v. 7
Charles Ryrie, commenting on Luke 24:12 said: "Despite the absence of the Body, the clothes retained the same shape and position they had when it was there. If someone had stolen the Body but left the clothes, he would have had to unwrap it and the clothes would not have been in this position." Christ's Body simply lifted itself right out of the grave clothes.

The wrapping that was about His head was found neatly folded up in a place by itself.

What is so significant about the detailed mention of the burial clothes? They support the doctrine of the resurrection. You see, if Christ's Body had been stolen, as the Jewish rumor stated (according to Mt. 28:11-15), then those who stole the Body would not have taken the time to unwrap the Body, fold up the head wrapping, and they could not easily reshape the linen wrappings in the shape of Christ's Body (Lk. 24:12). Especially not with a Roman guard posted outside (Mt. 28).

v. 8
John at this point believes that Christ is alive!

v. 9
Prior to this, the disciples were unaware of Psalm 16:10 (later quoted in Acts 2:25-28) and Isaiah 53:10 (". . . he shall prolong His days") and of Christ's own promise to be crucified and raised on the third day.

V. The Numerous Appearances (20:11-31)

A. His Appearance to Mary Magdalene (20:11-18)

v. 11
Mary Magdalene, who had returned to the Tomb with Peter and John, now finds herself alone (the other women having departed).

"Mary" – at first glance poses a problem in harmonizing the Gospel accounts' record of Christ's appearance to her. Read Mt. 28:1-9, which seems that Mary had already encountered the angel (Mt. 28:5) and Jesus (Mt. 28:9).

The purpose of each Gospel writer was not to construct a moment by moment detailed chronological record of every even that Jesus did after His resurrection. But each Gospel gives sufficient data to demonstrate the factual and historical account of Christ's resurrection. Each looks at the same event from different angles (vantage points) and each records certain selected details in keeping with their thematic aim and purpose. By comparing all of the Gospels you will gain a fuller idea of all of Christ's appearances which God wanted recorded. Some work is necessary, however, to harmonize the appearances of Christ (especially His appearance to Mary Magdalene).

Harmony of the Resurrection appearances:

1) Mary Magdalene along with Mary the mother of James, Salome, Joanna and other women (Luke 24:10) come to the tomb early in the morning to anoint Jesus' body with spices. When they arrive at the tomb they find the Stone removed from the door and see an empty tomb (Luke 24:1-3).

2) Mary Magdalene (alone, by herself – John 20:2) immediately runs from the tomb to inform Peter and John that Christ's body was missing. (Note: This is a key point in arriving at a chronological harmony of the four accounts of Christ's appearance to her)

3) During Mary's departure, the other women, being perplexed about Christ's departure from the tomb, suddenly see one angel of the Lord, along with another angel who announce to them that Christ had risen (Mt.28:5-7; Mk.16:5-7). With joy they then leave the Sepulchre (Mt.28:8; Mk.16:8; Lk.24:4-10).

4) Peter and John arrive at the tomb and find it empty, just as Mary Magdalene had said. They then leave and go back home to where the disciples were gathered (John 20:3-10).

5) Mary Magdalene (who evidently followed Peter & John back to the Tomb) remains outside the tomb area in deep distress, not knowing who took the body of Jesus. It is at this point that two angels appear to her and inquire as to why she is crying (John 20:11-13). After this she turns and notices someone she thought was the gardener. It is Christ she sees (John 20:14-18); She begins to cling on to Him, but He asks her not to. Mary Magdalene is the first person to see the Resurrected Christ (Mk.16:9-11).

6) As the women were making their way back to the disciples, Jesus (evidently having vanished from Mary) appears to them. They bow to him and grab on to his ankles with joy (Mt.28:9-10). They then go to the disciples to report that they had seen the Angels and Jesus!

7) At this report, Peter leaves the group and runs back to the Sepulchre by himself (Luke 24:12). It is at this point that he evidently sees Jesus alive (Luke 24:34; I Corinthians 15:5)

8) Jesus then appears to two of the disciples on the road to Emmaus toward the end of the day. (Mk.16:12; Luke 24:13-35)

9) Jesus, later appears that same Sunday evening to the disciples in the upper room (Thomas is absent from this meeting) (John 20:19-25; Mk.16:14; Luke 24:36-43).

10) Eight days later Jesus appears again to the disciples with Thomas present (John 20:26-31).

11) Some time after, Jesus appears to the disciples at the Sea of Galilee (John 21). (Note: This is the "third time" He appeared to the Disciples as a group (John 21:14)

12) Jesus appears to the eleven upon a certain mountain in Galilee (Mt.28:16).

13) After this Jesus appeared to over 500 brethren at once (I Cor. 15:6).

14) After this Jesus appeared to James and all of the apostles (I Cor. 15:7)

15) In total, Jesus appeared to His disciples for some 40 days prior to ascending to Heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:1-11)

16) From Heaven Jesus appeared to Stephen as he was being stoned to death (Acts 7:55-56)

17) Last of all Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus (Paul) (Acts 9:5; I Cor. 15:8).

18) We now walk by faith and not sight (2 Cor. 5:7); Although we have not seen Christ with our eyes, we love Him (1 Peter 1:8)

v. 12
"Head. . . feet" – in similar fashion as two cherubim hovered over each side of the ark of the covenant.

v. 16
At the sound of her name she recognized the tone and inflexion of Christ's voice.

v. 17
This "touch" evidently involved a worshipful kneeling in front of Jesus and a grasping onto His ankles, as in Mt. 28:9.

Christ's instruction, **"Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father,"** would be better rendered, "Do not cling to me!" The point is that Jesus knew He would soon depart, and thus He was anxious for Mary not to become so fixated on His physical presence that she would again be devastated at His departure (Bookman).

Not to mention the fact that He had many other post-resurrection appearances to make. One such appearance would come just moments after this one, to the rest of the women who had come to the tomb with Mary Magdalene.

Note: Christ's statement: "I am not yet ascended" refers to His <u>physical</u> ascension (Acts 1:9). In Spirit He had ascended already to Paradise (Lk. 23:43), which is the third Heaven (2 Cor. 12:2, 4).

B. His Appearance to the <u>Disciples</u> (20:19-25)

v. 19
"When the doors were shut" – Jesus, in resurrected form, had a literal physical body with "flesh and bones"(Lk. 24:39), and yet He could walk through walls!

"Peace be unto you" – A phrase repeated in v. 21 and 26. Faith in the resurrected Christ does bring peace! Peace with God, with self, and with others who know Him.

v. 20
"His hands and His side" – two areas of the Body which had been pierced.

v. 21
A Great Commission verse; Christ completed the Father's will, now we are to do likewise!

v. 22
Christ would not leave them alone on their mission. He would later send the Holy Spirit.

Luke 24:49
And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Acts 1:5 & 8
For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. . . . But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Cp. Acts 2:1-4

v. 22
"Receive" = take or accept. The Holy Spirit did <u>NOT</u> come in John 20:22, but rather Jesus is commanded them to take Him when He does come (He gives a similar command in Acts 1:4).

"He breathed on them" – The breathing on them is interested. Christ made the sound of wind with His voice, so that when the Spirit did come in Acts 2 with the sound of "wind" (Acts 2:2),they would mentally link that event with this one. They would be reminded that the Holy Spirit (*Pneuma*) comes from the very breath (*pneuma*) of Christ, thereby associating the Spirit with Him (cp. Rom. 8:9; Phil. 1:9; Acts 16:7; Gal. 4:6; Jn. 14:16).

v. 23
Christ here gives the apostles confirmatory authority.

"They are retained" – perfect passive. They have already been retained. i.e. the apostles were simply confirming something about sin that God had already decided.

As Ryrie notes: "Since only God can forgive sins (Mk. 2:7), the disciples and the Church are here given the authority to declare what God does when a man either accepts or rejects His Son" (cp. Mt. 16:19).

v. 25
Doubting Thomas would not believe "hearsay. He was determined to both see and touch Christ's wounds before he would believe.

C. His Appearance to Doubting Thomas (20:26-31)

v. 26
On the following Monday, Jesus appears to them a second time for Thomas' sake.

v. 28
This verse is the pinnacle (high point) of John's Gospel. It is the fullest and clearest expression of Christ's deity (a theme which John emphasizes throughout this book).

"My Lord and my God" –

1) An affirmation of faith (Thomas now believes
2) An affirmation of personal allegiance (My Lord…my God)
3) An affirmation of deity (my Lord…my God)

The word "Lord" is the Greek equivalent to both Adonai and Yahweh. And the word "God" is the equivalent to the Old Testament Hebrew word Elohim.

Those who deny Christ's deity, as the Jehovah's Witness cult do, attempt to explain away this verse by saying that Thomas was beside himself. In astonishment he utters words without full awareness of what he was saying. They say that he really did not mean to call Jesus God. It just came out in his excitement.

If this was so, then Thomas had just taken the name of the Lord God in vain (a serious violation of the third commandment – Exod. 20:7). If such was the case, then Jesus should have rebuked him. But instead, Jesus commends his faith and promises blessing to those who have not seen Him but have the same faith in His Lordship and Deity (v. 29).

Conclusion: What are the practical ramifications of Christ's Resurrection?

Other proofs of Christ's resurrection:

1. The bribe given to the soldiers who had guarded the tomb. They had seen an Angel of the Lord remove the Stone from the tomb and were terrified. When they reported the empty tomb to the Jewish high priests they were paid a huge sum of money to lie and say that Jesus' disciples came and stole away the body at night while they were sleeping (Mt.28:11-15).

2. The cowardly disciples were transformed and were even willing to all die as martyrs for their faith

3. Even Saul of Tarsus, an enemy of Christ, was compelled to believe in Him when he saw the resurrected Savior

4. Jesus is transforming people today, as He has for nearly 2,000 years
   Hymn: "You ask me how I know He lives, He lives within my heart"

Practical application: Since Jesus is alive, He should more than a mere doctrine to us! He should be a personal savior; and a close friend. Do we practice His presence in our lives?

Because Jesus arose from the dead. . .

1. He is proven to be the Son of God
   (Rom. 1:4 - *"And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead"*)

2. His promises are trustworthy
   (Jn. 10:18 - *"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."*) (cp. Mt. 12:40, 16:21, 17:9, 23)

3. He has power over life and death
   (Rev. 1:18 - *"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."*)

4. He can now give eternal life to all who believe
   (Jn. 10:28 - *"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."*) (cp. Rom. 10:9-10)

5. He can intercede as our High Priest
   (Heb. 7:25 - *"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them")*

6. He can empower us to live victoriously
   (Rom. 6:4 - *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life")*

7. Our labor for Him is not in vain
(I Cor. 15:14 - *"And if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain"*) (I Cor. 15:58 - *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord")*

8. We are assured that we, too, shall rise from the dead
(Jn. 11:25 - *"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live"*) (Jn. 14:19 - *"Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also"*)

Just as the Holy Spirit "quickened" Christ (I Pet. 3:18), He will quicken those "in Christ."

Jesus has power over the grave.
Ill. As a young man, D.L. Moody was called upon suddenly to preach a funeral sermon. He hunted all through the four Gospels trying to find one of Christ's funeral sermons, but searched in vain. He found that Christ broke up every funeral He ever attended. Death could not exist where He was. When the dead heard His voice they sprang to life. ex. Lazarus.

Christ's resurrection assures the believer that He too will rise again.
Ill. 400 years before the birth of Christ, Socrates, the renowned Greek Philosopher, drank the poison hemlock and lay down to die. "Shall we live again?" his friends asked. The dying philosopher could only reply. "I hope so, but no man can know"

At Lazarus' tomb Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life" (Jn.11:25).

Our union with Christ assures our resurrection with Him.
Read: Rom.6:8-9; Col.3:1-4.
"Christ is the firstfruits of them that slept"

The Lord Jesus by His resurrection took away Satan's power to cause a fear of death. The Bible teaches that He took upon Himself flesh and blood "that through death he might destroy him that had power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb.2:14,15).

There will be no funerals in Heaven!
"The Christian dies to live" D.L. Moody

An unresurrected Christ could not give eternal life (Rom. 6:23) to anyone.

If He did not conquer death, what hope would we have that we would? (since He is our life - Col. 3:4).

9. He is coming back again
(I Th. 4:13-18)

10. He will one day judge the world
(Acts 17:31 - *"Because He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he ordained;; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead"*)

HYMN: "Christ Arose"