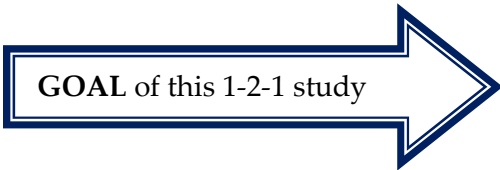


Summary Sheet for John 20

...to accompany Notes 37



GOAL of this 1-2-1 study

Believe John's written words that Jesus is risen, proving who he is & all he has promised

Context – how does this passage fit in?

We should read this passage in light of everything we've already been told in John about Jesus' work, the life he will bring and the nature of true belief.

Jesus has clearly said that he is "*the resurrection and the life*" (ch11) and that he will rise again (14v19 & 16v16-22). John has also told us that it is when Jesus is raised from the dead that his disciples would finally understand all that Jesus has been saying (2v22, 12v16). Ch 11-12 showed us through Jesus' powerful raising of Lazarus from the dead and the subsequent discourse that Jesus would bring life through his death.

So now, Jesus' actual resurrection is proof and confirmation that Jesus really is God's eternal king, able to give eternal life through his completed work on the Cross as the sacrificial lamb.

Also, as John shows us that the resurrection definitely has happened and that we should take the eyewitnesses' word for it (20v29-31), by alluding to the rest of his Gospel, he also reminds us and underlines for us what it means...eg

- 1v12 - 20v17 ...entry to God's family.

- 14vs1,27 & 16v33 - 20v19-23full cleansing from sin & therefore peace

- 14v16-17, 16v4-15 - 20v22the Spirit will come meaning the Apostles can be witnesses and we can have a personal relationship with God

Impact on us

Jesus' resurrection from the dead isn't metaphorical, spiritual or wishful thinking - he really did rise physically. We didn't see it but it has been recorded for us by eye witnesses so we can believe and true belief comes through their Word. So will we take this evidence seriously, believe it is true and respond to the implications? If so, we can be totally confident Jesus is alive and that he really is our Lord and God who gives life - by giving us true peace with God, his Word through the Apostles, full and permanent forgiveness of sin, an eternal loving relationship with God as Father, and his Spirit living in us.

How John writes to make his point

John wants us to be confident that Jesus really did rise from the dead and that we should trust his Word about it. So he records for us 4 incidents where close friends of Jesus - people not likely to be easily hoodwinked - saw him physically alive after his death and were changed from being sad, confused, not expecting it and incredulous to being convinced. As we read these 4 incidents and see what was involved in convincing them we are shown that it really happened, reminded of what it means and reminded that we can and should believe their testimony to have life.

Structure:

20:1-9 Proof: Peter & John see the empty tomb & John believes. We're shown they weren't expecting it, and didn't understand from the Scriptures that it must happen.

20:10-18 Proof: Mary sees Jesus alive. Jesus confirms his mission has worked and is finished. He is now ready to return to the Father - the disciples can now call God 'Father'

20:19-23 Proof: the disciples see Jesus alive. His sacrificial death has worked - the disciples now have peace with God. Jesus now sends them out to continue God's plan equipped by the Spirit to share the Gospel and to bring forgiveness and eternal life to the world

20:24-29 Proof: Thomas sees Jesus & believes he is God. Jesus commends even more those who believe in him without needing to see Jesus' actual wounds (ie who will believe through the Apostles' words about Jesus)

20:30-31 John calls us to accept his written evidence and believe in Jesus, just as the Apostles did.

John's references to the Old Testament and why they matter

'...as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.' (v9)

There are specific references in the OT stating that God's Messiah/King would live forever (eg Psalm 16v10, Isaiah 9v6-7). Furthermore, Isaiah 53vs10-12 implies that the Suffering Servant will rise from the dead. John has shown us in his gospel that Jesus combined both these OT figures, which is why he now says confidently that Jesus *must* rise from the dead. The Scriptures' fulfilment depends on Jesus' resurrection.

Did the resurrection happen?

Notice the eye witness detail – it was dark, folded grave clothes, locked doors, etc. And the fact they clearly didn't expect it to happen - they took a lot of persuading, eg Thomas and Mary - she saw an empty tomb, 2 angels and Jesus standing in front of her but still thought he must be the gardener! These aren't deluded people, willing the facts to fit their dreams.

What did it mean?

Everything he said is true. He is Lord and God. We shouldn't 'cling' or wish for Jesus to still be around. His work is finished and accomplished a relationship with God is now available.

How belief comes about?

Jesus' point to Thomas helps us see that he (and we) can and should believe from the Spirit inspired eye-witnesses and the Scriptures. This is what God has provided and it is actually better - even when the disciples did see they didn't always draw the right conclusion, whereas Gods' word shows us that it happened and what it means and brings life (v31).

Some questions to help guide someone else through ch 20

Opener: What will be involved if you are to believe truly that Jesus has risen from the dead?

Considering the text1: What do we notice and learn from the expectations, understanding, emotions, reactions, etc in this passage of Peter, the 'one Jesus loved', Mary, the others and Thomas?

Considering the text2: How are we shown that the Resurrection really happened? How does he show us what the resurrection means from v9, v17, v19-23 & v28? (How are we reminded of things Jesus has already promised?) How are we shown/reminded what true belief involves, particularly through Thomas?

Ones to keep chewing on:

If you were in court, what details from John's evidence in this chapter would you pick out to convince the jury that Jesus has risen from the dead?

From this chapter how would you answer someone who wants to know what the big implications of the Resurrection are?

From this chapter how would you respond to someone who says, I want to see something!" "Why can't God give me a tangible experience or sign here and now to sure up my confidence that the Christian message is true?"