

John Chapter 20

In Acts chapter 1, we read this concerning the Lord and His disciples – “To whom He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs.” Taken together, the resurrection appearances of the Lord Jesus are proofs indeed that He triumphed over death and is no longer in the tomb. I Corinthians chapter 15 lists just a few of those occasions – His appearances to the women at the tomb, for example, are excluded. But when we look at each appearance in turn, we see that each one meant a great deal to the person or group of persons concerned. He came in fact to meet the then present need of everyone whom He met.

Hence the two on the road to Emmaus set off with sad hearts. When the Lord joined them on the road, He asked the question, “What manner of communications are these, as ye walk and are sad?” Here were two sad, disillusioned disciples walking away from Jerusalem and walking away from the band of disciples. Three things marked them :-

1. They had a low opinion of who Christ was
2. They had a poor understanding of the purpose of God
3. They were displaying signs of unbelief

They obviously thought of the Lord as no more than “a prophet mighty in word and deed”. There is no mention of Him as the Son of God or the Messiah or the King of the Jews. In their esteem, He was on a par with Elijah or Elisha who were truly prophets mighty in word and deed. Their appreciation of the Lord Jesus seemed to be no higher than that of Nicodemus in John chapter 3. He recognised Him as a teacher come from God for no-one could do these miracles unless God were with Him. They were also disappointed in Him for they said, “We trusted it had been He which should have redeemed Israel”. Thirdly, they had ignored the testimony of the women at the tomb who reported it empty, and also reported back the vision of angels who said that He was alive. Then two of the disciples also went and found the empty tomb. The two on the road were guilty that day of unbelief. What they really needed was a true appreciation of who Christ is, a fuller appreciation of the purpose of God for Israel, and a strengthening of their own faith. The Lord met them to give them these three things, and during a journey which may have lasted over two hours, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.

When we come now to John chapter 20, we see the same idea. Mary Magdalene came to the tomb with a broken heart, and the Lord came to heal a broken heart. The ten disciples gathered in that room had fearful hearts, and the Lord came to bring them peace and to dispel their fears. Thomas had a doubting heart, and the Lord came to dispel the doubts. Lastly, in John chapter 21, Peter had a failing heart, and the Lord came to restore His failing disciple. Thus each appearance met the exact need of the individual or group of people concerned. He came, not just to His own, but also **for** His own.

We read first of all in John 20:1 regarding Mary Magdalene. She came on the first of the week, and we also read that it was early, while it was yet dark. Earlier in this gospel, John chapter 13, we read of Judas in the upper room. The Lord sent him out of the room with the words, “That thou doest, do quickly”. And John adds somewhat tersely, “And it was night”. We might say, “We know it was night for the Passover supper was eaten between the two evenings”. But is John not underlining for us the moral darkness that was in the heart of Judas Iscariot. The devil had first put it into his heart to betray the Lord Jesus, but later again, the devil entered into him. In this

he was unique – truly the darkness was in his heart.

When the Jews brought the Lord to Pilate's judgement hall, we read in John chapter 18 that "it was early". Here were men eager to rid themselves of this despised Nazarene. They wanted the whole matter settled before most of the citizens of Jerusalem were even awake and aware of what was taking place. Remember how they wanted to take Him in the absence of the multitude. These Jews were having a busy night. Between leaving the upper room and finally being condemned, the Lord faced no fewer than 6 trials

1. Annas
2. Caiaphas
3. The whole council
4. Pilate
5. Herod
6. The multitude

Each one of these individuals or groups of people had it within their power to grant the release of Lord Jesus, and each in turn rejected Him. Each event could be seen as a trial. Three of these trials had already taken place before they came early in the morning as dawn was breaking to Pilate's judgement hall.

But why was Mary Magdalene at the tomb so early? She came for the very opposite reasons from the Lord's enemies. She came out of a full heart to show her appreciation of her Lord and master. Nicodemus had embalmed the body with one hundred pounds of ointment. Mary couldn't match that but she came, as she thought, to add her contribution to the Lord whom she loved. But might we not ask Mary, "But why so early? It isn't even daylight yet". Mary would reply, "I am here because of that He that He has done for me" She could then go on to describe the state she was in before she met the Lord Jesus. We find the record of this momentous day in Luke 8:2. "And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary Magdalene out of whom went seven demons". The number seven, as we know of elsewhere, speaks of completeness. Here was a woman whose life had been completely taken over by Satan. We know from elsewhere of the condition of Legion. He was in the tombs, cutting himself with knives, untamed, and untameable. Was Mary Magdalene not, perhaps in a lesser measure, in the same state as Legion. But one day, she met the Saviour – it was a glorious day, for suddenly everything changed. She was never the same woman again. Just as we find Legion sitting clothed and in his right mind at the feet of the Saviour, so must Mary also have experienced an amazing transformation. We too have also been delivered from the power of Satan. Colossians chapter 1 tells us that we have been delivered "from the power of darkness" and translated "into the kingdom of the Son of His love". According to Ephesians chapter 2, we were once walking "according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience". But the day we met the Saviour, everything changed. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away, behold all things have become new". We have been born again, we have had a new beginning.

Mary Magdalene therefore loved the Lord because of that first experience. She would be like the woman of the city in Luke 7. The Lord said of her, "She was forgiven much, for she loved much".

But was this the only reason why Mary was present at the tomb. Was it only because of that first day? She would tell us, "Far from it. That day was only the beginning of my acquaintance with Him". Modern day authors have written wicked blasphemous words about this dear woman. But she was simply a woman who loved the Lord out of a pure heart. We read of her and those other women that they "followed Him from

Galilee, and ministered unto Him of their substance. Mary, on this journey, must have learned much about the Lord Jesus. She would have heard many of those gracious words spoken by Him. She would surely have witnessed many of those miracles done by Him. All these things would have endeared the Lord Jesus to her even more. It is good when we come on a Sunday morning and remember what the Lord has done for us in salvation – even better when we can come and remember His words and His works. So Mary could have added at the tomb. “I am here also because of all the things that I saw and heard on that journey from Galilee to Jerusalem”. Mary and her companions also had the joy and privilege of being able to give something back to the Lord. “They ministered unto Him of their substance”. They just wanted to give something back to Him. This is true worship, for worship belongs to God and is His right. In the days of Malachi, God complained to Israel, “Ye have robbed Me...in tithes and offerings”. We also should be following Him on His journey to Jerusalem, and as we do so, our hearts should be drawn out to Him. We want to give something back to Him.

And what can we give back to Him. We can identify in the New Testament the various sacrifices that the Christian can offer to God. We might even call them, “The New Testament Offerings”. I suggest there are at least 5.

1. Romans 12:1 – the believer’s body

“ I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God. that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service”

This is the surrender to God of the whole person, and I suppose really would incorporate all of the other sacrifices below.

2. I John 3:16 - our sacrifice for fellow saints

In John’s epistle, we read that “He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”.

This may not involve the ultimate sacrifice – rather we can devote time, energy, and money to the care and consideration of the saints in a host of little ways. Does this cost too much. Remember that He laid down His life for us. Paul also had the same spirit when he wrote in Phil chapter 2:17, “Yea and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all”.

3. Hebrews 13:15 - the sacrifice of praise

“By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name”.

4. Phil 4:18 - the sacrifice of giving

“A sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God”

5. Romans 15:16 - the sacrifice of service

Paul writes thus regarding his gentile converts, “That the offering up of the Gentiles of the Gentiles may be acceptable”. He speaks also of God, “Whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son”. Paul’s preaching was a spiritual act and his converts an offering to God as part of that religious service.

So what Mary and the others did in a material sense, we can do in a spiritual sense. We can give something back to Him. Mary’s journey to Jerusalem led her all the way to Calvary. In this, she and her companions excelled over the disciples. In Gethsemane they all forsook Him and fled. Judas had betrayed Him; Peter was to deny Him. When it came to Calvary, only one disciple, the beloved John, was still present. But there was a little band of faithful women standing afar off, amongst whom was Mary Magdalene. She would feel the pain and suffering of the Saviour –

she would be hurt by every taunt. In the Psalms we read concerning the Lord that He "looked for some to take pity and there was none". The exceptions were this little band of women.

Luke 23 tells us that many came to Calvary and when they saw what was done, they beat their breasts and returned. But even after the Lord had died, Mary stood her ground. She watched as Joseph and Nicodemus took the body down. She watched how the body was prepared and laid in Joseph's tomb. There weren't many at the Lord's funeral but Mary was there.

Mary Magdalene therefore had experiences of the Lord in His lifetime, in His death, and in His burial. She had a heart that was full of Christ that morning. She is an example to us of a true worshipper. In the gospels we have, in fact, three women who give us pictures of worship. First, there is the woman of the city who was a sinner, described for us in Luke chapter 7. She came seeking forgiveness for her sins and found it at the feet of the Lord Jesus. Her love and her worship were because of forgiveness. Mary of Bethany sat at His feet and heard His words – that was her first experience of Him in that home in Bethany. But in John chapter 11, she is again at His feet, saying to the Lord, "If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died". Soon her grief would turn to joy as she witnessed her brother emerge from the tomb. In John 12, her experiences of the Lord Jesus bring her as a worshipper to His feet. These three women then had many reasons between them to draw out their hearts in worship – forgiveness, deliverance, words, works, suffering, death, and burial. So also do we.

But when Mary Magdalene came to the tomb that morning, she found the stone rolled away, and inside was an empty tomb. She fears the worst, and runs to tell Peter and Jon, "They have taken away the Lord, and we know not where they have laid Him." Later, she will say to the angels, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him". Her affections were rising by the minute and for her, this was an intensely personal experience. It is the same for us. While it is true that we worship collectively, we also express our feelings individually. Like the house in Bethany, the whole house should be filled with the odour of the ointment.

Paul was another who knew much of a personal relationship with Christ. In Philippians chapter 1, he writes, "I thank my God for my whole remembrance of you". He thanked the God whom he knew personally in prayer. In chapter 4 of the same epistle, he says to the saints, "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus". The God who supplied his need would meet theirs also.

Peter and John respond to the message brought by Mary and they both ran together toward the tomb. We read that "the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre". Various suggestions have been made as to why John arrived first. Some say it was because John was the younger man, but there is no record in scripture of their relative ages. It seems strange that Peter, the man of action, should be beaten in a race to the sepulchre. Can I make another suggestion? Was Peter not still reeling from the shame of his own failure in denying his Lord? Matthew in his gospel tells us of the extent of that failure in the three denials :-

1. He denied
2. He denied with an oath
3. Peter began to curse and to swear

John goes even further - Peter is confronted by a kinsman of Malchus the High Priest's servant, whose ear Peter cut off. This man has just come back from Gethsemane himself and would have taken particular note of the man who attacked his kinsman. This man says to Peter, "Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?" Peter then tells a barefaced lie.

John also tells us twice over in his gospel that, "Peter stood and warmed himself". He was in the wrong company, and soon he not only compromised his position but also began to speak in the language of the servants who stood by the door. The crowing of the cock and the Lord's look soon led him however on the road to repentance and recovery.

Peter would still be smarting under this and when he heard of an empty tomb, he must have been filled with mixed emotions. It would be wonderful if the Lord was risen, but how would that same Lord deal with him who had let Him down so badly just three days previously. Was Peter not perhaps dragging his heels somewhat as they both ran towards the sepulchre?

John therefore arrived first, but he did not enter right away. When Peter arrived, he did go in, followed by John. They saw the linen clothes lying, and the napkin wrapped together and laid in a place by itself. This napkin was the sweat cloth. We read of Lazarus that he came out of the tomb still wrapped in the grave clothes and with the napkin about his head. The napkin of the Lord Jesus was laid aside in a separate place, thus suggesting to us that the days of His toil on earth had ended. There was something about the clothes in the sepulchre. Only Luke, briefly, and John of the four gospel writers mention the fact about His clothes still within the tomb. Looking back to John chapter 19, John makes much of His garments for which the soldiers gambled. John tells not just of what they gambled for but why they had to do so. "Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout".

The clothes that were left within the tomb would not be proper made up garments that we would recognise but rather the strips of linen cloth purchased by Joseph of Arimathea and wrapped around the body of the Lord Jesus. They could not have been removed from Him without first unwinding the cloth from around His body. Had this been done, then the cloth would have been in a heap, however tidy, within the tomb.

Let us say firstly, the fact that His clothes were still there at all rules out any chance of His body being stolen away by others. In Matthew 27, the Jews feared that the disciples might come and steal away the body, hence the request for a guard to be set at the sepulchre. But if men had come and stolen the body, they would have taken it as it was still wrapped in the linen clothes. So the presence of the clothes ruled out any suggestion of the body having been removed.

Again, muslims and others have put it about that the Lord simply swooned on the cross and didn't die at all. But John records how the body was anointed with one hundred pounds of ointment before being wrapped up in the linen clothes. It would have been physically impossible for the Lord to free Himself from the clothes. He would have had to be released like Lazarus from the clothes. So what can we assume, reading between the lines perhaps regarding the grave clothes. John records the fact that when the two angels appeared to Mary, they sat, one at the head and the other at the foot, where the body of Jesus had lain. Were the angels then sitting at either end of the clothes? Were the clothes lying in perfect order, the body of the Lord Jesus having passed through them and leaving the clothes behind? Such in any case was the impact made by the clothes that the two disciples looked and believed.

John adds a further note – "For as yet they knew not the scripture that He must rise again from the dead". Does this not suggest that the scripture is more weighty evidence than that of the eye witnesses. And we might say in retrospect, should they not have been looking for His resurrection after all the sayings of the Lord Jesus on the subject?

1. John 2:19

"Destroy this temple, and in three days, I will raise it up again"

2. Matthew 12:40

"As Jonah was 3 days and nights in the whale's belly, even so shall the Son of man be 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth"

3. Matthew 16:

"He must suffer many things...and be killed, and be raised again the third day"

The Lord's statements about rising again from the dead seem to have been lost on the disciples, but they were not lost on the Lord's enemies who came to Pilate and said, "We remember that deceiver said while he was yet alive, "In 3 days I will rise again"" (Matthew 27:63).

The disciples then in verse 10 came, looked, and then went away again to their own home. They left puzzled perhaps, perplexed, but away they went. What a contrast though in verse 11, "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping". The feelings of Mary for the Saviour far excelled those of even Peter and John. Was this not the reason why the Lord appeared first to Mary and not to one of the disciples. Mary was first because she was the person on earth who missed Him and loved Him the most.

The most striking thing about Mary is that no fear in verse 12. There are many angelic appearances in the Bible and the usual reaction of both men and women was that of fear. Hence, when Gabriel appeared to Zacharias in Luke chapter 1, Gabriel's first words are "Fear not, Zacharias". Again in the same chapter, verse 30, his first words to Mary were, "Fear not, Mary". In Luke 2:20, the angel says to the shepherds, "Fear not, for behold I bring you tidings of great joy". Then in Matthew 28, there are four big brave soldiers guarding the sepulchre, but when the angel of the Lord appeared to them. "the keepers did quake and became as dead men". So why was there no fear on the part of Mary? I John 4:18 tells us – "There is no fear in love: perfect love casteth out fear". That is what Mary had that day – perfect love.

The second striking thing about Mary is that she not only had no fear of angels, but also that she turned her back upon them. She had not come to meet angels – they had no attraction for her. She had come to find the Lord and that was her all-consuming passion. But when she turned round, she saw Jesus standing but knew not that it was Him. Like the two on the road to Emmaus, her eyes were blinded. The angels had asked Mary one question, "Woman why weepest thou?" The Lord however added a second question, "Whom seekest thou?" The Lord of course knew exactly whom she sought but wanted to hear it from her own lips. For the same reason He asked the two on the road to Emmaus, "What things?", when they spoke of the events that had taken place that morning in Jerusalem.

In response to the Lord's second question, Mary replies, "Tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away". She not only had great love, but her faith seemed to give her great strength. She reckoned that she could have carried the Lord's body.

Mary had come with a broken heart. In a moment, that broken heart would be mended, not by a two hour sermon such as that given to the two heading for Emmaus, but by a single word from the Lord, "Mary". She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni, which is to say, Master". The word "Rabboni" is used on only one other occasion in the Bible. Blind Bartimaeus used it in Mark 10:51. The Lord asked him, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee". Bartimaeus replies, "Lord, that I might receive my sight". The word "Lord" is again, "Rabboni". Rabboni means "My great master". It is a more honourable title than simply "Rabbi", "my master", the title which the Pharisees used to love being called by others.

Perhaps Mary at this point stooped to grasp the feet of the Lord Jesus like those women spoken of in Matthew 28 who came and held Him by the feet. So, why was Mary not permitted to do so? In Matthew, there is no mention at all of the Lord's

ascension. Indeed, in Matthew 28:10, the Lord tells the women, "Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me". The Lord directs them to another place on earth. But in John 20, the Lord says to Mary, "Touch me not for I am not yet ascended to My Father". His ascension was before Him – He was not to be detained here on earth. Further words follow in verse 17, "Go tell my brethren.... I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God, and your God". Notice that He does not say "Our Father". His relationship with His Father was always distinct, even from ourselves who can cry "Abba, Father". In Ephesians 1, we learn that we are seated in the heavenlies in Christ, but there is special place reserved for Him, He is at the right hand of God in the heavenlies. But the Lord has here brought us into a special relationship with Himself. In the gospels, He elevated the disciples from being servants only – they were also His friends and therefore party to His ways. But now He goes even further for He says "Go tell my brethren". It is not that we would ever dare call Him "brother", but that He can call us "brethren". Hebrews 2:11 says of Him that "He is not ashamed to call them brethren". The words are remarkable – "He is not ashamed". He had to fit Himself for this role, by becoming a man and suffering here as we do.

The word "Father" here introduces us to what is the significant feature of the Christian age. We have entered into a more intimate relationship with God than Israel ever knew. It is true that David in the Psalms spoke of God as "our Father", but David had a greater appreciation and intimacy with God than any other Jew then or perhaps since. It is true that God called Israel His son. Hosea 11:1 says, "Out of Egypt have I called my son". Israel though never called Him Father. He was Jehovah, the ever-living One, the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel.

It is noteworthy that the Lord introduces this idea to a woman. You will remember that the concept of Christian worship was first spoken of to the Samaritan woman by a well. Thoughts of worship and nearness are expressed to these two women for they are to be held with feelings and affection and not simply cold doctrinal statements.

From verse 19 to verse 23, we have the record of the Lord's appearing to the ten disciples in the room.

It has been suggested by some that the next three appearances of the Lord are illustrations of how He will appear to the Church of God, to the Jew, and then to the Gentiles. His first appearance in the room to His ten disciples is seen as an illustration of how He appears to the Church. The world is excluded by the locked door. The next appearance is with Thomas present. He is typical of the Jew who will not believe unless he can have physical and tangible proof of who He is. The third appearance is by the sea, typical of the Gentile nations and the great harvest that will be gathered in when He comes again in glory.

But in this first appearance to His disciples, they had a major problem – fearful hearts. They had seen their Lord being taken away from them, condemned to death, and crucified with such suffering and shame at Calvary. They might have imagined that at any moment there could be a knock at the door, and those who took the Lord away would come for them. But there is no knock at the door and the Lord now appears in their very midst.

This incident would tell us much about the Lord's resurrection body, and hence would tell us something about our future glorified body. The last verse of Philippians chapter 3 tells us that our body of humiliation will be fashioned like unto His glorious body. What characterised His body in these appearances?

1. A body recognisable

The disciples knew immediately who He was. His body was just like the one they had

known during His sojourn here. We also then will recognise one another in that body that awaits us on the resurrection day.

2. A body that is tangible

We have already mentioned Matthew 28 when the women held Him by the feet. In Luke 24:42 and 43, He took the broiled fish and the honeycomb, "and did eat before them". It was surely to prove that in many respects it was just the same body as He had before

3. A body without blood

We say this because in Luke for in Luke 24:39 the Lord says, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have". Elsewhere we read that we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. The life of the flesh is in the blood and that life was poured out for us.

4. A body without constraint

The door was no barrier to the Lord's body. He came and went as He pleased. His was a body without constraints as to time and space.

So, returning to this room, what are the first words that the Lord says to calm the hearts of His fearful disciples. It was the very words that they needed most. "Peace unto you". The same words are repeated in verse 21. Did it work? As we know, when He appears again eight days later for the sake of Thomas, the doors are still shut but "for fear of the Jews" is excluded.

What else does the Lord give them on this occasion? There are four more. Firstly, He gives them a sight of His hands and His side. He proves to them exactly who He is. Only John in his gospel mentions His side for it is only in his account of Calvary that we read of the soldier and the spear. There were two others crucified that day, but He alone had the wounded side.

Secondly, He gives them a promise. "As my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you". This is the Lord's commission in John's gospel. It is not a command to preach or to baptise like Matthew 28 or Mark 16. Rather it is the promise of His presence. It goes beyond the "Lo, I am with you always" of the other two writers. "As my Father hath sent Me". How did the Father send the Son? Was the son ever alone? The son said, "He that sent Me is with Me. The Father hath not left Me alone". Was the Son ever stuck for words? He gave to men the words that the Father gave Him to speak. Did the Son ever wonder what to do next? He did the works that the Father gave Him to do. Did He ever do His own will? His will was to do that of the Father who sent Him. Just as the Father has sent His Son, so has the Son sent us into the world.

The third thing that the Lord gave them was the Holy Spirit. He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye Holy Spirit". On the day of Pentecost they received the power of the Spirit. "Tarry ye at Jerusalem until ye be endued with power". But in John 20, they got the promise of the Spirit's presence. They were not to be left alone.

Finally, they received from the Lord the authority to act on His behalf. Verse 21 says, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them". This is not the ability to forgive sins in the absolute sense of eternal forgiveness. The Jews were right in Mark chapter 2 when they said, "Who can forgive sins but God only". But the apostles had the authority to deal with sins in a governmental or administrative way. We see this authority being used by the apostles. Thus in Acts 5, Peter brings divine judgement to fall upon Ananias and Saphira for lying to the Holy Ghost. In I Corinthians chapter 5, Paul delivers to Satan the immoral man in the company. In I Timothy 1:20, Paul delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan because of their erroneous doctrine. We may not have the same powers today as the apostles but we nonetheless are here to

represent God upon earth, and the Lord has given us authority to judge in assembly matters.

The third and final appearance of the Lord in this chapter is in verses 24 to 29. He has so far mended the broken heart of Mary Magdalene, He has brought peace to the fearful hearts of the disciples, now He comes to dispel the doubts of Thomas. Verse 24 tells us that Thomas was not present with them on that previous occasion when the Lord appeared in their midst. Although all the disciples had fled from Gethsemane and only John remained at Calvary, by now the ten disciples had re-grouped and now found comfort in each others' company. Ten of them had met the Lord and fearful hearts had become glad hearts. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord". The ten must have spent the week rejoicing that the Lord was risen, but one disciple had a miserable week – Thomas. No matter how often they told him that week, he refused to believe. "Except I see," he said. "Except I thrust..", he was not going to believe. It illustrates the point about how much we miss by not having fellowship with the saints. Thomas may have given up on the Lord and the disciples, but the disciples had not given up on Thomas, and on this second occasion he was with the ten. The Lord also had not given up on his doubting disciple, and now the Lord appears again in the same room, just for Thomas' sake. The Lord speaks directly to Thomas and repeats the very words that Thomas had been saying all week about seeing and thrusting etc. Even in our wayward moments, the Lord hears us and now He moves to restore His disciple. The Lord invites Thomas to reach out and touch, but Thomas answers with the words, "My Lord and my God".

Christians today are in the age that is characterised by faith and not sight. Indeed Paul says those very words in Galatians. "We walk by faith, and not by sight". We are amongst the blessed who have not seen yet have believed. Perhaps Thomas is a picture of the future Jewish nation who will be turned to the Lord when He appears again in glory.

Verses 30 and 31 conclude the chapter with a general statement about the Lord's life. "And many other signs did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book". I believe there are 32 specific miracles recorded in all four gospels together, but John records only 8 of them, specially selected that "ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through His name". John describes the miracles as "signs". They are proofs of His deity – many of them also are dispensational in character and point forward to the millennial glory of the Lord Jesus in the midst of His people Israel.