

## THE GOSPEL OF

## JOHN

Dead...  
but Not  
for Long

## INTRODUCTION

John 19:38-20:10

“Dr. Frank Morrison was not the kind of person you would find in church on Sunday morning, but he won the respect of everyone – a well-educated Brit, an attorney by profession, a supremely moral man, but a skeptic in matters of faith. By his own account, he was a man moved only by irresistible logic and verifiable fact. He preferred the theology of German critics, Dr. Matthew Arnold of Oxford, Charles Darwin, and Sir Thomas Huxley. Therefore, he rejected the possibility of miracles and the supernatural, and he supposed that all of Christian tradition should be stripped of its ‘overgrowth of primitive beliefs and dogmatic suppositions’ to find the real Jesus, whom he considered an almost legendary figure of purity and noble manhood. Naturally, this meant he believed in the historical reality of a man named Jesus who died at the hands of Rome; but he denied the historic Christian belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Determined to discover a Jesus Christ unadorned by religion, Morrison set out to study His last days and uncover the truth of the subsequent week. He chose to pursue the study from a purely intellectual point of view, using the documents of Scripture, history, and archaeology, committed to allowing the facts to shape history. And with the dogged curiosity and relentless logic of a Sherlock Holmes, he unraveled the mystery of Jesus.”<sup>1</sup>

Morrison wrote about his findings in the book *Who Moved the Stone?* Morrison writes about his journey in investigating the resurrection that eventually led him to come to faith in Jesus. Morrison writes, “Somehow my perspective shifted – not suddenly, as in a flash of insight or inspiration, but slowly, almost imperceptibly, by the very stubbornness of the facts themselves.”<sup>2</sup>

The story of Jesus’ resurrection is not just a historical reality. It’s a historical reality that should change our lives forever.

## OPEN IT

1. Describe one time in your life when something truly surprising happened.

---

<sup>1</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on John*, Swindoll’s New Testament Insights (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 338.

<sup>2</sup> Swindoll, *Insights on John*, 338.

## READ IT

John 19:38-20:10

## EXPLORE IT

2. Why does Joseph keep the fact that he's a disciple of Jesus a secret?
3. What was significant about the tomb where Jesus' body was placed?
4. How did Peter and John react when Mary Magdalene told them Jesus' body wasn't in the tomb?
5. As they looked around the tomb, did Peter and John (known as the disciple Jesus loved) understand what had happened? Why or why not?

## APPLY IT

"In John 19:37-38 we get the first clue this passage is about change. John includes a detail about each man that reveals a change in his attitude. Joseph of Arimathea had been a secret disciple but was now publicly identifying himself with Jesus. Nicodemus, who had secretly come to Jesus at night when no one would see him (Ch. 3), also comes out of the dark and identifies himself as a follower of Jesus. It doesn't take much imagination to understand the potential danger in identifying with one who was just executed for sedition and blasphemy. If Joseph's and Nicodemus' lives weren't in danger, their reputations certainly were."<sup>3</sup> But the changes in these men caused them to ignore the risks to align themselves with Jesus.

6. Joseph and Nicodemus exhibited this change before Jesus was even resurrected. The cross impacted them. Write down three ways Jesus' crucifixion has changed your life.

---

<sup>3</sup> Matt Carter, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in John* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2017), 376.

When people are buried, there is often a funeral ceremony with friends and family gathered to honor the person who has died. A eulogy is read describing some of the great things about the person who has died. This did not happen with Jesus. Instead, his body was quickly laid in a tomb near where he was crucified.

**7. How should Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, have been honored at the tomb where he was buried?**

**8. What are some things you would include if you were writing a eulogy for Jesus shortly after his death?**

“There can be no resurrection without first having a corpse. The miracle of the empty tomb depends on the certainty of Jesus’ death. The need to substantiate this fact is made necessary by critics who declare He never died. Entire books have been written claiming that Jesus lapsed into a coma and lay unconscious in the burial cave. Then, inside the damp cool of the tomb, He revived, pushed aside the stone, slipped past the guards, and then escaped into the night, claiming to have been raised from the dead.”<sup>4</sup> But as Christians we don’t believe Jesus revived himself in the tomb. We believe He truly died on the cross.

**9. Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-19. Why is it so important that Jesus really rose from the dead?**

---

<sup>4</sup> Swindoll, *Insights on John*, 338.

Women were not treated equally in the ancient Jewish world. They were not respected and their account of events was not seen as credible. In fact, in a court hearing the testimony of women was often not accepted as evidence simply because it was coming from a woman. And yet, the testimony of women to the resurrection of Jesus Christ appears in all four gospels.<sup>5</sup> They were the first witnesses that Jesus was no longer in the tomb!

**10. What does this say about how highly God views women, especially compared with the way they were viewed in the ancient world?**

**11. Given how lowly women were viewed, what impact does the fact that their testimony is included in Scripture give to the truthfulness of the resurrection claim?**

---

<sup>5</sup> Gary R. Habermas and Mike Licona, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2004), 72.



The painting above is one my (Pastor Cisco) favorites. It was painted by Swiss painter Eugene Burnand in 1898. It's called "Peter and John Running To The Tomb." The looks on Peter and John's faces speak volumes about the emotions they were experiencing as they ran to the tomb.

**12. What emotions do you see in Peter and John's faces in the painting?**

**13. What would be going through your mind if you were running to the tomb alongside Peter and John?**

“Mary assumes that the body of Jesus has been stolen by grave robbers or moved by authorities (20:2). She doesn’t consider the possibility of resurrection. Peter and John – the beloved disciple – enter the tomb, and John deliberately calls our attention to the grave clothes (v.7). This is actually the second time grave clothes are mentioned in John’s Gospel; the first was at the tomb of Lazarus. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, Lazarus came out of the tomb still wrapped in the linen cloths. Jesus resurrection is different from the resurrection of Lazarus. We aren’t given many details but enough to understand Lazarus will die again; he will need his grave clothes one more time. Jesus will never need his own. He will not see death again. Something happened when Jesus rose from the dead that did not happen when Lazarus was resurrected.”<sup>6</sup>

**14. Lazarus died again but Jesus never will. Why does it matter that Jesus died once for all?**

**15. How would your life change if the resurrection of Jesus Christ was on the top of your mind each day?**

**16. How would your life be different if the resurrection had never happened?**

---

<sup>6</sup> Carter, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in John*, 377.

This study was compiled and questions were written by Cisco Cotto (Naperville Campus) - [www.villagebible.church/smallgroup](http://www.villagebible.church/smallgroup)