



# DIGGING DEEPER

John 20:11-31 – The Glorious One revealed

**PLEASE READ** – John 20:1-31

## GETTING STARTED

There have been some very big words that have recurred over and over in John’s Gospel, themes that tell us so much about the person and mission of Jesus. Here are some for starters ... but flick through the pages of the book and see if you can find more: more uses of these words, or further key recurring themes.

- “The/my *hour*”     John 2:4, 12:27, 17:1     .....
- Life**             John 1:4, 3:16, 6:35, 10:10     .....
- Light**            John 1:4-9, 8:12                             .....
- Believe**         John 1:12, 2:11, 3:16, 6:29, 6:47, 20:29, 20:31     .....
- Others?            .....

John 20 starts with Jesus apparently several days dead in the tomb ... but, we quickly read, curious things are starting to happen. Mary Magdalene, Peter and John have found the tomb empty (vv1-10), but, so far, Jesus himself has not reappeared.

So ... just what was it that John *believed* (v8)?

After recording three (why just three? weren’t there more?) of the Lord’s appearances, John finally comes clean about his agenda in writing his book. Does his having an agenda mean that we can’t regard this as “proper history”?

## 1) THE APPEARANCE TO MARY MAGDALENE (vv11-18)

Try to piece together Mary's likely state of mind at this point. The tomb, previously empty, but now occupied by "two angels in white" (v12), asking "why are you crying?" And why *wouldn't* she be crying at this point?

But why might she think that Jesus is "the gardener"? Do you think that our preconceptions and prejudices sometimes blind us to who Jesus really is? Can you give any examples of how this has happened – perhaps to you, before coming to faith ... or even afterwards?

What prompts Mary's recognition of Jesus (v16)? Do we also cry out in delight to see (or is it *hear*?) the Lord? In fact, how *do* we "see" or "hear" him nowadays?

Why is Mary told not to hold onto Jesus (v17)?

## 2) THE APPEARANCE TO THE DISCIPLES (vv19-23)

What do we see about the state of mind of the disciples before and after Jesus joined them? How can they properly be "overjoyed" (v20) when they see those signs of his suffering?

Breathing on the disciples (v22): is this suggesting a re-creation (remember Genesis 2:7), as well as a promise of Pentecost?

What do you make of the words that immediately follow, about forgiveness (or not) – literally, that sins "shall *have been* forgiven", or "shall *have been* retained"? So we can promise people forgiveness, if they believe, *on the basis of it already being God's promise*?

## 3) THE APPEARANCE TO THOMAS (vv24-29)

And Thomas' state of mind: do you class this as *will* not believe, or *cannot* believe?

Is doubt the same as actual unbelief, or, as a book title put it, "Faith in two minds"?

How do you handle any doubts you have? – or do you just pretend you don't?

In what way is v29 the high point of the book? – when John feels he can finally break cover (section 4) and tell us ...

## 4) JOHN'S "PURPOSE STATEMENT" - AND PROMISE! (vv30-31)

How do we know when the time is right to challenge someone with very personal words like this?

This "belief" is more than simply accepting that something is true, right?