

**April 20, 2025**

**John 20:24-31**

<sup>24</sup> Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.” <sup>26</sup> Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” <sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

“John wanted to present the Christian faith in such a way that it would commend itself to the Greek world to which Christianity had gone out.”

-William Barclay

“Historians of ancient Greece and Rome placed a high priority on eyewitness reporting, on being there and seeing for oneself. Time and research ‘in the field’ gave a historian credibility and authority.”

-Timothy Jospheh

“I know in their own terms what they saw was the raised Jesus. That’s what they say and then all the historic evidence we have afterwards attest to their conviction that that’s what they saw. I’m not saying that they really did see the raised Jesus. I wasn’t there. I don’t know what they saw. But I do know that as a historian that they must have seen something.”

-Paula Fredriksen



### **The Resurrection: See, Believe, Live** **John 20:24-31**

**BIG IDEA:** If Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and you are seeing Him as such, then believe that you may find life in His name.

#### **OUTLINE**

1. See

2. Believe

3. Live

## SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These “Sermon Discussion Questions” are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. Who is Jesus to you?
2. What did the disciples witness? Did they fabricate the resurrection story? What compelling evidence supports the notion that they didn’t invent the resurrection?
3. Refer to John 20:8 and John 3:3. What must happen in order for someone to believe that Jesus is the son of God?
4. What can you learn about the center of your life from the topics of your thoughts and conversations this past week?

“What the text teaches is that everyone who believes in Christ will be saved. Whoever does A (believes) will receive B (everlasting life). But the text says nothing, absolutely nothing, about who will ever believe. It says nothing about fallen man’s natural moral ability. Reformed people and non-Reformed people both heartily agree that all who believe will be saved. They heartily disagree about who has the ability to believe.”

-R.C. Sproul

“New life is not implanted because man perceives the truth, but he perceives the truth because new life is implanted. A man is not regenerated because he has first believed in Christ, but he believes in Christ because he has been regenerated. He is not regenerated because he first repents, but he repents because he has been regenerated.”

-William Shedd

“But let’s be clear: the name of Jesus is not a magic wand. Chanting it does not give one special powers. The power in the name is the person behind the name. In biblical times, names meant something. They were more than badges of identification. They often told others who you were and what purpose God had for your life.”

-Kevin Deyoung

“Jesus the name that charms our fears and bids our sorrows cease; ’tis music in the sinner’s ears, ’tis life and health and peace.”

-Edward Perronet

“John is telling us that the life, the life of the age to come, the life of the new heavens and the new earth is in Jesus Christ. It is in faith-union with Him. It comes only when a person has been united to Christ by the Holy Spirit because that life is in the Son. That’s why you cannot reject the claims of Christ and have life, because in Him is life. And if we are going to participate, if we are going to share in that life, we must be in Him. We must be trusting in Him, believing on Him, believing what the Scriptures say about Him.”

-Ligon Duncan

***Praise to Jesus.*** Praise God for Jesus, our life and light, who quenches our thirst with living water and satisfies our deepest hunger with the bread of life. As the light of the world, Jesus delivers us from darkness and offers abundant life. Through Jesus, we find the way and the truth, and we have the promise of life after death, communion with the Father, and everything we will ever need.

***Repentance through Jesus.*** Take some time today to pray. Confess any instances where you’ve sought life in anything or anyone other than Jesus. Repent, trust Him, believe in Him, and trust what the Scriptures say about Him.

***Consecration for Jesus.*** See Jesus as the Christ, the son of God, and believe that your life lies solely in the name of Jesus. Share this incredible news with the world today.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In chapter 20, John recounts the resurrection of Jesus, His appearances, and sending the disciples. He describes the aftermath of Jesus’ crucifixion and burial: the empty tomb, the risen Jesus’ encounter with Mary Magdalene, Jesus’ appearances to his disciples, their commissioning, concluding with the reason why he wrote his book.

-ESV Study Bible

## FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

These questions are written to aid parents in leading family devotions with their children.

1. Why did Thomas not believe that Jesus was alive when the other disciples told him that they saw Him alive? (In verses 24-25, we read that Thomas would not believe because he was not with the disciples when they saw Jesus. Thomas said that he would not believe unless he saw Jesus for himself.)
2. What happened when the Lord appeared to Thomas? (He believed and cried out, “My Lord and my God”. This is a significant profession as it directly professes Jesus is God.)
3. How did Jesus react to Thomas’ profession? (It is important to point out to your children that if what Thomas called Jesus was false, then Jesus would have corrected him. But he didn’t correct, but confirmed his belief in Him. Jesus does add that those who don’t see Jesus physically and believe in Him are blessed.)
4. Why did John say in verses 30-31 that God gave us the Gospel of John? (He said that God inspired the writing of John so that the readers would believe in Jesus. This would be a good time for you to talk with your children about how the Spirit has helped you believe in Jesus through the reading of the Bible. The Bible is eyewitness accounts of what happened in redemptive history. We also have God the Holy Spirit to help us spiritually see and know Jesus to believe in Him and have life in Him through the study of God’s Word.)

Scriptures for further study:

1 Peter 1:8

1 John 1:1-4

2 Timothy 3:15-17

## FOR STUDENTS

Scriptures for further study:

1 Peter 1:8-9

Hebrews 11:1

Romans 10:17

1 John 1:1-4

Romans 6:4

Colossians 3:1-4

1. Why do you think Thomas had a hard time believing Jesus was alive at first (vv. 24–25)? Can you relate to any doubts he had?
2. When Jesus appears to Thomas and invites him to touch His wounds (v. 27), what does that show us about how Jesus responds to doubt? How do you think Jesus would respond to your doubts or questions about faith?
3. Read verse 28. Thomas says, “My Lord and my God.” What makes this a powerful statement of faith? What would it mean for you to personally call Jesus your Lord and your God?
4. In verse 29, Jesus says, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” How does this encourage us today, even though we haven’t seen Jesus physically?
5. Read verse 31. John tells us that his Gospel was written so that we would believe in Jesus and find life in His name. What does it mean to have “life in His name”? How have you seen that kind of life in your own story or in the lives of others?
6. Where are you in your journey of faith right now—seeing, believing, or living? What’s one next step you could take this week to grow in your relationship with Jesus?

## FOR SEEKERS AND NEW BELIEVERS

1. Even though Jesus states, “blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (v.29), Jesus still accommodates himself to Thomas and encourages him to reach out his hand and examine Jesus for himself.

Question: What do you think this says to us about Jesus and how he approaches people when we exhibit doubt?

2. Jesus is understanding about our doubt, but he also encourages that we move past our doubt and ultimately come to faith. (v.27)

Question: Someone once said that doubt may be part of the journey but it must never become the destination. What do you think about this quote?

Interact with it.

3. In verse 28, Thomas professes that Jesus is “my Lord and my God.” Real faith involves believing that Jesus is Lord and God (i.e. correct understanding), and faith also involves personal assent and affirmation (i.e. that He is “my” God).

Question: Have you come to this same understanding and personal belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and God?

4. John indicates (v.30) that there are many other signs which he did not record. But of those signs that he did record, certainly the resurrection is the most dramatic and powerful.

Question: Have you studied the accounts of the resurrection as offered in all the Gospels. And have you taken the time to read any good books explaining why the resurrection is plausible and reasonable to believe? I encourage you to take a free copy of The Case for Easter, available at our church today.

5. John wrote his Gospel in order that his readers might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that by believing, we might have life in his name. (v.31)

Question: Would you like to receive this free gift of life that is abundant and everlasting? Is there any reason you would not want to believe and put your faith in Christ right now? Let today be the day of salvation for you!

## The Hand of Our God and His Divine Sovereignty in the Return and Renewal of God's People



*The Ancient of Days*, William Blake, 1794.

About the artwork and artist.

The Ancient of Days, found in prophecies of Daniel, is the subject of William Blake's engraving in which he shows us the Hand of Our God and His Divine Sovereignty in the Return and Renewal of God's People, the sermon series title for Ezra and Nehemiah.

The Ancient of Days is the cover art for Blake's Poem Europe: a Prophecy (1794). The Ancient of Days is a name for God the Father, whom the prophet Daniel spoke of in Daniel 7, where he saw Jesus, the Son of Man, "given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

Blake's poem "Europe", depicts a world filled with suffering based on the political climate of Europe and politics in England in the 1790s. It is appropriate in light of the suffering of God's people described in Ezra and Nehemiah. The artwork by Blake serves to remind and encourage God's people to know that He is still active and on the move with His plan of redemption despite their surroundings and circumstances. William Blake (1757-1827) was committed to connecting the prophecies and visions of the God of the Bible with the events in his country; the poet, printmaker, and painter was unrecognized and died impoverished. Despite their circumstances, William and his devoted wife Catherine, whom he taught to read and write, enjoyed a happy marriage and life together.

Today, William Blake is considered one of the greatest poets in the English language and one of the most original visual artists of his day.

Barker, (2004) (Barker, William Blake 1757-1827, 2004)



## Introduction to Nehemiah

From January to May 2024, we heard sermons from the Book of Ezra. The introduction to Ezra, recorded sermons, and discipleship resources can be found on our church website at this address: <https://www.fpcrome.org/pdd-ezra/>

Ezra and Nehemiah were, for centuries, received as one book narrating the return of God's exiled people to their land, as under Persian rule they were allowed to resettle and rebuild Jerusalem. These two books cover three different waves of returning exiles, from 538 to 433 BC. But they tell one story: the restoration of God's covenant people according to his Word—which they are now called afresh to obey.

This restoration required, first of all, the rebuilding of the temple and the reinstitution of ceremonial worship. The first leader, Zerubbabel, led the initial wave of exiles back to Jerusalem to accomplish this goal (Ezra 1–6). The second wave came more than half a century later, led by Ezra, who rebuilt not the temple but the people, teaching them—and calling them to obey—the law of Moses (Ezra 7–10).

Thirteen years after Ezra arrived, Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem. He first led the people to rebuild the wall (Nehemiah 1–6). Then, along with Ezra, he sought to restore the people (Nehemiah 7–13) as God's holy nation, followers of his Word.

The restoration was not complete, however. These books picture God's people regathered but struggling; they are poor subjects of a foreign king; their city is devastated; enemies oppress from without; sin threatens from within. We see the faithful hand of God mercifully preserving his people according to his promises. We also see the dire need for the perfect fulfillment of God's promises in the salvation accomplished by his Son. (For further background, see the ESV Study Bible.)