

“Do You Ever Find Yourself Doubting God?”

John 20:19-31

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Teaching Aim: To examine the two unexpected visits of the resurrected Lord with His disciples in a room that had been locked because of fear of the Jews. To understand all the disciples struggled to believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, but especially Thomas. To realize Thomas wouldn't believe until he saw and touched the wounds in Jesus' hands and side, once he did, he proclaimed the strongest confession of faith in the deity of Jesus Christ found anywhere in Scripture.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD'S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: Jesus appeared to the ten disciples without Thomas Sunday evening (John 20:19-25)

1. On what important day in history did the events of **John 20:19-15** take place? On what day of the week did this fall on (**vs. 19**)? According to **verse 19**, where were the disciples gathered? Why? Is it possible the disciples were still using “*the Upper Room?*” (See **Acts 1:12-14**) Who appeared and startled the disciples?
2. The disciples had witnessed Jesus raising people from the dead before. Why do you think they had such a hard time believing that Jesus Himself had risen from the dead? (See **Mark 16:9-11; Luke 24:9-11**) Do you ever find yourself doubting that Jesus is with you during the difficult times of life? If so, why?
3. What greeting did Jesus give to the ten disciples when He surprised them by His visit (**vs. 19b**)? What did they need the most at that time? What is the meaning of the Jewish greeting “*Shalom?*” (Hint: Google it) After the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, what kind of “*peace*” was available for the disciples of Christ? Is that kind of peace still available for us today? (See **Rom. 5:1-2**) If so, how do we get it? (See **John 3:16; 14:6; Eph. 2:8-9**)
4. According to **Luke 24:37**, how did the apostles initially respond? Why? What did Jesus do to comfort them? (See **Luke 24:38**) What was the disciple's response after examining the nail pierced hands and the wound on His side where the spear had entered his body (**vs. 20**)?

5. How was the resurrected body of Jesus different from our physical bodies today? (See **Luke 24:30-31**; **1 Cor. 15:15-38, 42-44**) In what way was it the same?

6. What message did Jesus bring to the disciples a second time in **verse 21**? Why do you think He repeated this to them twice? What is the meaning of the word “*apostle*?” (See Dictionary) What commissioning did Jesus give to His disciples in **verse 21b**? Under whose authority would the disciples of Christ be sent out to minister?

7. **Verse 22** is difficult to understand. If in fact the Holy Spirit didn’t indwell believers until 50 days later at Pentecost, what was the purpose of Jesus breathing on His disciples here? Was this action by Jesus a promise of what would happen in Jerusalem at Pentecost? (See **John 7:38-39**; **John 16:7**; **Acts 1:4-5**) Can you think of any other occasion where Jesus spoke of something symbolically before the event actually took place? (See **Matt. 26:26-28**)

8. How does **verse 22** relate to **Gen. 2:7** and **John 3:1-8**? (Note: The Greek word for “*wind*” in **John 3:8** can also be translated as “*Spirit*.”)

9. **Verse 23** is another difficult verse to interpret. Who alone can forgive sins? (See **Luke 5:21**) If only God can forgive sins, what was Jesus telling His disciples here? How can we apply this teaching to our own lives and ministries today?

10. According to **verse 24**, which disciple was not present in the room when Jesus suddenly appeared to the others? Where was this disciple and why was he not with the others? What did the ten disciples do when Thomas returned to the room (**vs. 25**)? How receptive was Thomas to the news they shared? What nickname has Thomas earned over the ages for doubting this report (**vs. 25**)? Does the nickname “*Doubting Thomas*” fit you when it comes to your faith in God and His Word? (See **Mark 9:31**; **10:33-34**) How do you find yourself doubting?

11. What qualities can we learn about Thomas from the following verses: **John 11:14-16; John 14:5-6?** (Note: Tradition also tells us that Thomas would later be speared to death near Madras, India; dying while ministering to others in the name of Jesus.)

Part II: Jesus appeared to all eleven disciples a week later (John 20:26-29)

1. According to **verse 26**, what happened on the following Sunday? What are some of the similarities between **verse 19** and **verse 26**?
2. What did Jesus say to Thomas in **verse 27**? How would Jesus have known the conditions Thomas had laid down? Did Thomas physically touch Jesus? What were the great sins of Thomas according to **verse 27b**? Do you ever find yourself struggling to trust God when times get tough? What did Paul mean when he wrote, *“the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith’*”? (See **Rom. 1:16-17**) How does this apply to us today?
3. How did Thomas respond to the sight of the resurrected Lord (**vs. 28**)? Throughout his gospel, the Apostle John has been careful to lay out the deity of Jesus Christ for the world to see (See **John 1:1-3, 14; 2 John 7**). Why do some scholars call Thomas’ confession *“the highest confession of faith in Christ”* found anywhere in the Bible?
4. In **verse 28** Thomas called Jesus *“My Lord and my God.”* The Greek word for *“Lord”* is *“Kyrios”* and can also be translated *“Yahweh.”* (Note: *“Yahweh”* is the special covenant name between God and His covenant people, Israel.) What was Thomas in effect calling Jesus? Why would this be offensive to most of the Jews?
5. What was the common response of angels when human beings became overwhelmed and worshiped them? (See **Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9**) How did Jesus respond to the worship of Thomas (**vs. 29**)? Believing in Jesus is a common theme in John’s gospel, he uses the word *“believe”* almost 100x. To whom did Jesus promise a special blessing in **verse 29**? How does this blessing apply to Christians today?

Part III: The purpose of John's Gospel (John 20:30-31)

1. Did John report every sign that Jesus performed in His ministry? Why or why not? What sign was the greatest of them all? (See **Luke 24:1-6**)

2. The four gospels report that Jesus performed 35 miracles during His public ministry. Do you think this was the total amount of miracles Jesus performed in His life or is it likely that He did even more? Why did each writer choose the specific signs, wonders and miracles that they did? (See **2 Tim. 3:16-17**)

3. According to **verse 31**, what was the purpose behind John's gospel? What kind of "life" is John referring to in **verse 31b**? (See **John 3:16, 36; 10:27-29; 17:1-3**) Many people today believe that you can lose your salvation. Is that true? Why or why not? Is there such a thing as "temporary eternal life," or is this a contradiction of terms? Is salvation dependent upon our own actions and feelings or upon the finished work of Jesus Christ?

4. Do you struggle with doubting God and His Word at times? If so, why? What is your biggest struggle? What makes the resurrection of Jesus Christ so important to you personally? How should the resurrection bring comfort to you? Will you commit to trusting in "*the sovereign Lord of the universe*" to help you through your struggles today?

5. Have you received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord? If not, why not repent of your sin and do so in prayer right now? (See **1 Cor. 15:50-57**)

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- The resurrection of Jesus Christ changed the disciples from fearful men to bold apostles willing to die for Jesus.
- Jesus commissioned His apostles to take the message of "*peace with God*" through faith in Him to a lost and dying world; our mission is still the same today. (See **Rom. 5:1**)
- The baptism of the Holy Spirit at regeneration (or new birth) is a prerequisite for God to empower us for ministry today.
- Those who have never seen Jesus physically and believe in Him anyways will receive a special blessing from the Lord.
- The purpose of John's gospel is evangelistic in nature; that people might believe that "*Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing they may have life in His name.*"
- Jesus brings "*eternal life*" to all who believe in Him by grace through faith.