

Bi123 The Gospels 2

Lesson Bi123-27 No More Doubting

A common failing of many people is doubt. A child usually starts out very trusting. He learns to doubt by just observing circumstances around him. Teenagers continue this habit through meeting people who don't always tell the truth and cannot be trusted.

An important source of doubt is the activity of Satan. He really wants to create doubt concerning the promises of God. How does God combat this evil influence about his reality? He gives us his truth contained in stories about people who overcame their doubts. In this lesson we learn how important it was to Jesus to replace doubt with belief in the hearts of the disciples.

Jesus first appeared to Mary early on resurrection Sunday morning near the tomb. Later in the day he met with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. The two disciples were still talking with the others about meeting Jesus on the road. They had told the two that the risen Lord had appeared to Simon also. They were meeting inside a house, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly Jesus himself stood among them all and said to them, "Peace be with you." His resurrected body was of a different order—a new glorified body that could come into the room without using the door.

They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence (John 24:36-43).

The Jews had a great fear of ghosts. They believed these beings had no bodies. This same belief caused their fear when Jesus came walking on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus came to remove any doubts they had about his resurrection. He showed them the prints of the nails in his hands and feet. Then he ate food in their presence. Only a physical body could do that! So we understand that in our glorified bodies we will still enjoy food.

Jesus went on to say to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." The entirety of scriptures in that day was defined using these three categories. Jesus meant that all of God's revelation spoke about him.

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:44-49).

Jesus here gives us the basics of the gospel message. The Messiah would be rejected, be killed and rise from the dead. His death alone would be sufficient to cover human sin in God's sight. Those who believed the message would deliver it with God's power, to all the peoples of the world, starting in Jerusalem.

The apostle John recalls that at that time Jesus said again, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven" (John 20:21-23).

When Jesus told them to receive the Holy Spirit and he breathed on them, the disciples were born of the Spirit, according to the New Testament pattern. They were regenerated—born again by the Spirit of God. All believers today experience this same thing when they believe in Jesus. This could not happen until after Jesus had conquered sin and had risen from the dead.

Another experience was waiting for the disciples, that of being filled or baptized in the Spirit. This would fulfill the promise of Jesus to give them power. It would soon be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. This experience would empower them for witnessing and for being used by God in supernatural signs and wonders.

Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus was God in the fullest sense.

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:24-29).

Jesus returned a week later to remove all doubts Thomas held concerning the Resurrection. He wanted this doubter to also know the truth and believe. Jesus promised a special blessing for those who would believe, but cannot see his resurrected body. According to tradition, Thomas was so transformed by Jesus that he took the gospel farther than any of the other apostles. He was the first person to bring the message of Jesus to the nation of India.

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in the Bible. The stories we have were written so people will believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing they may have life in his name (John 20:30-31). Faith has

content—belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Faith in Christ has purpose—it leads to eternal life.

This story is **important** because it shows that Jesus was not a ghost. He was the same person the disciples knew, but with a resurrected glorified body.

The **main truth** of this story is that believers today should have no doubts about the Resurrection. We are blessed because we believe the truth about his resurrection without seeing him ourselves.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. What did Jesus tell the disciples after the resurrection when they feared he was a ghost?
A. [Pause] If you said that Jesus told them, "Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have," you answered correctly.
2. What reason did Jesus give for the Messiah having to die and be raised to life?
A. [Pause] If you answered that Jesus said, "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms," you are right.
3. What did Jesus say to doubting Thomas to confirm who he was?
A. [Pause] If you said that Jesus told Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe," you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to learn the story so you can tell it from memory. After you tell it to someone, ask them this question, "After hearing this story, do you have any doubts about the truth of the resurrection of Jesus?" If they do, ask to pray with them that God's Word and Spirit would show them the truth. If they have no doubts, suggest that you go together to find someone else who needs to hear this story.