

Program: SS Panel 2024 4 Q

Quarterly title: Themes in the Gospel of John

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Lesson Title: #7 Blessed Are Those Who Believe

For Lesson Dates: *November 9-15, 2024*

Section title: Wednesday - The Witness of Thomas

Note: This color and **this color** and font = quarterly text

Note: This color and **this color** and font = John Dinzey notes

Lesson 7

**November 9–15*

Blessed Are Those Who Believe

Read for This Week’s Study: *John 8:54–58, Gen. 12:3, Rom. 4:1–5, John 12:1–8, John 19:4–22, John 20:19–31, Daniel 2, Daniel 7.*

Memory Text: “Jesus said to him, ‘Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed’ ”
(John 20:29, NKJV).

WEDNESDAY

November 13

The Witness of Thomas

Read John 20:19–31. What can we learn from the story of Thomas about faith and doubt? What major mistake did Thomas make?

John 20:19–31 19 Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace *be* with you.”

20 When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

21 So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”

22 And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained.”

Seeing and Believing

24 Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.”

So he said to them, “**Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.**”

READ

Thomas was dictating the conditions of his faith. This approach to faith in Jesus has appeared over and over in John. Nicodemus answered Jesus with, “ ‘How can a man be born when he is old?’ ” (*John 3:4, NKJV*). The woman at the well asked, “ ‘Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?’ ” (*John 4:11, NRSV*). The crowd who had been fed with the loaves and fishes asked, “ ‘What sign are you going to give us?’ ” (*John 6:30, NRSV*)

Mary at Sepulcher

REF: >> John 20:1- Now the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

2 Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.”

3 Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb.

4 So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first.

5 And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there*; yet he did not go in.

Peter & John at Sepulcher

John 20:6 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there*,

7 and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself.

8 Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and **he saw and believed.**

9 For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

10 Then **the disciples went away again to their own homes.**

REF:>> John 20:11 But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down *and looked* into the tomb.

12 And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 Then they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?”

She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.”

14 Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there*, and did not know that it was Jesus.

John 20:15 Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”

She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, “Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”

16 Jesus said to her, “Mary!”

She turned and said to Him, “Rabboni!” (which is to say, Teacher).

17 Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but **go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’**”

18 Mary Magdalene came and **told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.**

REF:>>Mat 28:10 Then said Jesus unto them, **Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.**

REF:>>Mat 28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

Mat 28:2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

REF:>>Mat 28:5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

Mat 28:6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

Mat 28:7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

Mat 28:8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

Mat 28:9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, **All hail.** And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

Mat 28:10 Then said Jesus unto them, **Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.**

>>> See Luke 24 the Road to Emmaus

Do not be unbelieving, but believing

John 20:26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"

27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be **unbelieving**, but believing."

unbelieving (faithless KJV) G571 (Mounce) **ἄπιστος apistos**

23x: unbelieving, without confidence in any one, [Mat 17:17](#); violating one's faith, unfaithful, false, treacherous, [Luk 12:46](#); an unbeliever, infidel, pagan, [1Co 6:6](#); pass. incredible, [Act 26:8](#).

John 20:28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"
29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed."

*****READ*****

At this time Thomas was not present. He would not humbly receive the report of the disciples, but firmly and self-confidently affirmed that he would not believe unless he should put his fingers in the prints of the nails and his hand in the side where the cruel spear was thrust. In this he showed a lack of confidence in his brethren. If all should require the same evidence, none would now receive Jesus and believe in His resurrection. But it was the will of God that the report of the disciples should be received by those who could not themselves see and hear the risen Saviour.. SR 236.2

written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ

John 20:30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;

31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Christ appeared to the disciples after His resurrection, when they were shut up together in a room because of fear. Thomas was not with them. Later, he heard the reports of the resurrection from the other disciples, but he despaired. It did not fit his picture of the kingdom. And, too, he surely must have wondered why Jesus would have revealed Himself to the others when he himself was not there.

Thomas said, " 'Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe' " (*John 20:25, NKJV*).

*****READ*****

Thomas was dictating the conditions of his faith. This approach to faith in Jesus has appeared over and over in John. Nicodemus answered Jesus with,

“ ‘How can a man be born when he is old?’ ” (John 3:4, NKJV). The woman at the well asked, “ ‘Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?’ ” (John 4:11, NRSV). The crowd who had been fed with the loaves and fishes asked, “ ‘What sign are you going to give us?’ ” (John 6:30, NRSV).

It is this “see and then believe” perspective that the Gospel of John counters. When Jesus met Thomas after the resurrection, He invited him to come, see, and touch His risen body. But then He says, “ ‘Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed’ ” (John 20:29, ESV).

*****READ*****

“God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration.”—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 105.

Through the Word of God, through the Creation, and through personal experience, we have been given an incredible amount of evidence for our faith in Jesus.

If someone were to ask you, *Why do you believe in Jesus?* what would you say?



Additional notes:

A number of the disciples now made the familiar upper chamber their temporary home, and at evening all except Thomas gathered here. One evening Thomas determined to meet with the others. Notwithstanding his unbelief, he had a faint hope that the good news was true. While the disciples were taking their evening meal, they talked of the evidences which Christ had given them in the prophecies. “Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.” DA 807.2

Turning to Thomas He said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing." These words showed that He was acquainted with the thoughts and words of Thomas. The doubting disciple knew that none of his companions had seen Jesus for a week. They could not have told the Master of his unbelief. He recognized the One before him as his Lord. He had no desire for further proof. His heart leaped for joy, and he cast himself at the feet of Jesus crying, "My Lord and my God." DA 807.3

Jesus accepted his acknowledgment, but gently reprov'd his unbelief: "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." The faith of Thomas would have been more pleasing to Christ if he had been willing to believe upon the testimony of his brethren. Should the world now follow the example of Thomas, no one would believe unto salvation; for all who receive Christ must do so through the testimony of others. DA 807.4

Many who are given to doubt excuse themselves by saying that if they had the evidence which Thomas had from his companions, they would believe. They do not realize that they have not only that evidence, but much more. **Many who, like Thomas, wait for all cause of doubt to be removed, will never realize their desire. They gradually become confirmed in unbelief. Those who educate themselves to look on the dark side, and murmur and complain, know not what they do. They are sowing the seeds of doubt, and they will have a harvest of doubt to reap. At a time when faith and confidence are most essential, many will thus find themselves powerless to hope and believe.** DA 807.5

In His treatment of Thomas, Jesus gave a lesson for His followers. His example shows how we should treat those whose faith is weak, and who make their doubts prominent. Jesus did not overwhelm Thomas with reproach, nor did He enter into controversy with him. He revealed Himself to the doubting one. Thomas had been most unreasonable in dictating the conditions of his faith, but Jesus, by His generous love and consideration, broke down all the barriers. Unbelief is seldom overcome by controversy. It is rather put upon self-defense, and finds new support and excuse. But let Jesus, in His love and mercy, be revealed as the crucified Saviour, and from many once unwilling lips will be heard the acknowledgment of Thomas, "My Lord and my God." DA 808.1
