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Email: woody@dtgministries.org; Website: <http://www.dtgministries.org>

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John 20 - Part II

John 20:19-20: 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, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.* 20. *And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.* When did the disciples and the other believers begin to fear the Jews? It was not until they took Jesus in the garden, tried and crucified him. Think of the events spiritually. Who Jesus is, the event of the cross and the ministry of Jesus today is still being discussed. Many different organizations have been formed as a result of differences of opinion, and all of them have killed the understanding of Jesus in their hearts by the various doctrines and creeds they have adopted. Talk to a 1000 people who believe in a Triune God, and tell them that you have seen in the Bible that the doctrine is not true. It would be very rare for even one person out of a 1000 to say, "Sit down with me and show me what the scriptures have to say."

How were the disciples convinced that day, that it was Jesus that stood in their midst? He showed them the marks of the cross in his body. **Luke 24:36-39:** 36. *And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.* 37. *But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.* 38. *And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?* 39. *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.* A few weeks later, 120 people who were convinced that Jesus was their Messiah and Savior, received the Father's Spirit and began without fear, to tell everyone that would listen, that Jesus, the man on the cross whom they crucified, was the anointed One. By preaching the gospel of the cross, eleven men turned the entire religious world upside down.

Mary did not recognize Jesus when she first saw him and neither did the disciples. Why? There was something different about his physical appearance. **Mark 16:12-13:** 12. *After that he appeared in another form (a type for the Spirit of Truth,) unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.* 13. *And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.* Jesus appeared, in another form, to two men who were walking to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35), and they did not recognize him. Neither did we believe when we first heard about the real Jesus. The disciples did not believe three different eye witnesses. Why? And why do people not believe today?

Notice what the two said to Jesus as they walked along the way: **Luke 24:21:** *But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel...* They, like all the rest, were taught to expect a false Messiah, one that would deliver Israel from the Roman yoke and set up his kingdom on the earth, and make Israel the glory of all the nations. The majority of Christians today are expecting a false Messiah and they fear going against their churches because they cannot believe that the majority could be wrong. But, that is exactly what the disciples did the day of Pentecost. And yet the number accepting the truth was small compared to those who rejected the gospel.

Here is why: **1John 4:4-6:** 4. *You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.* 5. *They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them.* 6. *We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to*

us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood (NIV). Notice that the *Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood* are discerned by what is spoken.

Mark is more specific about the day of the events and the meeting: *when the sabbath* ^(g4521) *was past and early in the morning the first of the week* ^(g4521) (Mk 16:1-2). (note: *Sabbath* and *week* are from the same Greek word. Other translations say *first of the sabbaths*. Some argue that these verses prove the Sabbath was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week. *Evening* in Jn 20:19 above, refers to a time between 3:00 pm and dark, and not like our Roman evening of the early hours of darkness). Jesus was resurrected the day after the seventh day Sabbath, fulfilling another feast type: **Leviticus 23:10-11**: *10. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: 11. And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.* Not only was Christ the Passover Lamb (1Cor 5:7), he was a type for the firstfruits of the dead in Christ (1Cor 15:20).

The previous wave offering was at the beginning of the barley harvest. There is a second wave offering at the beginning of the wheat harvest, which is Pentecost: **Leviticus 23:15-17**: *15. And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: 16. Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD. 17. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of [two tenth parts of an ephah - ASV]: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the LORD.* I believe the feast days indicate a progression of understanding as well as a spiritual resurrection. The wave offering at Passover was raw grain, while the offering at Pentecost, 50 days later (10 x 5 - God's understanding multiplied by His grace), were two loaves baked with leaven, i.e. bread leavened with the understanding of Christ. The 144,000 are the firstfruits from among mankind (Rv 14:4). Spiritual Pentecost is when we begin to enter into a more complete understanding of the cross. It is a time when our sun (understanding of the Son) is darkened and our moon (the Bible) is turned to blood (understanding of shown to be from man) (Acts 2:15-21).

John 20:21-23: *21. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22. And when he had said this, he breathed on* ^(g1720) *(them), and saith unto them, Receive ye (the) Holy [Spirit]* (or, *take hold of a holy spirit*): *23. Whose soever sins ye remit (rather, dismiss), they are remitted (dismissed) unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.* Literally, Jesus breathed in ^(g1720) (or took a breath) and said, *Receive a holy spirit* (no definite article). How do you imagine they received a holy spirit? Did they receive it at that instant? Or, Is Jesus telling them how to have a holy spirit? In the next verse Jesus tells them how to have a holy spirit. To be created in the image of God, we must be able to dismiss the sins of others, which we cannot do until we see that God has dismissed the sins we have committed, as He is not keeping a record of anyone's sins. We are the ones keeping the record, and it takes time to purge the record from the mind.

John 20:24-29: *24. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. 25. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. 26. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. 27. Then saith he to Thomas, 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. 28. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. 29. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

Ten disciples, and likely others, told Thomas that they had seen Jesus and yet Thomas would not accept their testimony. He would not believe except he see for himself. What is the problem here? A man brought his son to Jesus because the disciples could not cast out a demon from him. The disciples ask Jesus: **Matthew 17:19-20:** 19.*Why could not we cast him out? 20. And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief*^(g570)... He added to that, **Verse 21:** *this kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting.* The Greek word for unbelief, *Apistia*^{g570} = *pistia* (*faithful*^{g4103}) preceded by the Greek *a*, which reverses the meaning. The word is means *unfaithful, faithlessness*. Faith is God's understanding which we receive by hearing (Rom 10:17). Thomas, like the disciples, had a hearing problem. Jesus told them over and over that he only spoke what his Father told him (Jn 12:50), and yet they did not catch on to follow his example. Thomas was more stubborn than the rest concerning listening to his conscience. Can you see this in people today, with whom you interact?

John 20:30-31: *30. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

I find it interesting that *many other signs truly did Jesus* which are not written. And many of the ones written are duplicates from different witnesses. Why did God choose to bring out only these things? Well, for one thing, *In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established* (2Cor 13:1). The witness of various people will be different because their experiences are different. It is like the gathering of the manna: **Exodus 16:18:** *And when they measured it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating* (ASV). Gather according to your ability, share what the Lord has shown you, and he will bless your experience. Amen.