

DOUBTING THOMAS

“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 it.” —JOHN 20:25

Thomas had not been present when Jesus first appeared to His disciples. When the disciples told him they had seen the Lord, he would not believe. There are three basic aspects of the human psyche that lends itself to either a “doubting Thomas persona”, a rejection stance, or to a solid conviction of belief in Christ through experience of Him.

Intellectually, people perceive living in a physical world, which is subject to physical laws, and the laws say that ‘dead men don’t rise’. The evidence is clear that Christ’s tomb was empty, and that He appeared to many after His resurrection. This naturally defies physical laws, and seems an assault on rational thinking. But what if there are other realities beyond the natural? Can there not also be a supernatural order where the God who created the natural order chooses to intervene at His will?

Secondly, people doubt because of emotional reasoning. Our moods, passions and our pain may sometimes express themselves masquerading as factual doubt, but are really an expression of the way we feel. Our thinking is subjective; we think what we want to think, and avoid what we want to avoid. Christ is then interpreted through our moods, our histories and experiences. Something has

happened within one's heart which has created an attitude that won't accept. Emotional causes are not good reasons to doubt, because they can render us both blind and deaf to the real issue, which is Christ Himself.

The third reason people doubt is volitional; that is their will is set against the evidence. There are those who believe Christianity is true, but will not accept it because they choose to pursue their own will and not the will of God. Truth does not conform to what we want, and denying it in our lives could close us off to the greatest message on earth. Thomas did not say, "Unless I see the nail marks in His hands... I cannot believe." That would have been a rational reason for doubt, but he said, "I will not believe." It was his choice, his will. For whatever reason, our minds can be set against believing.

Knowing Thomas doubted, Jesus let a week go by before appearing to him. Sometimes it's necessary we take time to adjust our minds and dispositions and open our hearts to the possibility we may be wrong. When Jesus appeared to Thomas, he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" That was not an, "Okay, I believe," but a total surrender to Christ. Jesus having risen from the dead is not a mere tenet of belief in the Christian Gospel. It is the indispensable fact of the Christian Gospel.

PRAYER: I pray, Lord Jesus, for all those who have yet to seek You. I ask that You lift their barriers so they will be drawn by your Holy Spirit. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: How did I first come to believe in the risen Lord?