



# DOUBT

DOUBT OUR FINAL FRONTIER

JOHN 20: 24-28

## Doubt Our Final Frontier

- **Mathew 28:16-17 NIV**, 16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.
- This would have been after Jesus' appearance in the upper room on the day of His resurrection with Thomas absent

## **Doubt Our Final Frontier**

- A week later Jesus appeared again in the upper room with Thomas present
- There were multiple observations over multiple days in multiple places, multiple different people
- There were still some of the 11 disciples who doubted

## Doubt Our Final Frontier

- What were they doubting?
  - That Jesus didn't exist in some form?
  - That Jesus was not there with them now?
  - That Jesus was physically raised from the dead, that this was the same Jesus that they walked with for three years

## Doubt Our Final Frontier

- I wonder if Jesus glowed like on the Mount of Transfiguration
- Remember they thought Jesus was a ghost or spirit when he walked on the water to them during the storm
- Jesus told them numerous times He would rise from the grave after three days
- He would have already opened their minds allowing them to see from Scripture this was ordained by God the Father *(Luke 24:45)*

## Doubt Our Final Frontier

- **Luke 24:41 NIV**, 41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement
  - It is too good to be true
  - It's the old bait and switch con
  - **Luke 1:37 NIV**, 37 For no word from God will ever fail  
*(Nothing is impossible with God)*

## Doubt Our Final Frontier

- So, what is going on?
  - They are wandering in the wilderness of doubt
  - Maybe explaining away God's Word
  - Just like Israel wandering in the desert for 40 years because they doubted God and refused to believe
  - John gives us a picture of this in the life of the disciple called Thomas

## Scripture

- **John 20:24-28 TLB**, 24 One of the disciples, Thomas, “The Twin,” was not there at the time with the others.  
25 When they kept telling him, “We have seen the Lord,” he replied, “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands—and put my fingers into them—and place my hand into his side.”

## Scripture

- **John 20:24-28 TLB**, 26 Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them and greeting them.
- 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger into my hands. Put your hand into my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!” 28 “My Lord and my God!” Thomas said.

## Doubt the Final Frontier

- Jesus is offering Thomas the same experience He offered the others a week earlier
  - **Luke 24:39 TLB**, 39 Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do.

## **Doubt the Final Frontier**

- Give Thomas some slack, he is not asking for anything more than was offered to the other disciples
- Jesus is not making an exception for Thomas' lack of faith
- These men were going to need absolutely clarity to the physical resurrection of Jesus to be His Apostles after Jesus' ascension

## Doubt the Final Frontier

- They are going to have to be bold without doubting when Jesus ascends back into heaven
  - Peter could never have said to the Jews what he said on Pentecost without being absolutely sure of Jesus' bodily resurrection
  - Stephen would never have been able to handle the stoning if he had not seen his risen Savior

## Doubt the Final Frontier

- **Acts 7:55-56 NIV**, 55 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”
- So, why was the doubting of Thomas so important that God would select him to be the poster boy of doubt?

## Even the strongest disciple/believer can go through seasons of doubt

- **Luke 22:31 NIV**, 31 “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat.”
  - Each disciple would be sifted in different ways according to their weaknesses
  - Peter’s sifting was prideful control
  - Thomas’ sifting was unbelief and doubt

## **Even the strongest disciple/believer can go through seasons of doubt**

- There is nothing bad or unusual about the struggles you're experiencing
- Christianity needs to wrestle with doubt and unbelief to make it yours
- A faith unquestioned and untested is no faith at all

## **Even the strongest disciple/believer can go through seasons of doubt**

- The word “faith” in the New Testament is derived from the word “persuasion”
- The process of making your faith your own is probably going to entail some hard work until you come to the point you are persuaded to the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- Then nothing life throws at you can take it away
- Seasons of doubt do not have to define you unless you stay there

## **Even the strongest disciple/believer can go through seasons of doubt**

- We do Thomas a disservice by calling him doubting as if this was the whole of his life
  - He didn't do anything the other disciples did not do, they each struggled with doubt
  - We forget Thomas left everything to follow an itinerant teacher
  - He was the first to volunteer to return to Jerusalem with Jesus and be killed

## **Even the strongest disciple/believer can go through seasons of doubt**

- We do Thomas a disservice by calling him doubting as if this was the summary of his whole life
  - He is not like Peter but seems to carefully weigh and think before speaking
  - When Jesus told the disciples he was going away

## Even the strongest disciple/believer can go through seasons of doubt

- **John 14:1-6 NIV**, 1 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. 2 My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going.”

## Even the strongest disciple/believer can go through seasons of doubt

- **John 14:1-6 NIV**, 5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”
  - 6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

## **Even the strongest disciple/believer can go through seasons of doubt**

- Even the strongest Christian will wrestle with seasons of doubt so give yourself some grace

## **Your sifting, periods of doubt and testing, will differ in intensity and length from others**

- David's period was around 15 years
  - Job's test was long and intense
  - Nation of Israel was around 40 years
  - Some disciples were 3 days, Thomas' was 8 miserable days while the others rejoiced, some others was longer

## **Your sifting, periods of doubt and testing, will differ in intensity and length from others**

- We like to button everyone's experience up using our list of 5 ways to overcome doubt quickly as if everyone's sifting is the same as ours
  - We may even write a book telling others the great way we have discovered to walk in faith using these 5 steps
  - Until we find out our 5 steps do not even work effectively for us when we go through another season of sifting
  - Much like the experience of being pregnant

## **Your sifting, periods of doubt and testing, will differ in intensity and length from others**

- Everyone's path through sifting is different and complicated because people are complicated, and people's lives are complicated
- We will be tempted to think, "Why God?" or "Where are you God?" or "You are asking too much of me God!" or "If only God." or "Will it ever end?" or "No one understands."

## **Your sifting, periods of doubt and testing, will differ in intensity and length from others**

- A well-meaning friend might throw some Bible verses at you and run the other way
- Then our enemy will come and remind you what a miserable Christian you are for even thinking these thoughts

## **Your sifting, periods of doubt and testing, will differ in intensity and length from others**

- And we will try to work up our faith because we know you can't please God without faith and the cycle begins again – *Bipolar Christianity*
- Remember this is your period of sifting and doubt and you must wrestle with it in prayer, study of God's Word, asking God for faith to believe, and fellowship of like-minded believers

## **Your sifting, periods of doubt and testing, will differ in intensity and length from others**

- What can we do for others?
  - You walk through it with them allowing them to be open and honest, expressing their pain and fears without judging
  - You remind them of God's promises as led by the Holy Spirit, intercede for them in prayer
  - You simply love them back with the love God gave you

## **Remember Jesus has a purpose for your period of doubt and testing**

- You period of sifting and testing is not punishment even if it appears to be a consequence of your sinfulness
  - Its purpose is far deeper than simply teaching you a lesson

## **Remember Jesus has a purpose for your period of doubt and testing**

- Its purpose is to drive you deeper into the person of our risen Lord, Jesus Christ
  - To be convinced in the resurrection of Jesus
  - To be convinced of the vast love God has for you as defined and expressed in His Word
  - Allowing God to lead you to become the person He created you to be, giving Him all the glory

## **Remember Jesus has a purpose for your period of doubt and testing**

- Abraham became the Abraham we know through his years of doubt and testing while working through each season until he learned to simply trust God and His promises
  - King David needed the caves
  - Moses needed the back side of the mountain
  - Peter needed the crushing denials of knowing Jesus

## **Remember Jesus has a purpose for your period of doubt and testing**

- John Mark had his periods of doubt after dumping Paul until he became someone Paul desired to work with again
- We must keep in the forefront of our minds that God has a purpose for our period of doubt and testing
- And it is beneficial for you to remain there until He leads you out

## Doubting Thomas

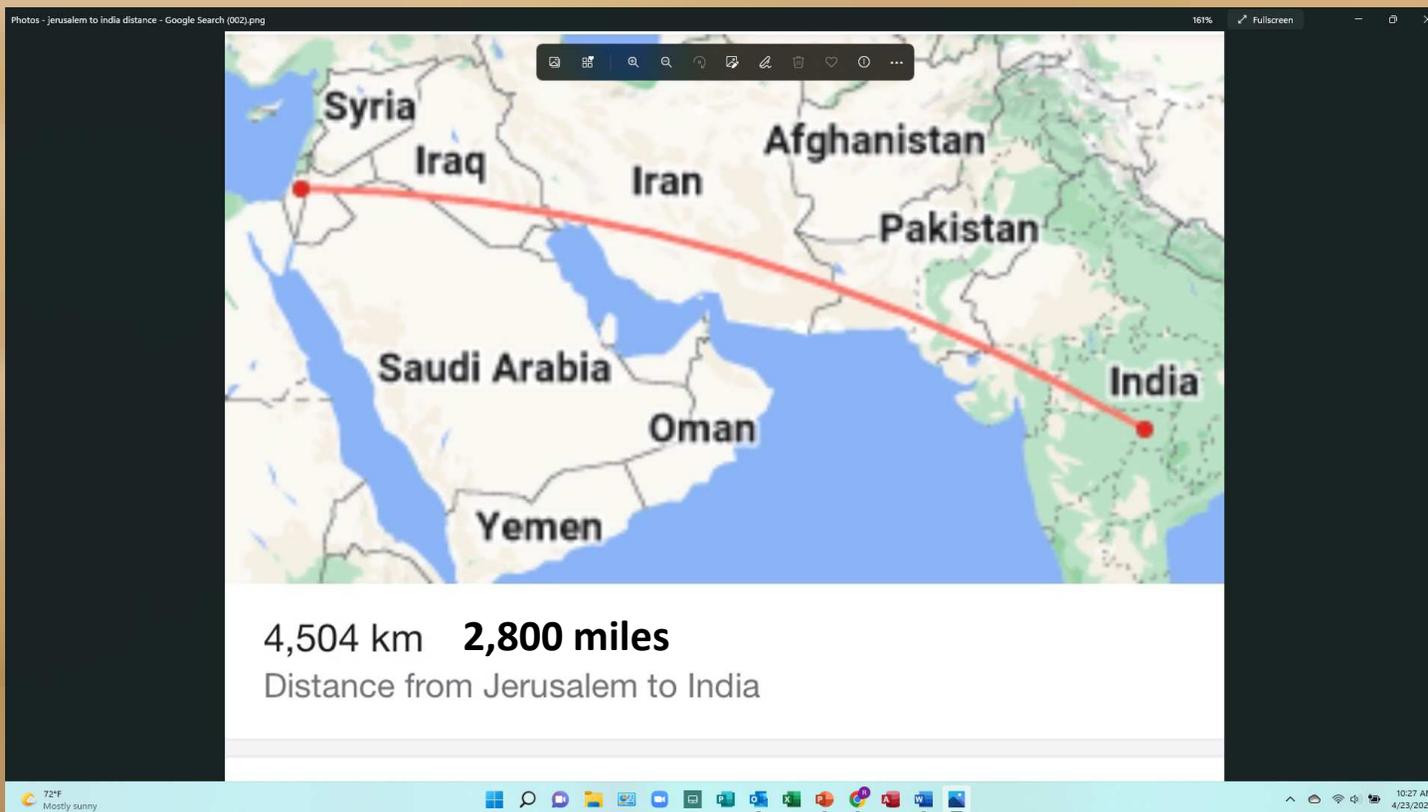
- Thomas made an immediate transition from declared unbelief to radical belief upon knowing Jesus is alive
- Maclaren, “Sight may have made Thomas believe that Jesus was risen, but it was something other and more inward than sight that opened his lips to cry, “My Lord and my God!”
- It indicates a complete change of mind
- It is a distinct and direct act of worship and adoration

## Doubting Thomas

- Thomas was honest enough to say when he didn't believe, but also honest enough to follow the evidence to its full meaning
  - No half-believe or half-faith for him
  - He was all in

# Doubting Thomas

- Did it make a difference in Thomas' life?





# DOUBT

DOUBT OUR FINAL FRONTIER

JOHN 20: 24-28