

The Confession of a Doubter

Jn 20:24-29

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about boy telling his mother about the crossing of the Red Sea, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #3363.
- B. In this sophisticated world, many refuse to believe what the Scriptures teach.
 - 1. Many today deny the virgin birth.
 - 2. Many attempt to explain away the miracles of Jesus--e.g., some explain the feeding of the 5,000 by saying that Jesus convinced that multitude to share their food.
 - 3. Many claim that Jesus was not the Son of God; he was just a good man.
- C. At Easter our minds are focused on the resurrection of Jesus.
 - 1. As Christians, we remind ourselves of the Lord's resurrection each Lord's day.
 - 2. Yet, at this time of year, we especially think of the resurrection.
- D. Many attempt to explain away the resurrection.
 - 1. Some claim that the apostles merely hallucinated their visions of Jesus.
 - 2. Some claim that Jesus didn't really die on the cross; he just passed out and three days later he was able to walk out of the tomb.
 - 3. Some claim that the women went to the wrong tomb.
 - 4. Some claim that the apostles just made up this story about Jesus' being raised.
- E. Thomas did not accept the resurrection.
 - 1. On the evening of the resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples (Jn. 20:19-23).
 - 2. Thomas, however, was not with the apostles when Jesus appeared to them, v. 24.
 - a. We're not told exactly why Thomas was absent; however, it seems likely that Thomas believed that Jesus was gone and the hopes of a Messiah were over.
 - b. Throughout John, we see Thomas as something of a pessimist.
 - 1) When Jesus went into Bethany to raise Lazarus, Thomas said, "Let us also go, that we may die with (Jn. 11:16). Thomas expected Jesus to be killed.
 - 2) When Jesus told his disciples they knew where he was going, Thomas said, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" (Jn. 14:5).
 - 3. The disciples told Thomas that they had seen the Lord--the Greek means that they kept telling him they had seen Jesus.
 - 4. However, Thomas refused to believe in the resurrection--he told the disciples he wanted to see the print of the nails and put his hand in Jesus' side.
- F. Jesus met with the disciples with Thomas present, v. 26.
 - 1. The doors of the place where the disciples gathered were shut; the apostles were afraid that they might die.
 - 2. Jesus stood in the midst of his disciples.
 - 3. Jesus showed Thomas his hands and side, v. 27.
 - 4. Thomas replied, "My Lord and my God," v. 28.
 - a. This is a very personal confession--Notice that he says my Lord and my God.
 - b. God expects us to make a similar confession.
 - 1) "Whoever confesses me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 10:32).
 - 2) "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9).
 - c. This morning, we want to examine Thomas' confession.

JESUS IS LORD

- A. The term "Lord" could mean any number of things.
 - 1. The term was used in polite conversation, something like our sir.
 - 2. The term was used to speak of the masters of slaves.
 - 3. The term was used as a designation of any person of high position.
 - 4. The term was often used of God.
 - a. Because they were afraid of taking God's name in vain, the Hebrews were very careful about not pronouncing God's name; when they read and came to the name Yahweh, they would say "Lord."
 - b. The Greek version of the OT translates God's name as "Lord."
- B. Thomas could have meant a couple of things in calling Jesus "Lord."
 - 1. He could have been referring to Jesus' deity.
 - a. The Scriptures do teach that Jesus is divine.
 - b. However, since he called Jesus "my God," Thomas probably doesn't mean to refer to Jesus' deity here.
 - 2. He more than likely uses the term to refer to Jesus as having high authority; one who has the right to be obeyed.
 - 3. The Scriptures teach that Jesus is Lord.
 - a. "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).
 - b. "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9).
 - 4. When John wrote this Gospel, Ephesus, the city in which he lived, was a center of emperor worship.
 - a. It is likely that both John and his readers were familiar with processions of worshipers going through the streets of Ephesus and chanting, "Caesar is Lord! Caesar is God!"
 - b. In writing the confession of Thomas, John was saying, "No, Caesar is not "Lord;" Jesus is Lord.
- C. Jesus is Lord, one of high authority, and one who has the right to be obeyed.
 - 1. The Scriptures show that Jesus is one of high authority.
 - a. Jesus told his apostles, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Mt. 28:18).
 - b. Jesus taught the multitudes as one having authority (Mt. 7:29).
 - c. After Jesus cast forth a demon from a man, the people of Capernaum said, "What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him" (Mk. 1:27).
 - 2. We need to recognize in our own lives that Jesus is one of high authority.
 - a. The Scriptures teach that God owns us--he is the Lord of our lives.
 - 1) "If we live, we live to the Lord" (Rom. 14:8).
 - 2) "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it" (Mt. 10:39).
 - b. We need to show that Jesus is really the Lord of our lives. If Jesus is the Lord of our lives, he is the most important part of our lives.
 - 1) We will spend time studying Scripture so that we know how to obey him?
 - 2) We will obey what we read in Scripture?
 - 3) We will seek to make every part of our lives subject to the will of Christ?
 - 3. Can you honestly say that Jesus is Lord of your life?--Is he the Lord of your TV life? Is he the Lord of your body? Is he the Lord of your home life--how you treat your wife, etc.? Is he the Lord of your work life? Is he the Lord of your money?

JESUS IS GOD

- A. By calling Jesus God, Thomas announced his belief in the deity of Christ.
 - 1. The Gospel of John has now run full circle.
 - a. The Gospel began with an affirmation of Jesus' deity- "the Word was God."
 - b. Now, the book ends with Jesus' being declared God by one of his disciples.
 - 2. Indeed, Jesus is divine.
 - a. "He is the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15).
 - b. "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).
 - c. The name Immanuel means "God with us" (Mt. 1:23).
- B. Jesus' deity has several implications;
 - 1. Since Jesus is divine, he is our Creator.
 - a. "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (Jn. 1:3).
 - b. "By Him all things were created" (Col. 1:16).
 - 2. Since Jesus is divine, he is our Judge.
 - a. "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Rom. 14:10).
 - b. "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:1).
 - 3. Since Jesus is divine, he deserves our worship.
 - a. When the disciples saw Jesus, they worshiped him (Mt. 28: 17).
 - b. After Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples worshiped him (Lk. 24:52).

CONCLUSION

- A. Thomas declared that Jesus was his Lord and God. Because of his encounter with Jesus, Thomas spent the rest of his life preaching the Gospel.
- B. Is Jesus your Lord and God?