

## Doubting Easter

### WE live in a sceptical world.

A large proportion of our society at least doubt that Jesus rose again. Most just don't believe it is possible that Jesus became alive again after being dead. Even in some Christian circles the resurrection is being touted as being a symbolic story of the resurrection is only a spiritual thing.

Even as I have read the internet and newspapers this week there is a sense of excitement for the Easter show, anticipation for a few days off and talk of the financial benefits of Easter to the supermarkets. Letters to the editor saying the name of Easter should be changed to not offend other religions, which is funny because Easter is the pagan name. So far very little about the Christian message of Easter with the exception of the Pope doing his easter services.

Let's be realistic, we are in the minority. Even bumper crowds to **Good Friday services only reach about 4.7% of the population.** I think we can honestly say, Easter as a Christian festival is just not contemplated by the mainstream of our country. And part of the reason is: They doubt it happened.

This is nothing new, look at our bible reading. It's about Thomas, and he was one of Jesus disciples and HE doubted. Let me say this at the outset. It is ok to doubt, but at some stage we need to do as Jesus told Thomas : **Stop doubting and believe.**

Let's look at Thomas and his doubting.

### **John 20:24 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came.

V24 – Thomas wasn't with the disciples when they saw Jesus. Why? We don't know.

### **John 20:25 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

V25 – He actually states he can't accept their story. Why should this be a problem statement? How many people have you heard say **"Seeing is believing and I can't see Jesus."** I would be a rich man if I had money for every time I heard that. But it is so logical. Can't see it or experience it yourself, then it is hard to get a grip on.

But there is more here than just that. Thomas is specific. I want to see the wounds. I want to know it is Him. I want to know that the dead friend I saw on the cross is the alive one now. **I WANT PROOF.**

Again, logical. And Jesus dealt with it, but what about us? How do we deal with it? Or how do we deal with it if a friend brings all this up?

Well we have the documental proof, and the bible is as credible in its recording of events as any other ancient document actually more credible. But these days people don't see recorded history as proof. They want to see the possibilities of it being true now. And unfortunately, with modern movies and special effects anything can happen but we don't believe anything that happens on TV.

Well we can't appease this desire for 100% proof. But we can say because of the evidence the story is most probably true, because of the evidence in four gospels, and commentaries written not long afterwards and then the letters and epistles written about Jesus by Paul, Luke, John and Peter we can assume something happened. Did Jesus rise again? According to the information we have – Yes.

Is it possible – well that depends on your view of God. If you believe in a omniscipotent God, a God that can do it all – then we can believe it. If your view of God is less than that or you don't believe in God then it is impossible.

**Could your God have raised Jesus after three days dead, kicked away a four ton rock, comforted a friend, cooked fish, walked through walls, walked to Emmaus explaining things to some disciples then rise into the air as He said goodbye.**

It is all amazing and to believe it we have to have a big view of God. It is more logical to not believe it.

But we do. Otherwise we wouldn't gather today like this. To us as Christians we believe it happened, we believe Jesus is God and we believe what he has done and said is valid for us today. We dearly want others to see it our way and we try to explain it. But they don't see it.

#### **John 20:26 (ESV)**

<sup>26</sup> Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

V26 - Jesus walks into as locked room with out opening the door. Says Peace be with you. I'm not sure my mind would be a peace if that happened. I mean it is not normal.

#### **John 20:27 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."

V27 Jesus instantly deals with Thomas's statements. (Remember Jesus wasn't their when Thomas said it!!) Feel my hand, my side see it's me. (Now here is something interesting. If Jesus rose from

the dead why did he still have to have scars, why didn't He get fixed up perfect? – That takes some thinking about – maybe that's why we have Easter Monday – to keep thinking about it!!)

Then Jesus makes a huge statement – Stop doubting and believe.

For Thomas it is earth shattering. But what about for us? Is there things in this whole Christian life experience we need to stop doubting about. Maybe it is God's caring for us, maybe it is doubting God's listening to our prayers, Maybe it is doubting God's guidance. Stop it. Believe.

### **John 20:28 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

V28 Thomas' reaction is probably all he could do and say. – My Lord and my God. Recognition of who Jesus is. We need to be recognising who Jesus is in our life. We often call Jesus friend, saviour and a bucket load of other titles but these two are significant. Lord and God. Lord indicates a position of authority. Does Jesus have authority over your life and God well, this indicates Jesus completeness and right to be worshipped. Do we worship Jesus?

What is our reaction to Easter? My Lord and God? That's the right response.

### **John 20:29 (ESV)**

<sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

V29 – This verse is so powerful in its message to us. Thomas saw him. We don't and we are blessed because we believe. So it is possible to believe and not see. Yes, in other words those who skeptically palm off the easter story CAN have it explained to them.

### **John 20:30-31 (ESV)**

<sup>30</sup> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;

<sup>31</sup> but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

V30 – **These are written so you may believe.** The stories are there for us to understand and gain the knowledge we need to place out trust in Jesus. Easter is a story to be told, and retold, and retold.