

## **Jn. 20:30-31 (LD 7, Q/A 22-23) “That You May Believe”**

**For the Children:** Imagine that I said to you that I was going to give you \$100 next week. But you didn't trust me. You replied, "I want to see the money right now! I want you to sign a note guaranteeing that you're going to pay up like you said!" I'd be disappointed. It would show how much you distrusted me. Jesus assured His disciples that He had divine power, that He would rise from the dead. Some of them, like Thomas, wouldn't accept His Word. They wanted proof they could see. But God let the disciples see Jesus' power with their own eyes – His miracles, His resurrection – so they could write about it in the Bible. Then others could have the best kind of faith – the kind that believes and trusts God's Word, simply because it is the Word of God. **Questions:** Why is it important to believe that the whole Bible is God's Word? Why is it important to believe God's promises about the Lord Jesus? What is promised for those who do believe in the Lord Jesus?

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### **Introduction:**

#### **First Point: The Nature of Faith**

- 1) **Accepting the Signs:** The definition of faith given in Q/A 21 is not the only thing that can be said about faith. For example, Heb. 11:1 speaks about the assurance and conviction of "things not seen." Jn. 20 speaks of believing Jesus' "signs" – or believing the account of them in the Word. These "signs" point to God, to Jesus' Person, works and Kingdom. The Lord performed these signs so that those disciples who were weak, like Thomas, could have their faith strengthened; and so that the disciples could become witnesses to these things and record some of them in the Scriptures.
- 2) **Believing without Seeing:** A higher level of trust is displayed when one simply accepts the record of God's Word, because it is recognized as His Word, than when one has to see the miracles before believing. Too many people fall for the "seeing is believing" philosophy.

#### **Second Point: The Object of Faith**

- 1) **The Word-in-General:** The object of faith in view in Q/A 21 is the Word of God in general – believing that "Everything God reveals in His Word is true." See Jn. 17:17, Ps. 119:151. This doesn't mean that we know everything in God's Word, but that we accept it entirely as God's Word and therefore fully authoritative. If we did not do so, we would be setting ourselves up as judges over God's Word, and we could no longer be certain of any of it.
- 2) **The Gospel in Particular:** In Q/A 22, the focus is on God's promises/the Gospel in particular as the object of faith – the Christian must believe "Everything God *promises* us in the *Gospel*." It is not enough to know that the Bible is God's Word; we must also know the Lord Jesus Christ, His Person and works. John wrote what he did "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (v. 31).
- 3) **The Apostolic Faith:** To understand rightly what it means that Jesus is Christ and Son of God, we need to know much more doctrine: His relationship with the Father and the Spirit, His works, the application of His works by the Holy Spirit. These are truths summed up in the Apostles' Creed – a summary of the Apostolic faith. The Heidelberg even enlarges on the Creed, to ensure we have a Biblical understanding of all these doctrines. It is all part of the "Gospel." We must reject the "No Creed but Christ" philosophy.

#### **Third Point: The Gracious Reward of Faith**

- 1) **The Promise of Life:** To understand the gracious rewards promised to those who have faith, we also need to study the whole counsel of God. Then we discover that the "life" promised in v.31 is spiritual and everlasting.
- 2) **In His Name:** That life is "in His Name" – won for us by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was God as well as perfect man. It is not earned by us, it is by grace. There is life in no other Name.
- 3) **By Means of Faith:** We only receive this life from Christ by entering into union with Him – by means of faith, by "believing" (v. 31). This is what John wants for his readers, and the reason the Holy Spirit inspired these words.

### **Conclusion:**