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Is it OK to doubt and ask questions?



Have you ever noticed a few words in the Matthew's gospel at the very end? We know Matthew's gospel chapter 28 because it is called the great commission where Jesus Christ tells all Christians to:

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

They are indeed great words and great affirmation to us that we should teach all Christians to obey everything that Jesus Christ has commanded His followers and that our Lord Jesus Christ will be with us always, to the end of the age.

But let us notice as well words just before that:

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples....

To be a Christian means that we believe in Jesus Christ and so that is what the word "CHRISTian" means. So any Christian needs to see what Jesus Christ says at verse 19 onwards.



Do you see the bit where in Matthew's gospel it says in verse 17:
When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted.

Words speaking against Heresy are strong in the Bible, and particularly in the New Testament, but even some (but not all) of the remaining 11 disciples both worshipped and doubted.

So it is OK to ask questions and seek growth in our faith. This is not the same as heresy. We live in a time when the mainstream media only understands anything about the Christian faith in small bite-size chunks and so even those bits are very often wrong! We also live in a world where too many of those who should know better are worshipping secular ideas instead of what Jesus Christ has told us, yet this contradicts the word of the gospel itself. Matthew's gospel. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. What is NOT said at all is that some worshipped the secular world and doubted, it says instead that they worshipped Jesus Christ but some doubted.

In Genesis chapter 3 at verse 1, right at the beginning of the Bible, it is the serpent that misleads humankind. The verse tells us:

³Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

We have to beware of the temptation said to others, one that has been even said to ourselves, and sometimes even thought by ourselves: *"Did God really say..."*

We must be positive and resist trying to reinterpret what God says just to avoid all the bits of Scripture we don't like! We should not be distracted by the Spirit of the Age but listening to the Holy Spirit instead.

Now those words and that thought *"Did God really say..."*, is all too often the start of heresy and of avoiding Jesus Christ's command to us at Matthew chapter 28 verse 20: *"...teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you."* This is not a command we should avoid but one that encourages us to learn and explore more about faith, and in God and Jesus Christ's words for us.

Perhaps we should simply remember just how recent the events of the crucifixion had been to all those disciples, in which Jesus had been killed on a cross, and although they had encountered the risen Jesus Christ briefly since then, you cannot understate how confusing it is for anyone to encounter a person risen from the dead. Perhaps the disciples could easily be a little confused and so the Gospel tells us that some doubted and yet they also worshipped Him.

The actual meaning of the resurrection probably was out of their reach at that moment. How could it not be when the unbelievable is first encountered?

Some years after the event we are given a serious and detailed analysis of what the resurrection of Jesus Christ actually means for all of us in St Paul's letters. Many of those letters discuss the meaning and significance of the resurrection but perhaps the most organised argument and discussion of the meaning of it all is to be found in St Paul's letter to the Romans.

Even if you only have a moment then Romans chapter 8 is a great part of the letter to the Romans in the New Testament and it is well worth a read. Romans gives an extensive account of the meaning to, and the importance of, the resurrection and it is written after the events described in Matthew 28.

We might never actually know what it is they were doubting yet we are clearly told that in spite of any doubts amongst the 11 disciples, they all worshipped Jesus Christ and, were commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ, to teach all Christians to obey everything that Jesus Christ has commanded His followers and that our Lord Jesus Christ will be with us always, to the end of the age.

So the teaching remains:

²⁰ *....and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

Matthew 28 verse 20.

So what Jesus Christ commanded should be obeyed.

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