

Law & Order, IV

Open Minds

April 17, 2016

Welcome to where we're learning to open our hearts to the One who can open our minds!



We're taking the outspoken atheists' "Empty Tomb Challenge", and we're weaving the Gospel stories together like overlapping news reports. Last week we hit the road to Emmaus, where ...

Jesus appeared in a **different form** [*morphē: external appearance*] to two of them. – Mark 16:12 NIV

How? To answer *that*, answer *this*: **What's the only manmade thing in Heaven? Jesus' scars.**



[Isaiah writes] I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard ... his appearance was so disfigured ... his form marred beyond human likeness ... – Isaiah 50:6; 52:14 NIV



Like burns on the face of a fireman who saves your life, **his changed form defies beauty and defines heroic glory!** A *theme* of Revelation.

[John writes] Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne ... – Revelation 5:6 NIV

When the Emmaus couple arrived at home, they invited Jesus in as a dinner guest; but, *He* took the bread and began to serve *them*.



Then their eyes were opened [*when they saw His hands*] and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight [*after saying, "I did appear to Peter!"*]. ... *These returned at once to Jerusalem. and reported it to the rest; ... "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread. but they did not believe them either.* – Mark 16:13; Luke 24:31-35 NIV

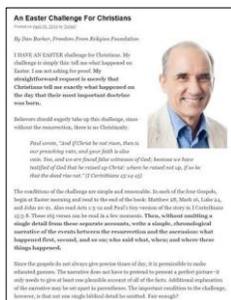
I have a contradiction the *atheists* have missed. They should put this one on their *list*: Were the disciples "**overjoyed when they saw the Lord,**" (John 20:20) or, "**startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost**"? (Luke 24:37) To which I say: *which disciples?* "Group A" or "Group B"?

Mary Magdalene who embraced Jesus, and Jesus' mother, who held His feet, were filled with joy (Mat 28:8), and the Emmaus couple whose hearts were ignited (Luke 24:32), would've been *ecstatic to see Him!* "See?! See?! See?!"

Those in *Group B* (the women who hadn't seen His changed form, and those who stubbornly refused to believe) had *good reason* to be afraid. *Peter probably being a mix of both groups.*

Let's read **Mark 16:14** in (BLUE), **Luke 24:36-48** in (GREEN), and **John 20:19-20** in (BROWN). No verse is left out or out of order.

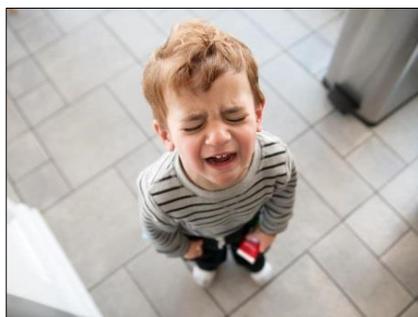
Later On the evening of that first day of the week, [Sunday] when the disciples were together, Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; [a fish dinner] While they were still talking about this, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, [still believing they're being set up] Jesus [Jesus] himself came and stood among them [stood among them] and said [and said,] to them, "Peace be with you." ["Peace be with you!"] They [in Group B] were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost [because, He was "beyond human likeness," and, that door was still locked!]. After he said this, he rebuked them [in Group B] for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those [in Group A] who had seen him after he had risen.



What's it mean to have an open mind? Many of you have asked if I'm going to send any of this to Dan Barker, the most outspoken atheist on the Empty Tomb Challenge. No. **Dan doesn't have an open mind.** Quoting Thomas Paine, Dan writes: "I lay it down as a position which cannot be controverted," [i.e. **refuted or challenged**] he wrote, "first, that **the agreement of all the parts of a story does not prove that story to be true**, because the parts may agree and the whole may be false; secondly, that **the disagreement of the parts of a story proves the whole cannot be true.**"

Funny, how that works out in favor of *Dan's* agenda: contradiction proves scripture false; but, perfect harmony only proves they conspired. **Dan is a cheater. Cheating himself and others into thinking he has an open mind while rigging the challenge so it can't be won.**

... men who **suppress the truth** by their **wickedness** [*adikia: unjustness; one-sidedness; prejudice*] ... are **without excuse** [*anapologētos: defense*] ... their thinking became **futile** [*mataioō: empty; vain*] and their foolish hearts were **darkened**. [*skotizō: deprived; veiled*]
Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ... – Romans 1:18-22 NIV



Dan isn't seeking truth; he's suppressing it. He has a closed mind due to a dangerously darkened, self-indulgent heart. **Unlike agnosticism, with its lazy pseudo-logic** that says: "nobody can know anything, so, just, whatever," **atheism is an emotion-based philosophy, an irrational expression of hatred toward a supposedly nonexistent God.**

Atheism is a type of tantrum; it's a fit of anger that actually acknowledges a parent's authority by rebelling against it.

But to the **wicked**, [*rasha: hostile to God*] God says: "What right have you to recite my laws or take my covenant on your lips? You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you." – Psalm 50:16-17 NIV

Dan wants the truth on *his* terms, which means: **he's only willing to go where the truth leads if it leads to where *he* wants to go.** Which group are *you* in? **Do you seek truth on *your* terms or *His*?** Do you come to church, read the Bible, or pray, with certain doors locked, certain decisions made, stubbornly refusing to trust Him? The Good News is: **sometimes Jesus just ignores locked doors and busts in ... if there's a chance of reception on the inside.**

He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?"

Well, in their *defense*, this is *fairly unprecedented*. However, in their *prosecution*, just three nights earlier, after the Last Supper, on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said:



"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but *you* will see me. ... All this I have spoken while still with you. ... my peace I give you. ... **Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.** You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' ... I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe." – John 14:18-29 NIV



For *us*, Jesus' resurrection is a *celebration!*

For Him, **it's a day of troubled hearts, stubborn distrust and fear, abandoned plans, and locked doors ... you know:** the regular reality of dealing with our short-sightedness, faithlessness, and lost opportunities. *Got'a love us!*

Do you see a pattern here? **First they refuse to go to Him, in Galilee. Now they refuse to believe He's coming to them in Jerusalem.** Wow. Welcome back, Jesus.

[Because His changed form carries the scars of our salvation, He has to *prove* that it's actually Him – they won't even believe Jesus!] Look at my hands and my feet. **It is I myself!** [Then, He has to *prove* that He's actually there] **Touch** [*psēlaphaō*: handle] me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." [You can't "handle" the Truth if you refuse to accept the *possibility* that Jesus is really Jesus] When he had said this, [he showed them his hands] he showed them his [severely scarred] **hands** [Just as the Emmaus couple had described!] and **feet**. [Just as the two Marys had described! (Mat 28:9)] and **side**. [Just as Mary Magdalene likely described after seeing Him in the garden, minus His grave clothes (John 20:6,7,15)] The disciples [in Group A] were overjoyed when they saw the Lord [confirming everything they'd been describing]. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.

"They still did not believe (trust) because of joy and amazement".

Nobody can. **Faith, belief, and trust must be based on more than emotion.** No matter how *joyful* the joy or *amazed* the amazement. **If you receive Jesus out of emotion, you'll reject Him out of emotion.** Unless, you open your heart, so He can open your mind.

He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” [And the Emmaus couple might’ve said, “Tell ‘em what’cha told us! He tells it so much better.”] Then [since joy and amazement can only get you so far in your faith] he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

What’s it mean to have an open mind? It means to have an *opened* mind, which is something *only Jesus* can do ... because, Jesus *actually* has a monopoly on truth. **We can’t open our minds to anything but vanity, deception, fear, and doubt. But, we can renew our minds with truth, on His terms, if we surrender our heart and follow *wherever* truth leads.**

He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

Why would Jesus *skip* the dinner in Emmaus, and *crash* the dinner in Jerusalem? **Why does Jesus eat their fish?** To show ‘em He’s not a ghost? No. That’s why He had ‘em *touch* Him. **The significance of the fish isn’t in the eating; it’s in the *servicing*.** He had specifically warned ‘em regarding this very evening.

“Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks [with words of truth (Rev 3:20) spoken to those He sent ahead] they can immediately open the door for him. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night. ... because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” Peter asked, “Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?” [“Cause, you’re staring so intently at us that it’s freaking us out.”] – Luke 12:35-41 NIV

He didn’t eat in Emmaus because He had another dinner ... *to host*. **But, when “Jesus himself came” they’d eaten without Him; doors locked; backs turned; arguing with all those who’d been sent to try and knock some sense into ‘em, and prepare ‘em. So ...**

... he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.

Welcome back, Jesus. *Got’a love us!* **You can be a witness of everything Jesus has done; but, if your heart isn’t unlocked and wide open, surrendered to His terms, you will *cheat yourself out of being served by Jesus Himself*.**

How many dinners do we miss, simply by not opening up? Now, on His *third* appearance, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, they’re waiting and watching. Peter jumps in and swims to Him.

And Jesus says, “I’ve cooked us a fish and bread breakfast; come and eat!”