

BEYOND THE SHADOW OF A DOUBT

**4 Week Study on
Overcoming Our Doubts
Through Christ**

Beyond the Shadow of a Doubt—Study Guide

This study follows a Bible study method called O.I.A. It is a simple method which guides the reader to observe, interpret, and apply.

Observation: What do I see?

- Look for key words, similarities and differences, cause and effect, unique phrases.
- Ask questions like who, what, when, where, why, and how.

Interpretation: What does this mean?

- Establish the author's intended meaning.
- Look up and define key words or phrases that you don't understand.
- Cross-reference other Bible verses to help you shed further light.
- Write out the big idea of the passage.

Application: How does it apply to my life?

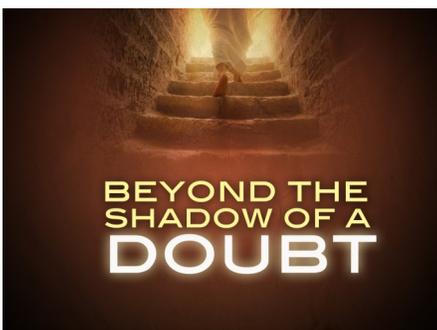
- Points of impact: personal, family, church, job, school, community, world.
- Questions: Is there a promise to hold? Command to obey? Sin to avoid? Example to follow? Warning to heed? Prayer to lift up? Problem to solve? What changes do I need to make in my beliefs, attitude, and behavior?

Outline for Study

Week 1: 3/18 – 3/24	What We Don't Understand	Luke 18:31-34
Week 2: 3/25 – 3/31	So Close and So Far	John 11:45-57
Week 3: 4/1 – 4/7	If You Only Knew	Luke 19:28-44
Week 4: 4/8 – 4/14	Doubters Are Welcome	John 20:19-31

It is my prayer that as you complete this study guide, you will see that we have a big God who can help us overcome our doubts.

Tom Harland, Family Pastor Intern



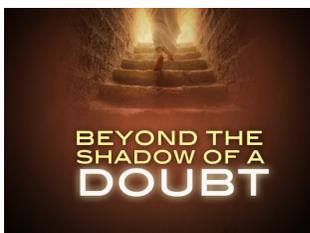
Week One: What We Don't Understand / Luke 18:31–34

Observe:

- Read Luke 18:31-34.
- Context: When studying the Bible, it is always important to keep things in context. Noticing what the author (in this case, Luke) includes before and after the passage can give you great insight.
- Read all of Chapter 18.
 - When you read the stories before and after Jesus telling the disciples about His future death and resurrection, do you notice a basic theme or themes? What do they all have in common?
- Read Psalm 22. What words or phrases are used in Psalm 22 that relate to what Jesus said in Luke 18:31-34 about how the Son of Man would be mocked, insulted, spit upon, flogged, and killed?
- Read Luke 9:22 and compare it to Luke 18:31-34. Are there any clues as to when these two almost identical events occurred?

Interpret:

- Why do you think the disciples did not understand?
- Assuming the disciples were familiar with Psalm 22, do you think they would have seen it as prophesy? Why or why not?
- After Christ's death and resurrection, do you think they would have seen it as fulfilled prophesy of Psalm 22?
- Why do you think Luke included this passage in the midst of all the other events and parables in Chapter 18?
- Read Luke 19:11. What clue might this give about why the disciples did not understand what Jesus was referring to in 18:31-34?



Apply:

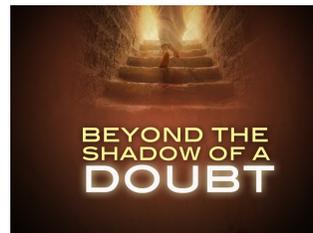
- Do you think you are expected to understand everything about God's plans?
- What are some areas in your life right now in which it seems you have no control and you have no clue what will happen?
- How can/should you respond to things you don't understand about God's plans?
- Describe a time when you questioned events in your life and how they fit into God's plan, but now you see a glimpse of how God was working.

Responding in Prayer:

Praise God for his amazing plan to rescue sinners. Confess some of the things that have happened or fears about the future that you don't fully understand. Thank him for his faithfulness. Lift up the needs of others who need to see his faithfulness.

A Verse to Memorize:

*Show me your ways, LORD,
teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long. (Psalm 25:4-5)*



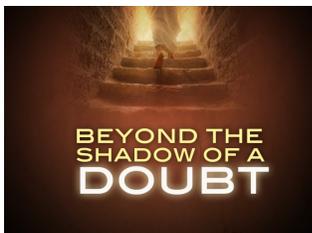
Week Two: So Close and So Far / John 11:45–57

Observe:

- John 11:45 begins with the word, “therefore.” “Therefore, many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary...” Look at the passage right before this. To what is the “therefore” referring?
- Read 11:47-48. About what were the chief priests and Pharisees specifically worried?
 - Does it seem like they acknowledged the fact that Jesus had possibly raised someone from the dead?
- Read 11:51-52
 - What was Caiaphas’ prophesy?
- What action did Jesus take when He found out about the Sanhedrin’s scheming?
- There were two groups of people looking for Jesus at the last Passover celebration. Who were they?

Interpret:

- Why do you think some people went to the Pharisees after Jesus raised Lazarus?
- What would have been Caiaphas’ understanding of his own prophesy? What did God really mean by Caiaphas’ prophesy?
- Read 2 Chronicles 30:17. Compare Caiaphas’ prophesy and the sacrifice of the Passover lamb.
- List the concerns of the religious leaders (both in the text and ones that may not be explicitly listed here).



Apply:

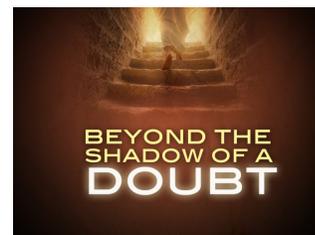
- If you can remember your years before you became a Christian, describe a time when you know you heard the gospel message, but interpreted it in a different way or rejected it outright.
- The Sanhedrin allowed their political beliefs about what should happen blind them to the coming of God's chosen Messiah. Have you ever allowed political or personal beliefs to get in the way of the gospel?
- In what ways are you most likely to misunderstand who Jesus is?
- In what ways are you most likely to try to make Him fit inside your box?

Responding in Prayer:

Praise God for His plan to save His people through His Son. Confess any personal or political beliefs that you have allowed to get in the way of the gospel. Thank God for his willingness to forgive. Ask that people who don't know Christ see an "unfiltered" version of the gospel.

A Verse to Memorize:

For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.
(Hebrews 9:15)



Week Three: If You Only Knew / Luke 19:28–44

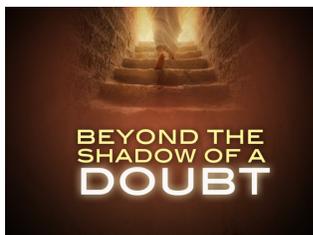
Observe:

Read through Luke 19:28-44; then go back and answer these questions:

- In verses 29-31, what task does Jesus give two of His disciples? What possible problems might they encounter doing that task?
- In verses 35-38, take the time to envision and describe the scene. What do you see? Hear? Feel?
- In verses 37-39, put yourself in the Pharisees' sandals. What might they have been thinking?
- What would happen if Jesus' followers were silenced?
- What was Jesus' reaction to the unbelief of Jerusalem?
- In verse 42, what would have been the result of recognizing who Jesus was?
- In verses 43-44, summarize the consequence for Jerusalem for not believing in Jesus that is described here.

Interpret:

- Read 2 Kings 9:13. List the similarities between the triumphal entry of a King in Israel (King Jehu) and the entry of Jesus.
- Read Psalm 118:26.
- Read Matthew 21:1-11 for a different account of this passage.
- Read Zechariah 9:9-13. What were the people expecting Jesus to do when He reached Jerusalem? How does this help explain His actions and emotions in verses 41-44? With this prophesy, has verse 9 been fulfilled? Has verse 10 been fulfilled?
- Why do you think verses 41-44 are not always included when retelling the "Palm Sunday" story of Jesus' triumphal entry?
- Summarize this passage in 2-3 sentences.
- What do you think is the big idea of this passage?



Apply:

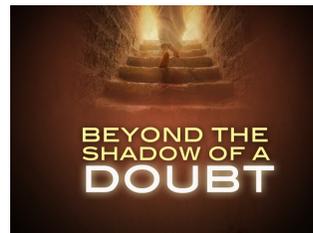
- For what person or group of people do you “weep?”
- In what ways are your expectations of God sometimes different from the reality of scripture?
- How should Jesus’ reaction to those who failed to see who He was direct us in our interactions with those who don’t believe or have false ideas about Jesus?
- In what ways do you recognize that Jesus is king and ruler of your life?
- In what ways might you be holding back from recognizing Him as king?

Responding in Prayer:

Praise God for being the righteous king. Confess any areas of your life in which you try to be king. Thank Him for the goodness of His kingdom. Ask that His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

A Verse to Memorize:

Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest! (Luke 19:38)



Week Four: Doubters Are Welcome / John 20:19–31

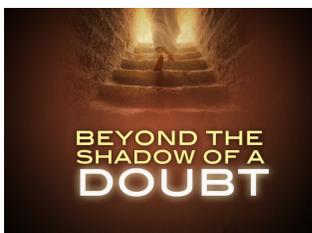
Observe:

Read John 20:19-31; then answer the following questions.

- In verse 19, what time of day was it? Why were the doors locked?
- In verse 20, what was the first thing Jesus did when He appeared to His disciples? Take a moment to reflect on what this moment might have been like for the disciples.
- How many times does Jesus say, “Peace be with you” in this passage?
- In verse 21, Jesus says “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” What immediately follows this statement? How are the two related?
- In verses 24-29, why did Thomas first doubt? What was Jesus’ original reaction? Did Jesus tell Thomas that he should never have doubted? What did He tell Thomas once He showed him proof? Once Thomas believed, what did Jesus tell him?
- In verses 30-31, what did John write about all of Jesus’ miracles?

Interpret:

- Read through the passage again. Why do you think Jesus says “Peace be with you” three times?
- Why were the disciples afraid of the Jews?
- Reflect on verse 21. What was Jesus sent by the Father to do? What does this mean for His followers? How have His followers been enabled to do this?
- Do you think Thomas deserves the nickname “Doubting Thomas”? Why or why not?
- Do you think Jesus expected His followers to blindly believe He had been resurrected without evidence? Why or why not?



Apply:

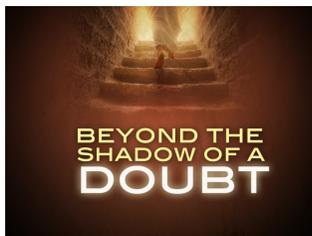
- Did you require some amount of evidence before believing the gospel? If so, what convinced you?
- Where could you use Jesus' "peace" right now?
- What should our response be to those who doubt that Jesus is the Son of God? Relate this to 1 Peter 3:15.
- When you have doubts or have had doubts in the past, what have you found helpful?
- Do you think God expects us to doubt from time to time? Is He OK with occasional doubts? Why or why not?

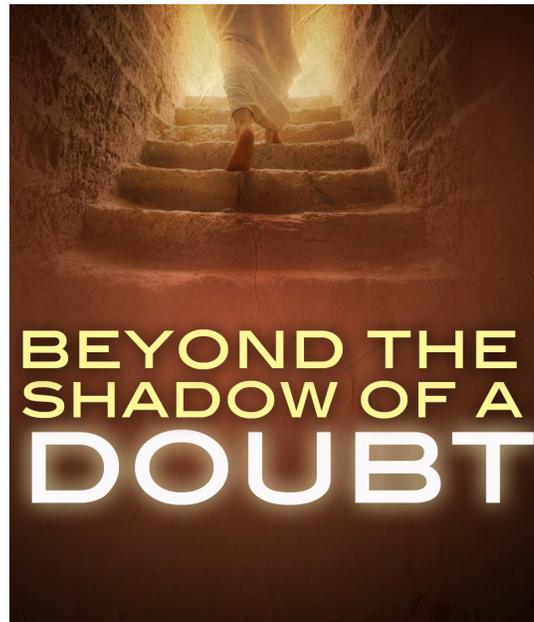
Responding in Prayer:

Praise God for what we have because of the death and resurrection of His Son. Confess any doubts you have and ask Him to help you overcome your doubts. Ask Him to reveal Himself to specific nonbelievers that you know.

A Verse to Memorize:

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 21:31)





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