

Seeing with discernment?

John 16:17,18 The disciples were asking each other about what Jesus meant when He said:

1. *“... you will see me no more, and then ... you will see me.”*
2. *“Because I am going to the Father.”*
3. *“a little while”*

Even though they spent so much time with Jesus, they were noted for missing many things. I wonder if Jesus allowed their misunderstanding so that He might prove himself as the Son of God by reading their thoughts?

Previously, Jesus had made an astounding remark back in John 2: 19. *“Destroy this temple, and I will raise it in three days.”* Jesus had just cleared the temple of money changers. Afterward, He was asked to prove His authority for doing so. We just read His response. In 7:36, Jesus states to the Pharisees, *“You will look for me, but you will not find me, and Where I am, you cannot come.”* Chapter 8:21-23, Jesus repeats these words again in the temple area. In 12: 23-28, Jesus speaks of His leaving by an illustration. *“...unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”* In vs. 32,33 *“But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself. He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.”* In vs. 35, *“You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you.”* In 13:33 Jesus states, *“My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews”* (vs.7:36;8:21-23), *“so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.”* 14:2b, *“I am going there to prepare a place for you.”*

Now notice 14:18 – 20; *“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. Because I live, You also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”*

Something was going to change.

What the disciples did not realize was that Jesus was about to go to His death. Jesus predicted His death many times over, as we have just read. On at least two occasions, the Pharisees, teachers of the law and Sadducees asked Jesus for a sign of who He was. He told them that they would only receive the sign of Jonah. (Matt. 12:39ff; 16:1-4) That sign would be that Jesus would be in the belly of the earth for 3 days and 3 nights, just as Jonah had spent the same amount of time in the belly of the fish. Yet, Jesus promised that they would see and believe. The day would come when the disciple’s questions would be answered. All the His teaching would be made clear. The disciples would finally understand and see Jesus as Lord, the Son of God, one with the Father.

In John chapter 20, Jesus keeps His promise. Running to the tomb, were Peter and John. John arrived first. He looked in and saw the burial clothes by themselves but did not go in. Peter arrived and entered into the tomb. He sees the burial clothes. He notices the head cloth separate and folded. Vs. 8 reads, *“Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed.”*

WOW!!!

John uses one word to describe Peter seeing the clothes. John changes to a different word when referring to his own sight. What was the difference? John saw with discernment. Peter simply saw with his eyes. Verse 9 states how the rest of the disciples still did not understand from the Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.

After Jesus showed himself, his hands and side, the disciples rejoiced when they ‘saw’ the Lord. This is now the same word used when John saw and believed. Jesus fulfills His promise that they would see and believe. What was the overwhelming result of this ‘sight’? They knew that Jesus had raised from the dead. They now had a matured sense of spiritual well being. This is joy! We too can have this kind of joy when we see (know with both certainty and understanding - from Scripture) that Jesus is alive having been raised from the dead!

In verse 25b, Thomas said that he would not believe unless he ‘saw’ (with understanding) the nail marks.... A week later, Jesus showed Thomas His hands and side. Jesus told him to ‘see’. It was time for Thomas to stop doubting and to believe. Verse 29: Jesus speaks, *“because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”* Here Jesus uses a play on words regarding those who have not seen and yet believe. He uses the same word we understood as seeing with discernment or understanding. In other words, blessed are those who have not seen with their eyes but see with discernment from Scripture instead.

This speaks of all those who would come after that time. It speaks to us today. Blessed are you and I having not seen with our eyes but see with discernment based upon Scripture. We are blessed, because we can participate in Christ with the disciples. We too, have the many promises that come from being in Christ. We can have joy (a matured sense of spiritual well being). We can have peace (no conflict with God). We have been forgiven of our sins, and we continue to have our sins forgiven. We have the promise of His Holy Spirit within us making us anew each day. We too, have the promise of eternal life.

How clear is your spiritual sight. Do you see clearly? Do you see with discernment? Or, are you waiting to see the nail prints in Jesus’ hands and feet? Blessed are those who do not have to see His physical body, and yet believe!