Looking at the Scars of Jesus

According to the Scriptures, when Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to the apostles, they were “startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit” (Lk 24:37). He calmed their fears and answered their doubts by showing them His hands, His feet and His side (Lk 24:39-40; Jn 20:20).

On His hands and feet the apostles saw where the soldiers had driven the nails to crucify Him. On His side they saw where the soldier’s spear had pierced His flesh (Jn 20:34). These places that once gushed with blood were now healed. Where there once were wounds, now there were scars.

Thomas was not present when Jesus first appeared to the apostles and did not believe what they told him about seeing Jesus alive. He was emphatic that unless he saw and touched the scars of Jesus he would not believe. Once Thomas saw and touched Jesus’ scars, he quickly affirmed His identity, “My Lord and my God!” (Jn 20:24-28).

A look at the scars of Jesus was convincing. The apostles concluded that they were looking at none other than Jesus, their Master, who had been crucified, and that He had returned from the grave.

After Thomas identified Jesus from His scars, Jesus responded, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed” (Jn 20:29). We have not witnessed Jesus’ scars, yet John said that we can and should become believers based on the testimony of those who saw the scars (Jn 20:30-31). But why should we believe them? Please read on as we explore the reasons…
Christians base their faith on what the apostles saw almost 2,000 years ago. Is this reasonable? Why should anyone accept that they saw His scars- that their message is true- that He not only rose from the dead, but is enthroned in heaven as Lord of all?

1) The only alternative story to Jesus’ resurrection is not believable. According to the Bible the Jewish leaders spread the story that Jesus’ disciples stole His body while the guards were asleep. Justin Martyr, in A.D. 150, wrote that they were still circulating this story. But, does it make sense?

If the guards were asleep, how would they know who stole the body? How would the disciples roll the large stone (Mt 27:6) away without waking the guards? The disciples did not understand and expect the resurrection (Jn 20:9) so why would they try to fake it? Even if the disciples had believed in the resurrection, they did not have the courage to confront the guard. After the crucifixion they shut themselves up behind closed doors for fear of the Jewish leaders. (Jn 20:19) Finally, if the disciples stole the body, why didn’t the Jewish leaders hunt it down in order to easily disprove the resurrection? We must infer that they couldn’t. That Jesus rose and the disciples saw His scars is the better explanation of the empty tomb.

2) The once timid disciples became bold and did not back down from their story. The disciples who once hid behind closed doors insisted that they could not stop speaking about what they saw and heard (Acts 4:20) and they kept right on testifying of Jesus’ resurrection despite intense persecution (Acts 5:40-42). There is no other reasonable explanation for their change in behavior- they saw Jesus’ scars!

3) A new religion had a successful beginning close to the cemetery where Jesus was buried. How could so many converts be made in Jerusalem less than two months after Jesus’ crucifixion? (Acts 2:41; 4:4)? Thousands rejected the Jewish leader’s explanation of the empty tomb to accept the more believable one- Jesus showed Himself alive to His apostles.

4) The resurrection of Jesus fulfilled prophecy. As the apostles spread their eyewitness testimony of Jesus’ resurrection, they backed their message up with prophecies from the Old Testament. For example, in the first gospel sermon, Peter quoted from Psalms 16:8-11 showing that David was not speaking about himself when he wrote, “You will not abandon My soul to Hades, nor allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.” David was still in his tomb. David looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ (Messiah). Peter said that Jesus was not in His tomb. He and the other apostles were eyewitnesses of His resurrection, an event foretold by Scripture and whose fulfillment establishes that Jesus is the Christ (cp. Acts 2:24-36).

We did not see Jesus’ scars, yet we have every reason to believe that the apostles did and that we should believe in Him through their word (Jn 17:20). Our evidence-based belief should convict us of our sins and prompt us to gladly seek the forgiveness of our sins through repentance and baptism (Acts 2:36-38, 41)…
WHEN WE LOOK AT JESUS’ SCARS

When we accept the apostles’ word and believe in Jesus’ resurrection, through the eyes of faith, we see many spiritual truths when we look at His scars. As we look where the nails were driven and the spear was thrust here are some things we observe (all beginning with H that we might be able to call them to memory:

1) **Humility of Jesus** (Heb 2:14-18). The fact that Jesus had scars illustrates that He did become like us in all things in order to help us. His life on earth enables Him to be a merciful High Priest to turn to when we sin and His death enables us to live our lives without the fear of death.

2) **Humility of Jesus** (Phil 2:5-8). Jesus’ scars show how low Jesus was willing to stoop in servitude to God on behalf of man. Before He left heaven to take on humanity, He had equality with God. He did not regard this as something to hang on to. Jesus emptied Himself or laid aside His privileges. Jesus exchanged the “form of God” for the “form of a servant”, and during the time of His appearance as a man, submitted Himself to God, to the point of death- not just any death- death on a cross!

3) **Holiness of Jesus** (1 Pet 2:21-24). Jesus’ sinlessness was often put to the test, no test greater than while He was on the cross. He was mocked, challenged and ridiculed, yet He did not return evil for evil. Jesus’ scars demonstrate His determination to stay true to God while He suffered, bearing our sins in His body on the cross.

4) **Horror of Sin** (Isa 53:4-6). How serious is sin to God? The answer is found in Jesus’ scars. Sin demands punishment. God could not simply “let man’s sins go” or He would have been unjust. God had Jesus bear our punishment for us so that He might be just and forgiving at the same time. “He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.” Those who break the laws of our society are sentenced according to how heinous their acts are considered to be, ranging from community service or a short time in a county jail one end to a lifetime in a maximum security prison or the death penalty on the other. The scars of Jesus point to a heavy sentence. While men may laugh at sin or minimize it like it is no big deal, God sees it as horrible.

5) **Heart of God** (1 Jn 4:9-10; 14, 16). When we look at the imprints on the hands, feet, and side of Jesus we come to understand the depth of the love of God. “By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.”

6) **High Value of Man** (1 Pet 1:17-21). The value of something is determined by how much someone is willing to pay for it. A car that commands a $50,000 sales price is worth much more than a car that commands a $500 sales price. How much is man worth? The scars on Jesus’ body reveal the high price tag. “Knowing you were not
redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”

7) **Hope of Heaven** (1 Pet 1:3-4). When we see the scars of Jesus we see hope- a living hope- for we see One who has conquered death and has given us the opportunity to do the same. He has the keys of death and Hades (Rev 1:18) and will unlock the realm of the dead so that the family of God may obtain an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and will not fade away.

8) **Happiness of Heaven** (Rev 21:1-4). When we look at a scar, we look at a place that has healed. We look at a place that once hurt, but now is free from pain. After His resurrection, Jesus no longer had open wounds. He no longer felt the pain of the nails. He was healed. He was pain-free. He demonstrated to us that we, too, will be able to get past the sufferings of this life when we are raised from the dead. On the other side of the resurrection, wonderful blessings await God’s people. “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will be no longer any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

May we never forget the many wonderful lessons taught to us by the scars of Jesus!

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**South Marion church of Christ**

3629 South Washington Street
Marion, IN 46953

**Schedule of Services:**

**Sunday**
Bible Study  9:30 AM
Worship    10:30 AM & 5:00 PM

**Wednesday**
Bible Study  7:00 PM

**Elders:**
David Huber  998-7134
Alan Jones   922-7602

**Deacons:**
Mike Huber   998-2520
Gary Pickering  384-4347

**Evangelist:**
Alan Jones   922-7602

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