



A Trail of Doubt, A Triumph of Faith

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L'Amable Bible Chapel

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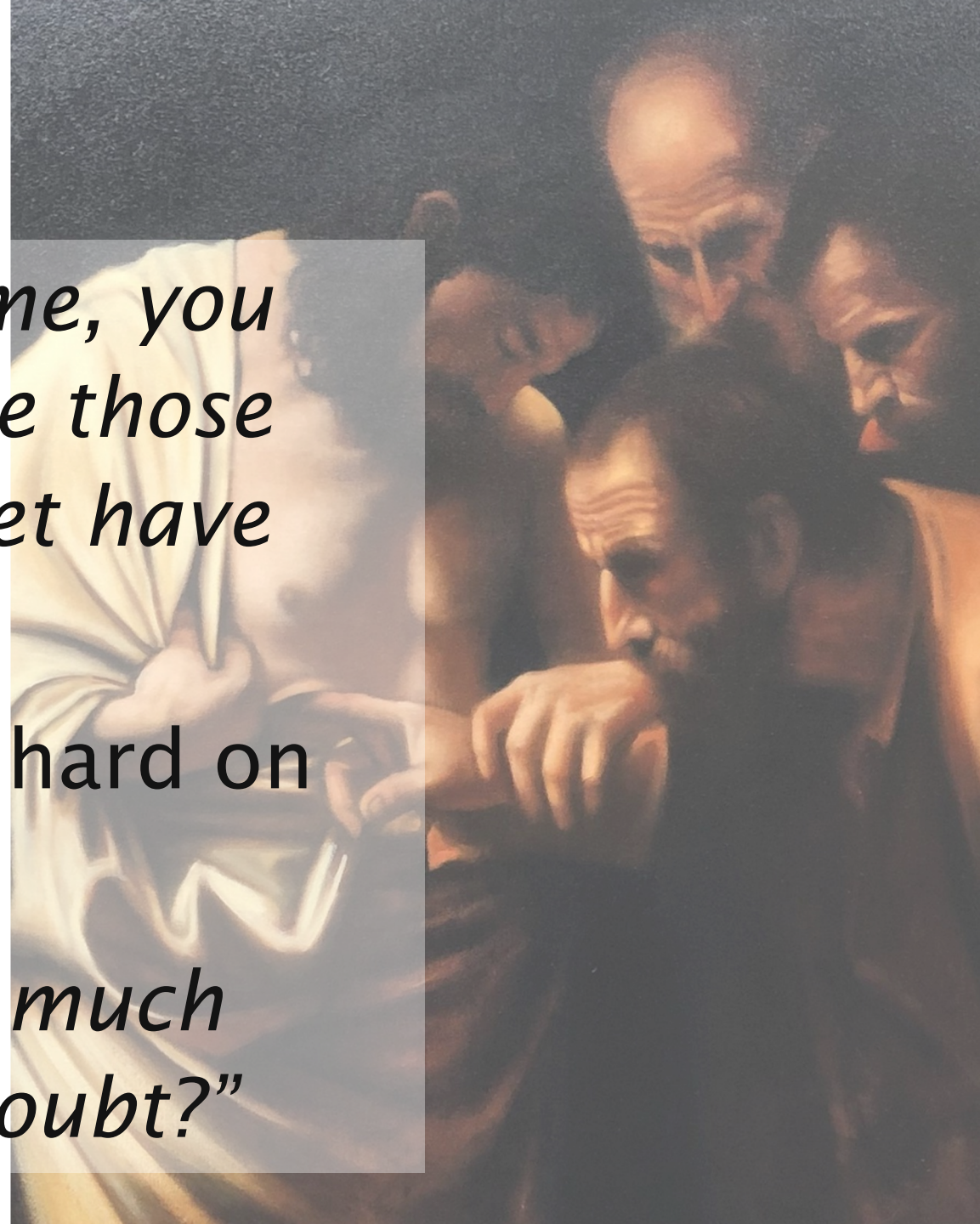
Introduction

- Community Trail
- Where does our pas



A Trail of Doubt

- *“Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”* John 20:29
- Have we been a little too hard on Thomas?
- A central question: *“How much evidence do we need to doubt?”*



Let's Consider the Doubters...

- Coming to Jerusalem, many doubted, while others believed...





1. Malicious Doubters?

- Crowds?
- Jewish leaders...
 - heard of his miracles
 - witnessed his teaching
 - recognized Scripture
 - desired and expected a Messiah!

- Roman Governor Pilate?
- Herod is impressed, but... (Luke 23)

⁵ But they [the religious leaders] insisted, “He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here.”

⁶ On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. ⁷ When he learned that Jesus was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

⁸ When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort.

⁹ He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. ¹¹ Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate.

- What if Jesus had performed a sign? Would Herod worship him?
- Would Jesus' accusers worship him?
- Would Pilate change his mind?
- It seems they were on a trail of doubt
- *“How much evidence do we need to doubt?”*

- **As well...soldiers at the cross...**

...they knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. ³⁰ They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. Matthew 27:30

- **Mockers (temple officials) at the cross...**

⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ⁴² “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.



2. Disciples before...

- Three times Jesus predicted his death, but...

³¹ Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, “We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. ³² He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; ³³ they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.”³⁴ The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.

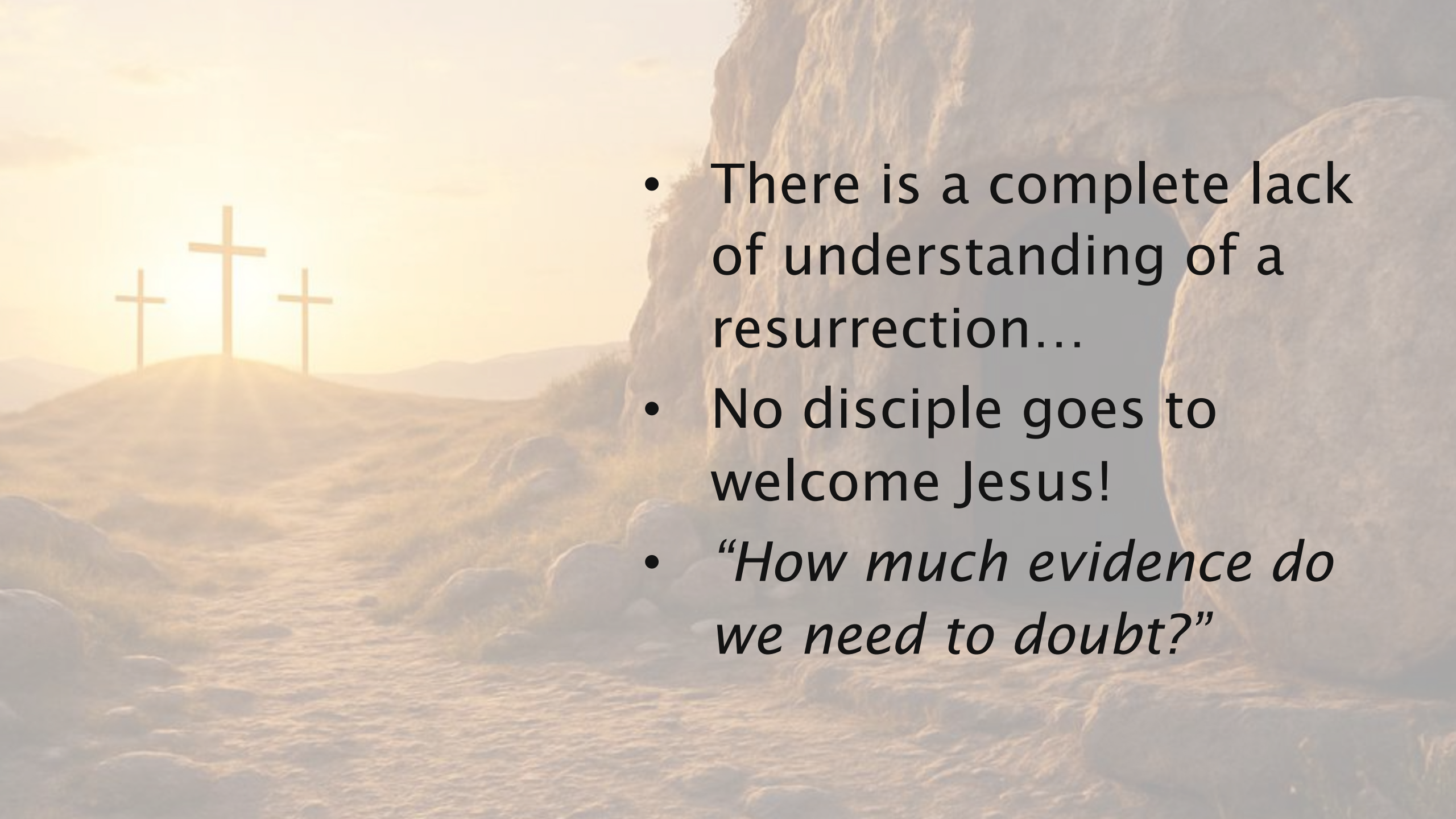
Luke 18:31-34

- Judas, Peter, both have doubts...

3. Disciples after...



- Many expressions of doubt after Jesus' resurrection...
- Both Marys go to the tomb to embalm the body
- Soldiers guard the tomb to prevent the theft of the body

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- A landscape scene featuring three crosses on a hill in the background, silhouetted against a bright sunset sky. In the foreground, a large, smooth, light-colored rock is visible on the right side. The overall atmosphere is serene and contemplative.
- There is a complete lack of understanding of a resurrection...
 - No disciple goes to welcome Jesus!
 - *“How much evidence do we need to doubt?”*

John 20: ¹Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ² So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!” ³ So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb...

- **They are not running in faith**

⁴ Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb.

He saw the strips of linen lying there,⁷ as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen.⁸ Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed.⁹ (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

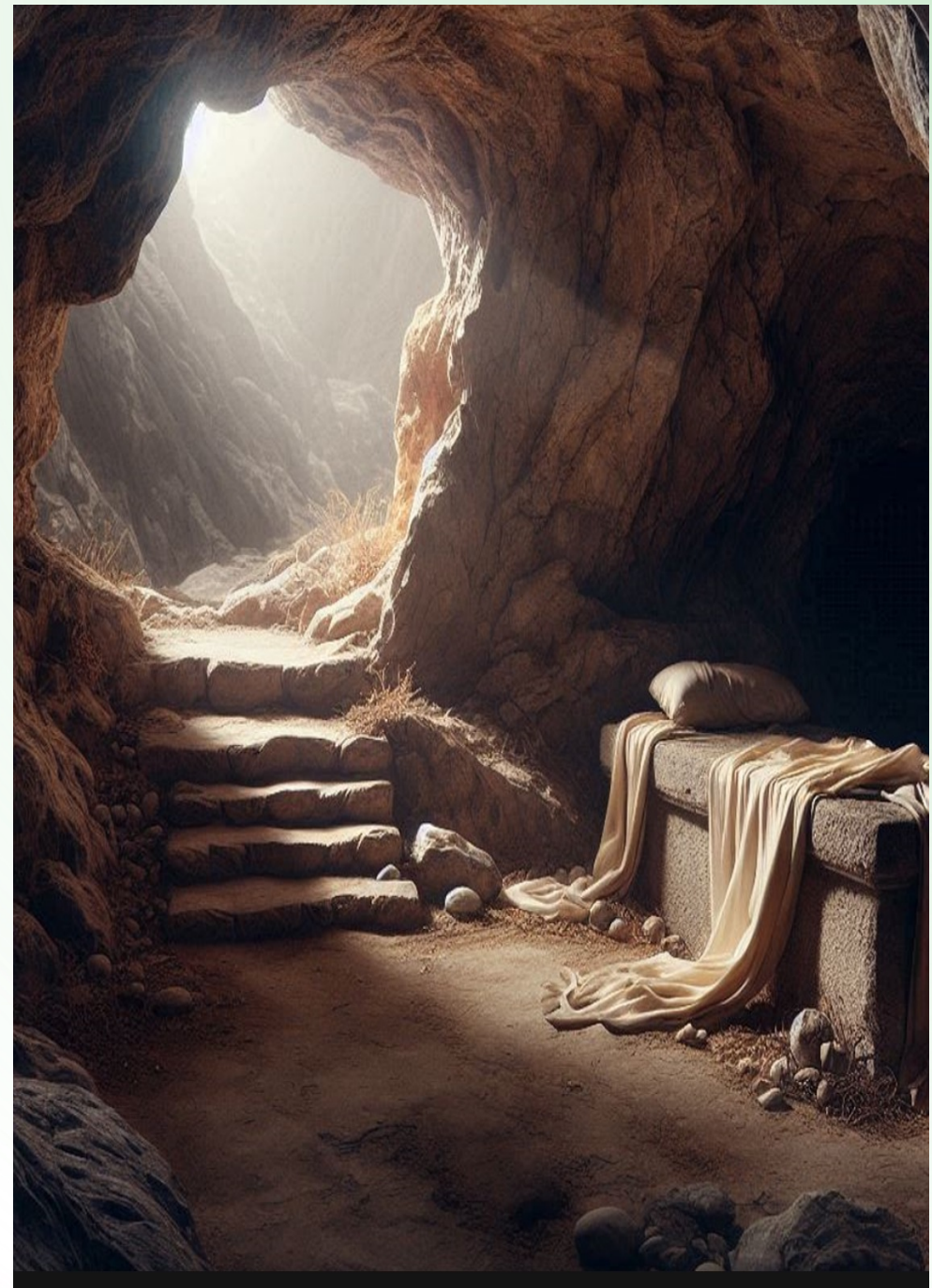
- **Luke's account:**

¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.¹¹ But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.¹² Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb.

Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened. (Luke 24:10-12)

- **Peter is perplexed, not convinced**
- **When Jesus greets Mary after this, she is still doubting...**

John 20:15 Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”



4. Disciples near Emmaus

- Context shows the disciples had already heard the testimony of the women (but doubted them)...

(John 20) ...Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her. vv.17-18.

(Luke 24) ...“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people...

(Luke 24) ²⁰ The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹ but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. ²² In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³ but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he **was alive.** ²⁴ Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”

- In spite of eyewitnesses, there is doubt!

(Luke 24) ²⁵ He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself... ³³ They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴ and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” ³⁵ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

(Note that the disciples do not believe because of the women’s testimony, but because of Simon Peter’s)

5. Jesus Appears to the Disciples

(Luke 24) ³⁶ *While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”* ³⁷ *They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost.* ³⁸ *He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?”* ³⁹ *Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”* ⁴⁰ *When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.* ⁴¹ *And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?”* ⁴² *They gave him a piece of broiled fish,* ⁴³ *and he took it and ate it in their presence.*

(Luke 24) ⁴⁴ 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.”

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

- So, doubts exist before we even get to Thomas!



John 20 explains it this way...

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Jesus Appears to Thomas

(John 20) ²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

John 20:28-29 Thomas said to him, “My Lord and **my God!**”²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, **you have believed**; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”



But these are written so that you may believe Jesus is the Messiah the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in His name

John 20:31

- A final call to faith from John...

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

- *“How much evidence do we need to doubt? Can that be a triumph of faith instead?”*

Doubt & Faith in Review...

- Clearly, several factors involved...
 - Disposition: *maliciousness* blocks faith
 - Evidence: *incomplete but helpful* (note food)
 - Presence: *Jesus' appearing is key, but...*
*“Because you have seen me, you have believed.
Blessed are those who have not seen and yet
have believed.”* John 20:29

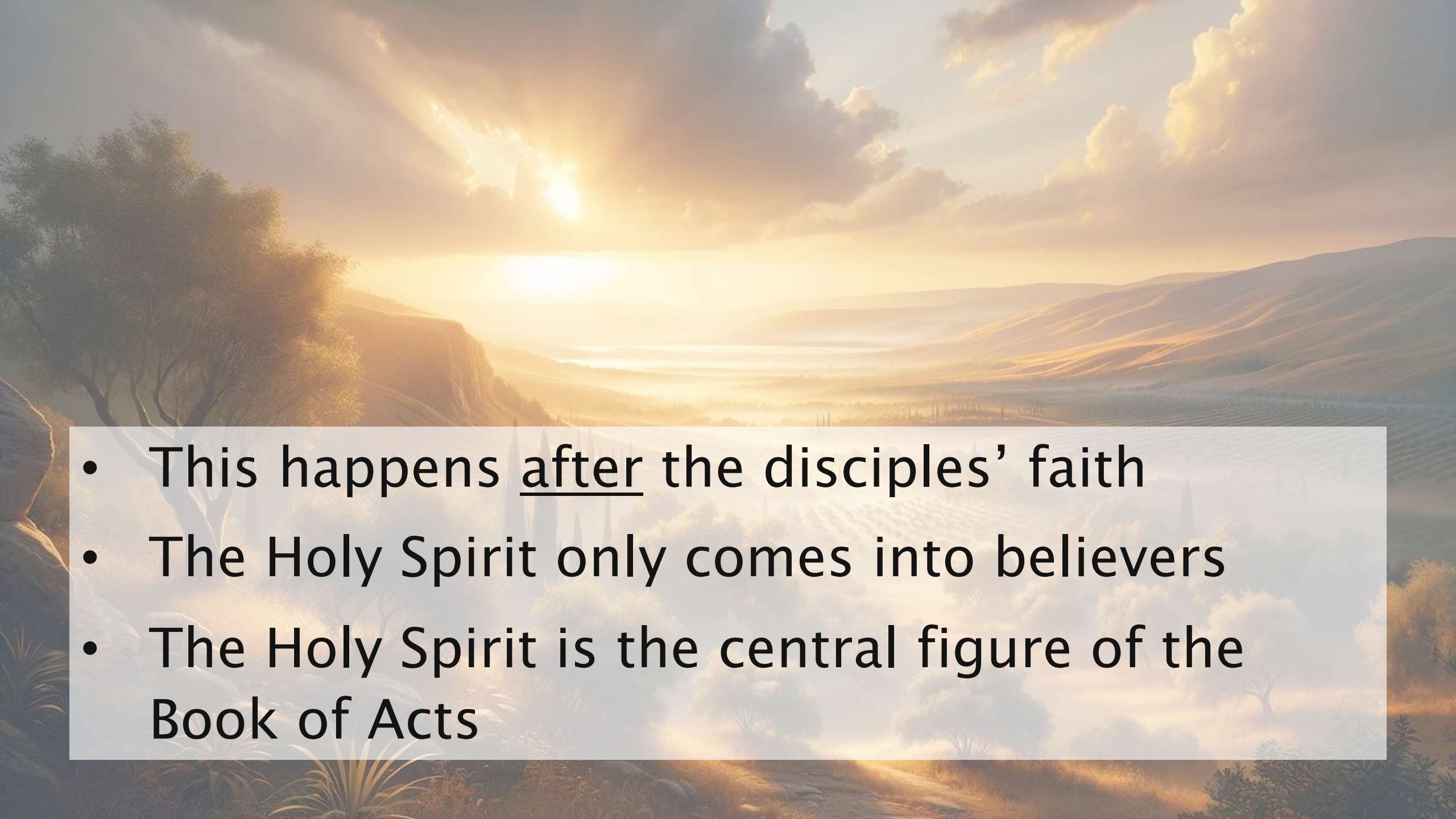
Doubt & Faith...

- There are two other factors...
 - *On the way to Jerusalem Jesus has told three times that he would be killed and rise to life, but they did not understand it. Why?*
 - Awakening: *“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.” Luke 24:45*
 - Inspiration: *the ministry of the Holy Spirit begins...*

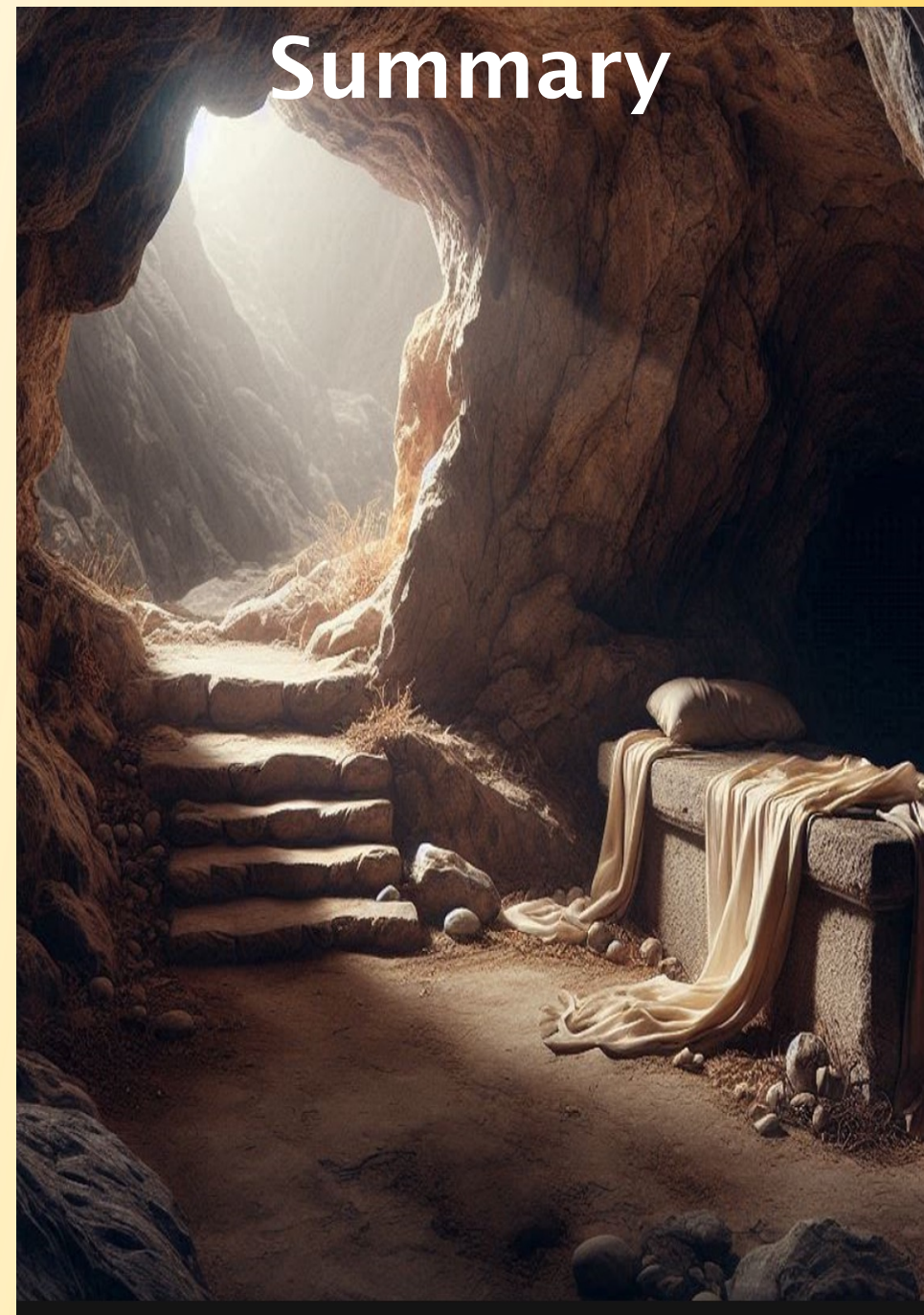
(John 20:19): *Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”*²⁰ *After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.*

*21 Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”*²² *And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”*

(Luke 24:49): *“I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”*

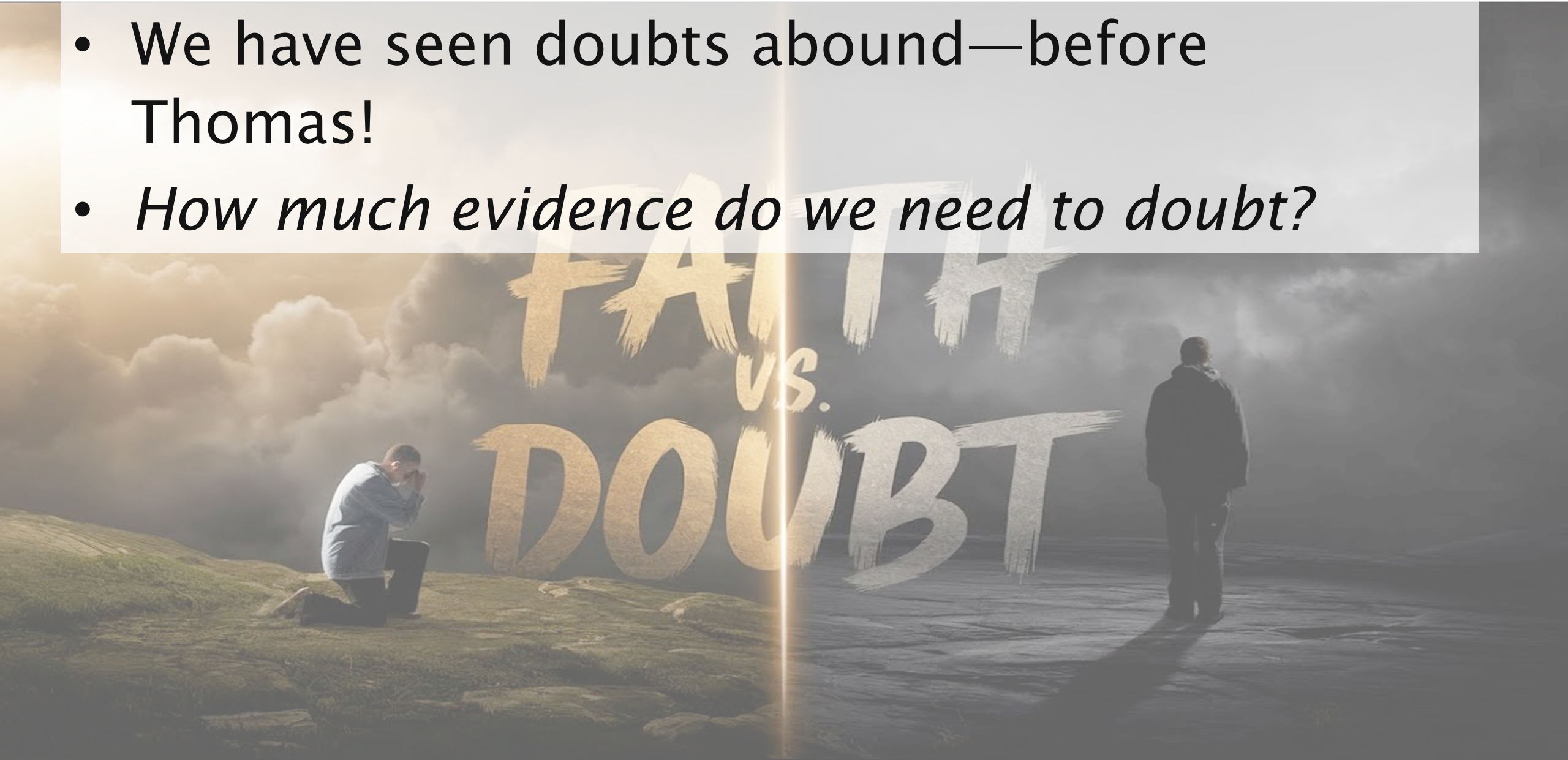
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- This happens after the disciples' faith
 - The Holy Spirit only comes into believers
 - The Holy Spirit is the central figure of the Book of Acts

- Women meet angels at the tomb
- They tell the disciples
- Peter & John run to the tomb, and Mary Magdalene follows
- Peter & John return home wondering
- Mary meets Jesus, and tells disciples
- Disciples near Emmaus meet Jesus
- Jesus meets disciples (*and Thomas a week later*)
- Jesus promises power and mission

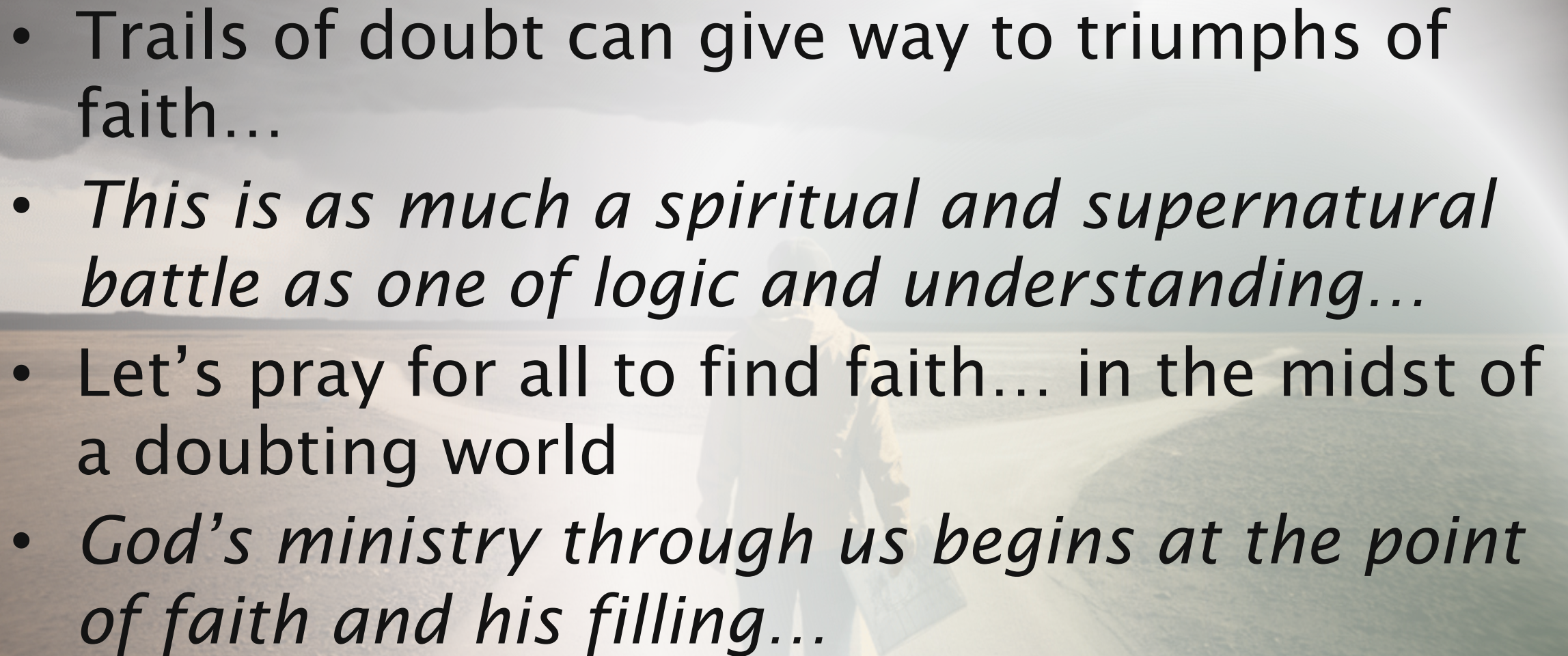


Conclusion

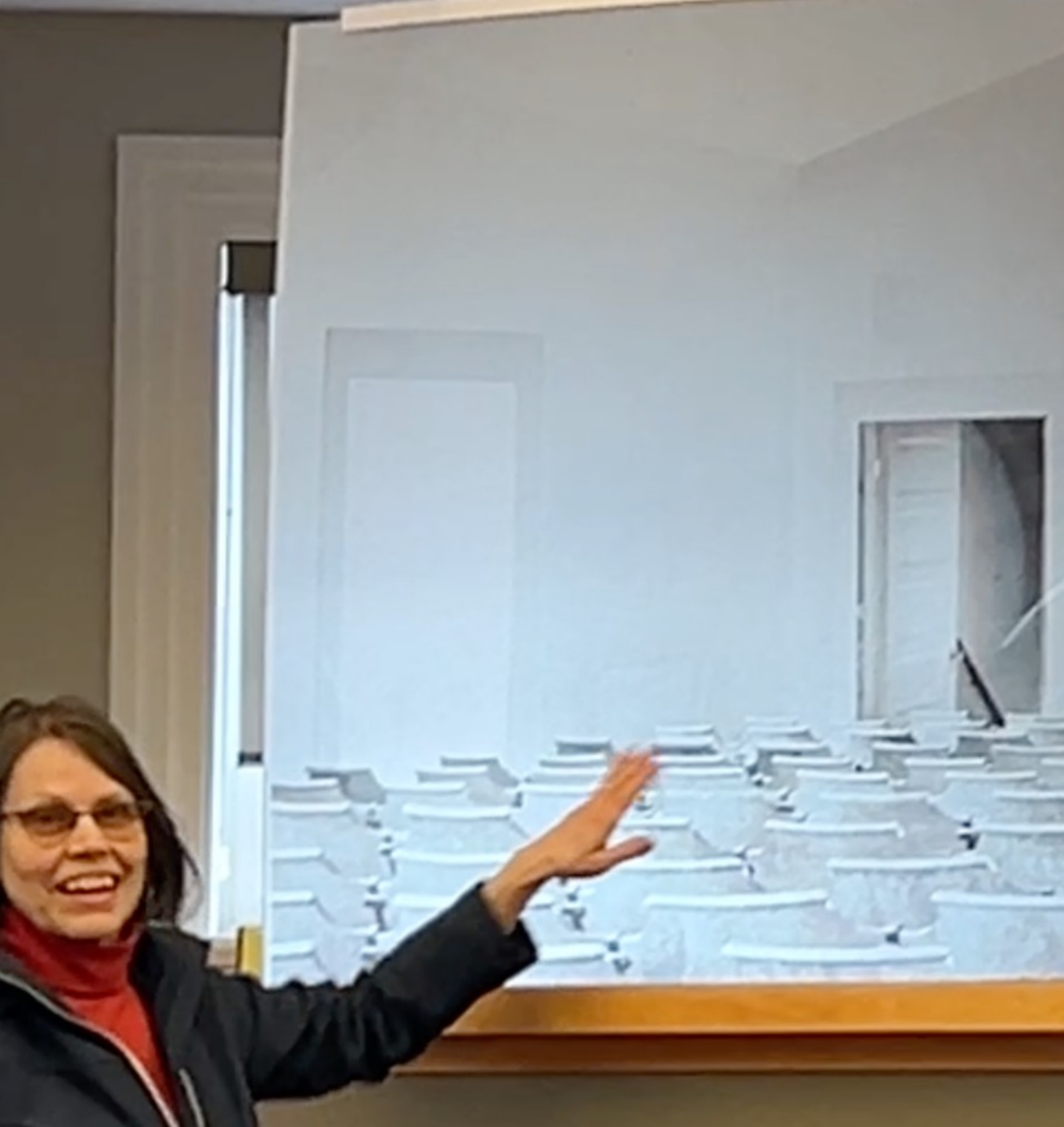
- We have seen doubts abound—before Thomas!
- *How much evidence do we need to doubt?*



- Evidence alone was not enough
 - Eyewitnesses were doubted
 - ‘Food evidence’ seems more believable
 - Disposition
 - Jesus’ presence
 - Factors of God’s word and personal awakening
 - *God’s Spirit & power comes after faith*

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- A person wearing a hooded jacket and carrying a bag is walking away from the camera on a paved road. The road leads towards a bright, hazy horizon under a cloudy sky. The overall mood is one of journey and hope.
- Trails of doubt can give way to triumphs of faith...
 - *This is as much a spiritual and supernatural battle as one of logic and understanding...*
 - Let's pray for all to find faith... in the midst of a doubting world
 - *God's ministry through us begins at the point of faith and his filling...*







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- Let's consider what paths and trails our lives will follow...

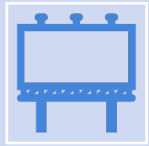




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