



*24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. 26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, **Peace be unto you.** 27 Then saith he to Thomas, **Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.** 28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. 29 Jesus saith unto him, **Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.** 30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. (John 20:24-31)*

Failure of hope often denies a blessing, and thus was Thomas denied the blessing of seeing the Risen Savior sooner instead of later. In so doing, Thomas exposed his doubts and lack of faith to the other Apostles.

The Apostle Thomas was conspicuous in his absence on this first-day visitation of the Lord to the disciples who were gathered together in waiting. There is little question that all of the disciples were in some degree of doubt, more or less, of the developments and rumors of the day; yet, they gathered together in a common bond - minus Thomas - to confront their anxieties. *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.* (Heb 10:25) Whatever was the reason for the absence of Thomas, it does not seem justified to me. Of course, we all suffer from a lapse of faith leading to doubt and fear. Thomas seems to have dismissed the reports of the women as mere rumor and not truth. Having seen the prior miracles of the Lord, he was unjustified in doing so.

The strong encouragement to us concerning Thomas is this: in spite of the doubting nature of Thomas, the Lord, nonetheless, chose him as an Apostle. Despite our great weaknesses of faith and hope, the Lord called and finally chose us as well to be a disciple of His. Thomas even discounts the eye-witness report of his fellow apostles: *The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I*

shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. Christ will, at length, pay a special commendation to you and me in view of our faith which is based on the same Word Thomas held in unbelief and which we have accepted at 'faith-value.'

The Lord may linger making His presence known to us to test our faith. But at the decisive moment, He will always reveal Himself to those who seek Him. Eight days may pass before He reveals Himself, so patience is tempered by hope. *And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.* Please note that though Jesus had a glorified Body, it was both spiritual and physical. He was able to pass through closed doors by the mystery of God.

We see in the Gospel of Saint Luke that Thomas was not literally the only apostle to doubt: *36 And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. 38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. 40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? 42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. 43 And he took it, and did eat before them.* (Luke 24:36-43) And we note Jesus ate physical food at His first appearance to the Apostles.

When Jesus appears this second time to the Apostles, Thomas is, indeed, present. Perhaps his doubts were lessened by the prior eye-witness account of the others, and he decided to investigate more fully their report. It is interesting that Jesus does not inquire of the doubts of Thomas, but immediately addresses them nonetheless: *26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. 27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. 28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. 29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* There seems to be, to me, two salient points that are illustrated in this passage: 1) That Jesus understands our weakness of faith and may pursue our doubts until we truly believe; and 2) We are blessed indeed who believe the Word of God above every doubt and weakness. We were not, as was Thomas, an eye witness to the Risen Christ; but we believe with that same faith demonstrated in Abraham of the Promise of a Redeemer.

It seems that the spiritual presence of Christ was sufficient to allay the doubts of Thomas. We are not told that Thomas acceded to the invitation of Jesus to *hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side.* the overwhelming spiritual impact of the sight of the Risen Christ seems to have been sufficient. Later, Thomas became the apostle to India and reportedly perished India as he was establishing a church there. But he heard the Gospel report and doubted first. Confirming faith emboldens and makes us courageous in righteousness.

*30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.* We see readily that Thomas did not at first believe the report of the Apostles; but the Word was written and inspired of God for our benefit to believe and accept. We have eternal life only through His Name.

John appends his own seal and certification to this Gospel at its very end: *24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his*

*testimony is true. 25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen. (John 21:24-25)*

Since Christ is the Creator of all things (See John 1:1-4 and Genesis 1:1-5), all of the books in the world are not sufficient to record His works. Can you imagine the voluminous work required to record the meticulous creation of a single gnat which the world as yet cannot create?

Faith is magnified in the dissolution of doubt. I read that there was a great draught in Texas lasting several weeks. The crops were all dying and the cattle were famishing for water and green grass. Sunday morning, the elderly minister called for a special prayer meeting to call upon Heaven for rain. He mounted the pulpit and said, "Brothers and sister, we are going to have an all day prayer service next Sunday; so come prepared with a basket of foods and plan to stay from sun-up to sun-down in prayer for rain." On the next Sunday, the congregation showed up at sunrise prepared for prayer. The preacher asked, "Did everyone come prepared to pray for rain, trusting in the Lord to send it?" All responded, "Amen, brother." The old preacher then asked, "Well, then, I have only one question: Where are the umbrellas?"

In the words of Frederick William Faber:

*For right is right, since God is God,  
And right the day must win;  
To doubt would be disloyalty,  
To falter would be sin.*

And in the words of Washington Gladden in *Ultima Veritas*:

*In the darkest night of the year,  
When the stars have all gone out,  
That courage is better than fear,  
That faith is truer than doubt.*