

## JOHN 20:24-29 THOMAS

### REVIEW:

### INTRO: Read **Jn. 20:24-29**

- Church history tells us that Thomas went on to evangelize in parts of Iran, Ethiopia, and India.
- His ministry was attested to by many conversions.
- This history records Thomas as being martyred at Calamina, a old city in Eastern India.
- Here, because of his preaching of Jesus and his strong condemnation of their false gods, the Hindu priests accused him before their king who then sentenced him to be tormented with red hot plates, then thrown into a glowing furnace and burned.
- However it is said that the idolatrous priests who stood and gazed into the furnace saw that the flames did not hurt him. They then had his side pierced with spears and javelins.
- According to Jerome, his body was taken from the fire and buried there.
  
- By the miraculous and glorious visit of Jesus to His disciples in the upper room, everything seemed settled, seemed restored as though a great reset had taken place. All was now ready to move forward.
- It seemed Jesus's work of encouraging His disciples was complete.
- But not so, the Great Shepherd is aware that one of His sheep is missing.
- Thus notice the first word in Vs. 24; as per the KJV. "BUT."
- The door to this story was left open by the word "but." Jesus was not finished. Something was incomplete.... Where is Thomas?
- John is the only gospel writer who records any of the words of Thomas.
- On 2 other occasions Thomas is singled out by him.
- Jn. 11:8-16
  - The Jews in Judea just recently tried or desired to kill Jesus. Jn. 10:31-39. And the disciples question His wisdom in going back into certain danger.
  - Yet Jesus is determined to return to raise His sleeping friend Lazarus.
  - His disciples question; "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?" (Jn. 11:8)
  - Realizing that Jesus was set on going Thomas speaks up saying "let's go with Him that we may die with Him."
  - Such tremendous loyalty and seeming bravery.
  - Thomas seems to be radical in his resolve to follow Jesus even to the point of death.
  - Yet reality crushed him with the crucifixion of Christ.
  - Life has a way of doing this. God wants to get us to the bed rock of who we are and what we are.

- **The second record; Jn. 14: 2-6**
  - **In response to Jesus saying He was returning to the Father and that they would be ok because they knew the way, Thomas speaks up and says;**
  - **"Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"**
  - **To which Jesus famously responds, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**
  - **Thomas is again seen committed enough to ask how they can follow Him. Thomas does not want to lose the way or miss out on what Jesus has for him.**
  - **But again we see all this devotion shattered by the reality of the crucifixion of his Messiah.**
- **In Thomas, the twin, we see two people, the steadfast devoted disciple, ready to follow Christ to death, and his twin, falling into hopeless unbelief and discouragement. An emotional man.**
- **Double minded. Doubled souled.....Like us?**

**VS. 24 *Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.***

- **Does not Jesus' appearance, which seems to be specifically to restore the doubtful Thomas; show us the Great Shepherds care for His own. His watchful and caring eye for His Sheep?**
  - **Jesus said in Jn. 6:39; "I will lose none of them."**
  - **And again in Jn. 17:12; While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled**
  - **And once more in Jn. 18:9; "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none."**
- **Jesus knows when we go missing.**
- **It was important to Jesus the Church Builder, that they be together.**
  - **Heb. 10:24, 25**

**VS. 25 *The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."***

- **We don't seem to detect any condemnation from any of the 10 towards Thomas. Only a desire that he too should have seen the Lord.**
- **His absence is most likely attributed to the loss of hope not selfish negligence.**
- **Thomas exhibited such hardened, determined unbelief.**
- **Was he protecting his heart from more pain, another breaking?**

- Were his statements really echoing the emotions of his heart, "I will not be that vulnerable again, I will not be hurt."
- However we see he was there with the brethren in Jn. 21 and again still committed to them in Acts 1:13. The last time we see his name.
- This verse is the only place in the New Testament where the nails which were driven through Christ are mentioned.
- The Roman's did not always use nails when crucifying criminals; they often bound the victim to the cross with chords.
- The fact that John records the nails and the piercing, witness to the perfection of God's word for in PS. 22:16 we read; "they pierced My hands and My feet.

***VS. 26*** *And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"*

- Also notice this little phrase added by the KJV writers, "Then came Jesus." As though He had waited until everything was ready, all 11 of His disciples together.
- How patient our Lord is with us. How He takes care of His own, shepherds them and keeps them in His flock.
- After 8 days. This is the second time the Holy Spirit draws our attention to the early Christians gathering on Sunday, the first day of the week.
- The doors being shut/barred, "then came Jesus."
- Barred doors and closed up hearts will not stop the work of Jesus.
- Our closed and barred doors cannot deter Jesus from His determined work.
- Ask Saul of Tarsus, Ask Lydia the seller of purple, ask the multitude of Muslim men and women who wake from their Jesus saving dreams.
- Notice also that though the doors being again locked there is no mention the reason being "for fear of the Jews." They found peace?
- Jesus does not excommunicate him, but speaks to him the same gracious word/ "peace." What He had spoken and gifted to the others He speaks and gifts to Thomas. What a blessing to be His and shepherded.
- This is the third time Jesus speaks peace to His disciples.
- This peace is a peace of recovery, a peace of acceptance, a holy reconciliation. It embraces what the first and second "peace" meant.

**VS. 27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."**

- It was the sight of the Savior's wounds, the wounded Savior, which abolished the doubts of Thomas and brought him to the feet of Jesus and taught him to confess and worship.
- If we go astray, that which brings us back is the great foundational truth of the atonement, we have peace, fellowship and life with God through the blood of the cross.
- Does this verse not focus our attention on Jesus' wounds and sacrifice which picture for us the Lord's supper, communion. His broken body, His poured out blood.
- Do this in remembrance of Me.
- Here Jesus challenges unbelief, faithlessness.
- Unbelief is perhaps the greatest sin and insult to God.
- Jesus says to Thomas, "do not be unbelieving but believing."
- Belief and unbelief are a choice. We are to hold on to believing while rejecting unbelief.
- Here Jesus commands Thomas to stop his stubborn unbelief, reject it and chose belief.
  - Heb. 3:12, 15; Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God <sup>15</sup> As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."
- Believe until you have come to the limit of your believing, then let grace and divine faith bring you the rest of the way.
  - Like Abraham in Rom. 4:18; Who against hope believed in hope,
- Jesus loves to eradicate unbelief, especially from the hearts of His own.
- Remember one of the works of the Holy Spirit is to convict of unbelief.
  - Jn. 16:8, 9 when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: <sup>9</sup> of sin, because they do not believe in Me;
- We are not told that Thomas actually put his finger in Jesus' hands, or his hand into Jesus' side.
- I don't believe he did, for in vs. 29 Jesus says to him, "because you have seen Me you believe." He did not mention a touch.
- The sight of the crucified Christ was enough to dispel all of Thomas's unbelief.
- As Jesus' heart had been opened to receive Thomas, so Thomas's heart was now open to the crucified Christ.

**VS. 28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"**

- **My Lord and my God.** This is the only time in the gospels where anyone actually calls and confesses Jesus to be God.
- **I believe in Thomas' words, "my Lord and my God,"** was more than a confession of his reborn faith, it was also an expression of his shame, humiliation and repentance.
- **Notice the personal confession, "my Lord, my God."**
- **Jesus does not rebuke Thomas for calling Him God.**
  - **Acts 20:28** attributes the blood of Christ as the blood of God.

**VS. 29 Jesus said to him "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."**

- **This then is the record of the restoration of Thomas through the operation of our faithful Shepherd who said, "of those whom the Father gave Him, He would lose none of them. (Jn. 18:9)**
- **Can we believe when we have not seen our deliverance, have not seen Christ come to deliver us from what we feel we should be delivered from or our prayers are still unanswered?**

**CONCLUSION:**

- **When we consider this story what do we see?**
- **Do we see Jesus rebuking, scolding, reproving Thomas or do we see Jesus restoring, rescuing him from the depths of unbelief and depression?**
- **Let's see Him as the Great Shepherd of the church.**
- **What area of my life do I need Jesus to increase my faith. To save me from unbelief and discouragement?**
- **What is He asking me to believe?**
- **This morning Jesus invites us to reach our finger in faith into His wounded hands;**
- **and if we need more, if we are more desperate by faith, let us thrust our hand into his side and receive.**
- **His arms and hands are still open, His heart and side are still open.**
- **All we lack and need of faith for life is in Jesus.**
- **Go to Jesus for all your need and He shall supply all our need according to His riches in glory according to Christ Jesus.**
- **He will take me up in His arms, into His wounds and answer and heal as He holds me fast.....**