

## THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST THOMAS

Thomas is merely named as an apostle in the first three gospels. Nearly nothing is said specifically about him in Matthew, Mark, Luke or Acts. However, John's gospel gives Thomas a cameo appearance which teaches more about the man whose name means "a twin" (*Hitchcock's Bible Names*). While it is tempting to only think of his reputation as "doubting Thomas," John expands upon this one-dimensional description.

**Thomas shows us the boldness of love.** In John 11, Jesus learns of the deathbed sickness of his dear friend Lazarus. Though Jesus wants to go to Judea to visit his friend, the rest of the disciples are afraid to go back to

Judea (John 11:7-8). Upon their last visit, the jealous Jews had tried to seize and stone Jesus (John 10:31, 39). If Jesus returns, he would be putting his life in grave danger. Even so, Jesus plans to go and it is Thomas who says to the other disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him" (John 11:16).

This quotation reveals the high esteem Thomas has for Jesus. In his mind, it is better to go and die with Jesus than to live alone without His friendship and guidance. Thomas, in this instance, epitomizes the greatest loyalty of all—a loyalty to the death. He counted it an honor to stand by Jesus even if it meant His own destruction.

Truly, in our own lives we would all benefit by having the faith to go where Jesus leads, even if it should bring a dim forecast of earthly trials. It is better to die with Jesus than to live without Him.

**Second, Thomas demonstrates even disciples ask questions.** In John 14:1-5, Jesus explains He is going to die, going to heaven and going to prepare a place for His followers. He concludes saying, "And where I go you know, and the way you know" (14:4). Thomas replies, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the Way?" (14:5).

Thomas may have been blinded by his own prejudices. It may have been difficult for him to imagine part of the Messiah's role being death. It may have been hard to fathom His kingdom being a spiritual one. Thomas may have needed more insight of the unseen. While some accuse Thomas of being "slow" or "faithless" perhaps his questions teach a more simple lesson—It is okay to ask questions if we will accept God's answers!

Sometimes we need more explanation, more knowledge and more understanding. Like Thomas, may we not be afraid to ask questions so our darkened minds may be brought to light. Jesus taught, "Ask, and it will be given..." (Matthew 7:7).

**Finally, from Thomas we learn there is evidence for faith.**

After Thomas saw Jesus dead he felt all hope was lost. As his fellow disciples told him Jesus had been resurrected, Thomas argued, "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" (John 20:25). To Thomas, believing the man he saw die was now alive sounded like a legendary tale. Many skeptics feel the same way today.

Yet, Jesus appears to the first skeptic convert and says, "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" (John 20:27). Thomas replied, "My Lord and my God!" confessing his faith (John 20:28).

We will not get to examine Jesus personally. However, we do have the eyewitness testimony of His disciples who died for what they saw. This is evidence enough for faith and Jesus says, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." *Joshua R. Welch*

