



Saint Thomas

Doubting Thomas was one of the 12 disciples in the Bible. Another name for Thomas was Didymus, which comes from the Hebrew and Greek words both meaning 'the twin.' He wasn't one of the more well known disciples, but he was popular enough to earn the nickname "Doubting Thomas." He was given this label because he simply did not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Jesus appears to some of the disciples, but Thomas was not with them the first time. John 20:25 says, "So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord!' But he [Thomas] 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 it.'"

Eight days later, Jesus appears before His disciples again:

"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!' 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.' Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!' Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed' (John 20:26-29).

Even though Thomas earned a negative label, he was not lacking in some very good qualities. He displayed great courage and loyalty. When the other disciples tried to keep Jesus from going to Bethany to raise Lazarus from the dead because of the danger from those in the area who had just earlier tried to stone Him (John 11:8), Thomas said to them, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him" (John 11:16).

Thomas also asked Him one of the most famous questions. John 14:5-6 says, "Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

Thomas is mentioned again (John 21) as one of the seven disciples who were fishing on the Sea of Galilee (Sea of Tiberias) when the Risen Lord appeared to them.

Aside from this he appears in the New Testament only as a name on lists of the Apostles.

A couple of centuries later a story was circulating in the Mediterranean world that he had gone to preach in India; and there is a Christian community in India (the Kerala district) that claims descent from Christians converted by the preaching of Thomas.

The tradition among Christians in India is that Thomas was speared to death near Madras, and accordingly he is often pictured holding a spear. Paintings of martyrs often show them holding or accompanied by the instruments with which they were put to death.

