

“THE GREAT CONFESSION OF THE GREAT GOSPEL”

John 20:24-31

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INTRODUCTION

“Doubting Thomas.” Admit it, that is what you think of when you think of Thomas.

However, we need to focus on the outcome of Thomas’ doubt—once he was convinced that the Lord truly was risen—**the most powerful confession of faith in the Gospels!**

I am going to handle this message a little differently than the others preceding it. We are going to look at several significant principles within this account.

*This is now the **third** resurrection account given by John here in chapter 20.*

We will see one more from chapter 21 next Sunday—Jesus’ appearance to His disciples on the shores of Galilee.

You must listen to the voice of God through His apostle John in this Gospel.

Everything he wrote he wrote for a purpose—and your life should have been transformed as the result!

GOD WANTS YOU TO HAVE LIFE—Abundant Life—THROUGH FAITH IN HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST

I. THOMAS WAS NOT PRESENT (24)

What do we miss when we are not gathered together with God’s people at the appointed times of meeting?

II. TESTIMONY ABOUT THE RISEN CHRIST BY THE OTHER DISCIPLES (25)

We must be speaking about our risen Lord!

III. TESTS PUT FORTH BY THOMAS BEFORE HE WOULD BELIEVE (25)

A. “I must see the ‘marks’ of the nails”

B. “I must ‘put my finger’ [“throw”] into the place [mark] of the nails.”

C. “I must ‘put my hand’ [“throw”] into His side.”

Otherwise, “I WILL NEVER BELIEVE” (In no wise, in no way at no time!)

Lest we be too hard on Thomas, we must understand how devastating the death of the Savior had been to him, a loyal follower, how strongly impacted he had been by Jesus’ wounds [“The wounds of the Lord are for him still gaping, as he had seen them”; “for him the universe collapsed when Jesus was crucified.], how serious and introspective a person he was (cf. 11:16), and how the others had told him about how Jesus had allowed them to touch and handle Him.

IV. TENDER CONDESCENSION OF THE RISEN SAVIOR (26-27)

- *The importance of Sunday—the regular meeting time of the NT Church!*
This timing was not an accident on the Lord's part.
He chose the time and the place—evidently He had had no further contact with them during that week!
- The circumstances—time, place, people [except Thomas], room setup, Jesus' coming, sudden appearance, and His words to them were evidently the same—except there is **no mention of the “fear of the Jews.”**
- Note how tender and condescending Jesus is here to Thomas. He gives him the same opportunity that the others had had the week before.
- Jesus met each of Thomas' test requirements (v. 27)
Some of his words are different: “reach with your finger and see”; “reach with your hand”. But the basic demands were met precisely: I must see, I must put my finger, I must put my hand
- Jesus rescues him from **unbelief** (απιστοϋς) to **belief** (πιστοϋς), from **faithlessness** to **faithfulness**. “Don't become, don't continue to manifest, unbelief; become, continue to manifest faith!
- There is no evidence that Thomas ever carried out his tests—in fact v. 29 seems clear that he believed upon seeing—not touching. [Some say that he had no choice but to carry out the commands of Christ to him—I disagree. He felt it foolish and unnecessary once He saw the risen Lord for who He really was!

V. TESTIMONY OF THOMAS—His powerful confession of faith. (v. 28) “MY LORD AND MY GOD”

- There is absolutely no way to minimize the content of this confession!
- He had just seen the risen Son of God who had conquered death!!!
- Others had likewise recognized Jesus' sovereignty and their submission to Him (v. 18, 25). He was the **Lord**.
- Jesus had just manifested His **omniscience** to him—he was there when Thomas had made his earlier denial!
- No one has previously addressed Jesus as “My God.”
- This confession of faith brings the gospel to a conclusion. It prepares the way for vv. 30-31!
- **Jesus does not correct Thomas for his statement!** (cf. 5:18). “He accepts and approves this confession of belief in His Divinity.”
- **Thomas “has ‘died with Him’ and risen again”**

VI. JESUS' BEATTITUDE TO THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN, AND YET BELIEVE (29)

- Thomas has believed upon seeing Jesus—such is not wrong or sinful; this is how most of the others had done so up to this point.
- But Thomas had had an opportunity of believing without seeing—and he had rejected it.
- Jesus refers to some of His current disciples who “did not see” and “yet believed.”
- He primarily pronounces this beatitude for **all of you and for those who have preceded you and will come after you who have not had an opportunity to see the risen Christ in person.**

VII. JOHN'S PURPOSE FOR THIS GOSPEL (30-31)

- **John did not intend to write a biography of Jesus!**
- He did not even attempt to include all of the signs performed by Jesus—he clearly selected from among them the ones that suited his purpose.
- Remember the purpose of *signs* in the NT—especially in the Gospel of John—they are teaching miracles. Often they are followed by long discourses in John.
- John lists only seven signs—outside the resurrection itself:
 - 1) Water into wine; 2) Healing of the nobleman's son; 3) healing of impotent man at the pool of Bethesda; 4) feeding of the 5,000; 5) walking on the water; 6) healing of the man born blind; 7) the raising of Lazarus.
- Numbers 1, 2, 3, 6, & 7 are found only in John.
- John tells us here and elsewhere in this Gospel (e.g. 12:37) that Jesus had performed **“many other signs”**.
- These signs were performed *in the presence of the disciples*. Why is that significant? Because they were intended to be witnesses for the Lord—they had seen and they would tell others! This is what occurs in the book of Acts—ch 1, esp. vv. 8, 21-22.
- John's Gospel has an **EVANGELISTIC PURPOSE**.
- 1) That **YOU** may believe the TRUTH about Jesus Christ—He is the Christ; He is the Son of God. He fulfills all of the *Messianic prophecies* of the OT, but in a higher sense than any of the Jewish scribes had understood. He was not merely a *greater prophet (like Moses or Elijah)* or a *greater king (like David or Solomon)*. **He was the Son of God—in the sense that He shares full deity with the Father!**
 - Jesus was “very man” and “very God” (I Jn. 4:14-15).
 - The terms give the **very highest view of Jesus' person**.
 - John has just included Thomas' amazing confession.
 - John conceived that Jesus was “the very incarnation of God. (857).
- 2) That **YOU by believing may have life in His name**.
 - Throughout the book faith leads to eternal life (3:16 etc.)
 - Life is found only in His name—i.e. in Jesus Christ as He has revealed Himself. In the fullness of His person and all that He is.
 - See Acts 4:12—“Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

CONCLUSION

The darkness and the despair of Thomas before he saw Jesus.
Now he has light in the Lord—a living Savior.
He has “life in His name.”

Do you have life in Jesus Christ?
Do you have abundant life in Jesus Christ?