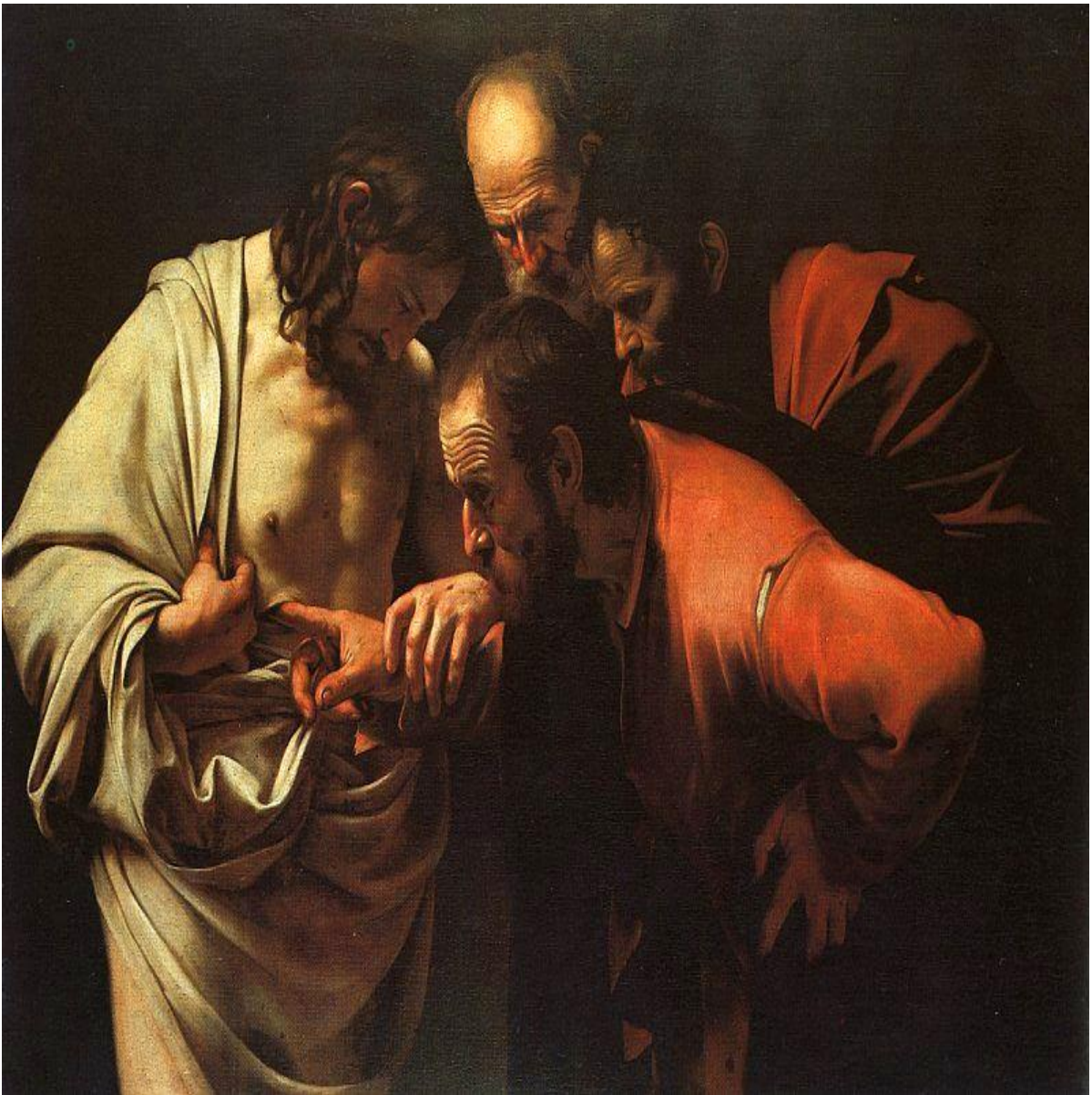


LIVING GODS WILL

The Apostle

THOMAS



The Incredulity of Saint Thomas by Caravaggio

The Apostle THOMAS

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Born:	Galilee, Israel
Died:	AD 72, Chennai, India
Death:	Pierced with five spears while praying

Also known as "**Doubting Thomas**", "**Twin**"

He was one of the **original 12 disciples**

Thomas was one of the twelve apostles of **Jesus Christ**.

In the Bible, **Thomas** was also called **Didymus** (**John 11:16; 20:24**), which is the Greek equivalent of the **Hebrew name Thomas**, both meaning "**twin**." Scripture does not give us the name of Thomas's twin.

In the Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—**Thomas** is mentioned only in the listings of the apostles (**Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15**). In the Gospel of **John**, **Thomas** plays a leading role in two significant accounts.

Near the end of **Jesus'** earthly ministry, some people in Judea were plotting the Lord's demise. It was during this time that **Jesus** and the disciples received the news that their friend **Lazarus** was at the point of death (**John 11:1-3**).

Fearing for their lives, the disciples tried to talk **Jesus** out of returning to **Lazarus'** hometown of Bethany, which was near Jerusalem where death threats certainly awaited them.

Jesus was set on going, however, and **Thomas** spoke to his fellow disciples: "**Let us also go, that we may die with him**" (**John 11:16**). **Thomas'** readiness to stay with **Jesus** despite the consequences is noteworthy. Although his outlook may have been pessimistic and his words rather gloomy, **Thomas** demonstrated extreme loyalty to **Jesus**.

We learn from the life of **Thomas** that he was deeply committed to His master, and yet he struggled with doubts and questions. On the day of His resurrection, **Jesus** appeared to a group of His disciples in a closed room.

For some reason, **Thomas** was not with them for this supremely significant event (**John 20:19-24**). When the disciples later told **Thomas** they had seen the resurrected Lord, he replied, "**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**" (**John 20:25**).

With those famous words, **Thomas** earned a nickname that he would be remembered by throughout history—**Doubting Thomas**. For **Thomas**, and for many of us, seeing is believing.

But **Thomas**' skepticism was not the same as worldly opposition to the truth. His doubt represents a genuine, truth-loving quest. Earlier, **Jesus** had warned the disciples of His imminent departure and that He was going to His Father's house to prepare a place for them.

The disciples were confused by **Jesus**' mysterious language. **Thomas**' honest skepticism and inquisitive nature prompted him to be the first to ask, "**Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?**" (**John 14:5**).

Jesus answered **Thomas** with these notable words: "**I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me**" (**John 14:6**). **Jesus** wasn't talking about knowing a route or a location but about knowing a person.

When **Thomas** told the other disciples that he needed proof to believe that **Jesus** had risen, he was speaking honestly. Sincere faith does not prohibit sincere investigation.

Eight days after **Jesus**' resurrection, the disciples met together again. This time **Thomas** was present. **Jesus** appeared to them once more and invited **Thomas** to touch the wounds and see for himself: "**Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe**" (**John 20:27**). **Jesus** knew what **Thomas** needed to believe, and He provided the evidence.

Jesus lovingly met **Thomas** at the exact point of his need and then guided him back to faith. We can be honest with **God** about our doubts and questions; He understands our struggles and is quite capable of strengthening our faith. Like **Thomas**, we will be able to confess, "**My Lord and my God!**" in full confidence of who **Jesus** is (**John 20:28**).

After **Jesus** confirmed **Thomas**' faith, He addressed all future readers of John's Gospel with these words: "**Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed**" (**John 20:29**). These words reach down through the ages to help and encourage all of us who have not seen the resurrected **Christ** and yet have believed in Him.

Some days later, **Thomas** was fishing with **Peter** and the other disciples when **Jesus** appeared to them at the Sea of Galilee (**John 21:2**). The final mention of **Thomas** is in **Act 1:13**, where he is listed among the disciples.

Extrabiblical writings and Christian tradition hold that **Thomas** took the gospel to either Parthia or India and that he was **martyred for his faith**.

In the end, the nickname "**Doubting Thomas**" is a rather unfortunate one. It's true that **Thomas** demanded evidence of the miracle of **Christ**' resurrection before he accepted the truth.

Doubt factored into his response to his friends, but it was not the defining quality of his life. **Thomas** should be better known for **his loyalty, his obedience to the gospel, and his faith.**

Various historical records and traditions indicate that **Thomas** traveled by sea to **India in AD 52**. He was later **martyred** and buried there after witnessing to the Indian people.

The tomb of **St. Thomas** is in Mylapore, India. A poet, **St. Ephrem**, recorded in his hymns and poetry that Thomas worked miracles in the Indian city of Edessa. A Syrian ecclesiastical calendar has an entry which reads, **3 July, St. Thomas who was pierced with a lance in 'India.'**

His body is in Urhai (Edessa) having been brought there by the merchant **Khabin**. A tradition observed by the people of Edessa honors **Thomas**, calling him "**the Apostle of India.**" Many other accounts and traditions mention **Thomas** in connection with India.

Thomas came into conflict with the Hindu priests of Kali, who killed him for insulting their deity – or simply for converting many of their followers. **He was Pierced with five spears while in prayer at the Saint Thomas Mount in Chennai, India in 72 AD.**



Saint Thomas Mount Church, Chennai, India