

Vicarious Sacrifice: Post-Resurrection Events of Jesus: the Appearance to the Disciples Including Thomas, John 20:26–31: Jesus Again Joins the Disciples through a Bolted Door; Jesus Quotes Thomas's Demands from a Week Ago; Uses Divine Omniscience to Demonstrate His Hypostatic Union; He Commands Thomas to Touch His Stigmata; Thomas Believes; Jesus Scolds Him that He Required Empirical Proof Instead of Faithful Acceptance; John's Gospel Is Intended to Evangelize the Lost, v. 31

The Appearance to the Disciples Including Thomas:

John 20:26–31

- Thomas is the major character of this passage. It exposes Thomas as a person that is negative to truth because it requires faith for acceptance.
- Thomas demanded empirical proof of everything and without it he would not believe.
- When told by his fellow disciples they had seen Jesus in resurrection body, he was adamant that he would not believe them until he saw for himself:

John 20:25b - "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

- The following paragraph moves the drama forward for eight days. In John 20:26, we find the ten reassembled at their previous location with Thomas now joining them.
- Again, Jesus enters the room in the same fashion as He did previously:

John 20:26 - After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut [perfect passive participle of κλείω (*kleiō*): barred by a heavy bolt slid through rings attached to the door and the frame], and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you."

- The first meeting was on the evening of the resurrection. Eight days puts this second assembly on the following Sunday night (i.e., after sundown).
- The Jewish Sabbath is observed on what we refer to as Saturday. To be caught worshipping Jesus on a Sunday would bring the wrath of the establishment upon them, so the door is again bolted.
- The statement, "Peace be with you," emphasizes the need for the disciples to rid their souls of fear since they are in the presence of their Savior and Lord.

John 20:27 - Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing."

- Remember that the word translated "hand" is the Greek noun χεῖρ (*cheir*): "the hand including the wrist."
- The Lord commands Thomas to reach with his finger and see His hands, i.e., wrists, and then reach with his hand and thrust it into His side.
- These things Thomas did as the Lord issued two imperatives of prohibition.
- First is the present middle imperative of the verb γίνομαι (*gínomai*) preceded by the negative particle μή (*mé*): "stop being faithless."
- "Faithless" is the adjective ἄπιστος (*áπιστος*). The alpha privative negates the word faith. It can be translated (1) no confidence, (2) treacherous, or (3) disbelief.

- The latter is the meaning here. Thomas disbelieves because he has no faith since he is an empiricist. He does not accept information without empirical proof.
- Thomas is a cynic, a skeptic, and (Shall I say it?), a doubting Thomas.

Doubting Thomas. One who is habitually doubtful. The term alludes to the disciple Thomas, who doubted Jesus's resurrection until he had first-hand evidence of it (John 20:24–29).²

- Jesus commands him to stop being an empiricist and become a believer: **πιστός (pistós)**.
- Thomas told his fellow disciples in verse 25 that until he put his fingers in the place of the nails and his hand in His side, he would not believe.
- This is exactly what the Lord commanded Thomas to do, after which He commanded him to stop being an unbeliever but to do what he said he would do and that is to believe.
- There is more to this scene that “meets the eye.” There is also evidence that Jesus is not only a resurrected human being but also God.
- No one told the Lord what Thomas had proclaimed eight days ago. His omniscience knew His response in eternity past.
- With this information, Jesus was able to address Thomas with the same words he has spoken the week before.
- Jesus proved His resurrection in two ways. First by the empirical evidence demanded by Thomas. But the real proof was His use of omniscience to recite verbatim to Thomas his exact demands of the week before and recorded in John 20:25.
- It is always important to remember the essence of deity. And when one does this, the divine decree comes to mind.
- The deity of Christ is completely informed about all the thoughts, decisions, and actions of every person including Thomas's.
- The plan of salvation is complete. Jesus has paid the price for human sin, He has died physically, and is now resurrected. He may now verify these victories by the use of His divine essence where applicable.
- The strategy obviously works as Thomas confirms by his response:

John 20:28 - Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and My God!”

- Thomas called Jesus his **Κύριος (Kúrios)**: “Lord,” in recognition of His resurrected true humanity, and his **Θεός (Theós)**: “God,” in recognition of His divine essence.
- There is no record of Thomas actually touching the wounds left by the spikes and spear; he believed because of his recognition of who and what Jesus was.
- Nevertheless, Thomas is now going to receive a scolding from the Lord:

John 20:29 - Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.”

- Jesus notes that Thomas has seen Him and then believed. The verb “to see” here is the perfect active indicative of **ὁράω (horáō)**.

¹ No pun apparently intended.

² Christine Ammer, *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997), 171.

- The consummative perfect indicates that because of visual evidence, Thomas completed the act of believing, the intensive perfect active indicative of the verb **πιστεύω (pisteúō)**.
- The intensive perfect places special attention on the results of the action where stress upon the existing fact is intensified: because Thomas saw, he believed.
- *Pisteúō* is a transitive verb which demands an object. The Object is Jesus, but Thomas's belief also required visual verification of His stigmata.
- The Lord points out that Thomas's belief is based on the result of seeing. Again this is not faith, but empiricism. What if Jesus had ascended into heaven before Thomas arrived at the meeting?
- In fifty days, Jesus will ascend and salvation will be solely based on belief in the testimony of the apostles and prophets and subsequent evangelists and pastor-teachers.
- Ultimately, post-A.D. 96, belief must be directed toward the testimony of the completed canon and its exposition to the lost.
- Jesus stresses this fact with His following statement: "Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."
- The word "blessed" is the noun **μακάριος (makários)** and it refers, in context, to the mental attitude of the person who accepts the veracity of a statement revealing Jesus as the Object of saving faith.
- There are those who are not privy to visual authentication of the Lord's stigmata but yet believe.
- John concludes the chapter with these summary statements:

John 20:30 - Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;

John 20:31 - but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

- In verse 31, John states that "these have been written," referring to his revelation of the words and works of Jesus up to this point.
- The verb "written" is the perfect passive indicative of **γράφω (gráphō)**: "to write." The consummative perfect indicates completed action. This refers to the permanent status of Scripture.
- In verse 30, John indicates that Jesus did a number of other things in the presence of His disciples that the apostle was not directed by the Holy Spirit to record.
- But those things that John was inspired to include have a specific purpose and result indicated by the conjunction **ἵνα (hína)**: "so that."
- What follows is a permanent biblical principle that stands forever: "you may believe," the present active subjunctive of the verb **πιστεύω (pisteúō)**.
- This present tense is static indicating that the purpose of what John has written might solicit a positive faith response with the result that the one who believes might have eternal life.
- John recognizes by use of the subjunctive that every person is a free agent who may use his volition to believe or not believe based on his acceptance or non-acceptance of what he has written.

