

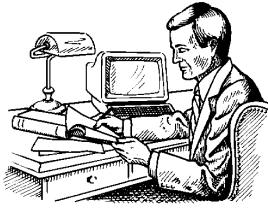
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From Where I Sit . . .

“From Doubt to Faith”

Why is it that some people believe the gospel and others do not? Perhaps the experience of Thomas can supply at least some of the answers to this question.

John 20:24 - 29 (KJV) ²⁴⁾ But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵⁾ The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

There were three barriers to faith that Thomas had to overcome in order to believe in the resurrected Lord: **Ignorance; Skepticism; Empiricism.** Concerning **ignorance**, one of the reasons Thomas was slow to believe in the resurrection of Christ is that he did not have all the evidence. The resurrected Christ had appeared to the disciples and gladdened their hearts with his presence (**John 20:19-23**) but as our text reminds us (**v. 24**), Thomas had not been among them.

Thomas is the patron saint of a whole generation of doubters who have detached themselves from the fellowship with believers. There are many people who seek to be good without God – a Christian without the church. Such people are ripe for doubt. Many others are intellectually dishonest and will not admit that Christians are any more than just naive, deluded, deceived individuals without even giving the book that causes one to be a Christian the time of the day. Why is it that people who doubt God the most are often the very ones who know the least about Him?

The honest searcher will seek faith where other people have found it. He will expose himself to the evidence of God’s reality – to the contagion of other people’s faith – to the preaching and teaching of the word of God. God’s Word sets itself open for investigation and scrutiny in a real space and time dimension making claims of fact that can be tested and have been demonstrated over and again to be truthful. One does not have to remain in a state of ignorance.

Like Thomas, it is harder for some people to believe today because they are cynical and skeptical in their basic approach to all of life. Sometimes the cruel and “unfair” blows of life make it difficult for people to profess any kind of faith in God. There are many people reeling from life’s blows who have hardened their hearts to God and everybody else.

Thomas was an empiricist. He was one of those people for whom “seeing is believing.” **“Unless I see... touch... I will not believe.”** (**v. 25**) As such he is a fitting model for our times. Since God cannot be “seen” or “heard” or “touched,” some people are slow to acknowledge his existence. They have a tendency to trust only what their senses can confirm.

We must remember that our senses can take us to the edges of life, but they cannot take us beyond this life. Faith and faith alone can take us beyond this life. For us, like Thomas, the key to overcoming doubt is a personal encounter with the risen Lord. For us it happens as we chose to accept the testimony of the Scriptures concerning him and trust in him to save us. The Lord did not leave us without strong evidence: **John 20:30 - 31 (KJV)** ³⁰⁾ **And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: ³¹⁾ But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.**

. . . . Terry Broome