What Happened to Thomas?
by Ed Jordan

Thomas was discouraged. In fact, he was probably downright depressed. Things had been so wonderful in the last couple years, and now all of a sudden his world came crashing in on him. The sky had turned black, evil was cackling and echoing through the crevices of Golgotha, and the person to whom Thomas had entrusted his entire life and future had just been killed by religion-positing political hacks who had just enough power to be dangerous.

Thomas was in shock, depressed, and overwhelmed. He had to sort through what had happened, what these events meant, and what he would now do with his life, since everything he had hoped and believed had died. Had he been wrong about how special and unique Jesus was? How could all the miraculous things he had seen Jesus do be explained, other than by the fact that Jesus was God who had come to live among mankind? But if Jesus was God, what was he doing hanging pitifully on a cross, being mocked by petty creatures who should be kneeling at his feet? If he was God, how could he die? What will now happen to the Kingdom of God that he came proclaiming and to those who embraced it?

Jesus was crucified on Friday, and he rose from the dead on Sunday. On the day that Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared to his followers. John 20:21 (ESV) records what happened: “On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ Jesus then showed them the wounds in his hands and side.”

Jesus’ resurrection proved that everything that he had said to them was true. Jesus had promised them citizenship in the Kingdom.
of God. He promised that those who believed in Jesus would live, even if they died. Now Jesus stood before the disciples, as proof positive that he is God; that he rose from the dead. The eternal life that Jesus promised was not just a myth.

But Thomas wasn’t there when the resurrected Jesus first appeared to the disciples. Later the disciples found Thomas and told him that they had seen the Lord. Thomas said that he would never believe unless he personally saw the nail holes, could put his fingers in the wounds, and put his hand in the Lord’s side. He needed tangible, concrete proof before he would believe.

The next Sunday, the disciples were together again. This time Thomas was with them. Again Jesus appeared to them. In John 20:27–28 (NASB95) we read: “Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’”

Thomas believed. He went from “I will never believe unless…” to believing and acknowledging Jesus as “My Lord and My God.” All of the disciples were radically changed by the resurrection of Jesus, as was the entire world.

Which “Thomas” are you today? Are you, like Thomas, questioning the reality of his promises? Or are you the one who has been changed by his living presence?

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