

# The Three Statements of Thomas

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*A journey of doubt and how to avoid it!*

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**THE THREE STATEMENTS OF THOMAS**  
**A JOURNEY OF DOUBT AND HOW TO AVOID IT!**

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## The Three Statements of Thomas

Wouldn't it be unfortunate to have "doubting" as the adjective most often used to describe you? Thomas, the twin (Dydimus in Greek), will forever be known as the "doubting disciple."

When people describe you, what words do they use?

- There is that grumpy old man!
- What a sourpuss!
- He's so happy and carefree!
- There goes a bundle of worry!
- What a Barnabas (encourager).

You can be certain that people use adjectives to characterize you. You should also know that these adjectives are, at least to some extent, founded on reality. I know that many compliments are self-serving. However, the consistent commentary of those around you says a great deal about their perception of you, and that perception has some attachment to reality. The Apostle Thomas is only recorded saying three things in the New Testament. This booklet describes those three testimonies, and

prayerfully provides some application to keep you from becoming a doubting disciple!

**STATEMENT 1: “Let us also go, so that we may die with Him.” John 11:16**

This looks like such a confident statement, a bold exclamation. How can this come from the very one the world calls "doubting Thomas?"

In John 10 the Jews were seeking to kill Jesus. They had already picked up the stones and commenced casting them at Jesus. However, Jesus barely escaped death, and went into the region beyond the Jordan River. Soon after he arrived, Jesus heard news that Lazarus had become ill! Jesus said that the sickness was not unto death, but for the glory of God. Could it be that God would receive glory not only in the resurrection of Lazarus, but also in the timing of the event?

How often has something taken place that cause you to say, "there could not be a worse time?" This would certainly be the case for Jesus and his disciples. Of all the times for there to be a death in the family, this was most untimely. This illness and death could mean the premature death of Jesus Christ.

So when Thomas stands and boldly proclaims, "let's go with him, that we too may die," we want to cheer Thomas on for his bravery. Perhaps, however, this is more of a display of Thomas' grim outlook on life than of standing bravely with Jesus! At least Thomas was not willing to let Jesus die alone, but it certainly does not appear that Thomas was confident about the future!

So the first statement of Thomas seems to say, "we'll never make it out of this alive!" While I am glad that he was willing, I am not inspired by his less-than-positive outlook!

**STATEMENT 2: “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” John 14:5**

This question from the skeptic became an introduction into one of the most radiant and often repeated phrases from the mouth of Jesus Christ: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, but by me."

This statement shows frustration and doubt on the part of Thomas. "I just don't know, I just don't get it!" But once more, Jesus used Thomas' words of doubt to bring us a great sense of confidence. This would not be the last time that this occurred.

In the famous book by John Bunyan, "Pilgrim's Progress", the young man named Christian encounters three followers along the way: Fear, Despondency, and Much Afraid. It looks like the Apostle Thomas spent way too much time with these three imposters. I am not sure if Thomas did not want to know the way or why exactly he struggled, but his question seems to be one of frustration.

**STATEMENT 3: “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.” John 20:25**

In a sense, it is tremendously arrogant to ask the risen Lord to allow you to touch his wounds. I wonder if the Lord felt any frustration, saying to himself, "I said I was going to die, I died, I was buried, I rose again on the third day, just as I said, I appeared to the women, I appeared to two on the road to Emmaus, I appeared to your closest friends on earth as they met in the upper room behind locked doors, and you **won't** believe unless you touch?" If it were me, I might have said, "then you will never believe."

And gratefully, I am not the Messiah!

By the graciousness of God, he stoops down to our level in order to reveal himself to us. For this we must ever be grateful.

It appears that Thomas never really had the intent of believing. "Unless I see, and touch" seems to send the message that "it will be a cold day in hell

before I believe this message." But, for whatever reason, Thomas was persuaded to be with the disciples that second Sunday night. (Never miss a Sunday night service!) When Jesus arrived that night, he invited Thomas to do the very thing that Thomas doubted would ever happen.

And most interestingly, Thomas never did take Jesus up on the offer! He never touched Jesus' hand, nor the wound on his side. Rather, he gave what is perhaps the most inspiring testimony of faith in all the New Testament, "My Lord and my God!"

My Lord – Lord means supreme, sovereign, in charge, master! In some sense, Jesus had been called Lord by many people. For some it was in the widest sense of the term, but for others it was with full force.

My God – this is the first time in the recorded word of God that any human being speaks of Jesus as God. It seems that the Apostle John chose this phrase as the climax of his gospel. He began by saying "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." All of John's

gospel is written to convince us that "the Word was God." Now at the climax of his writing we see Thomas – the doubter – proclaiming that which John is trying to convince, that Jesus Christ is God.

In John 20:30-31, the Apostle tells us that all of these things are written "in order that you might believe." In doubting Thomas we are able to see the flow of the progression. From one who dutifully follows but is doubtful of the outcome, to one who is even uncertain of the direction, to one who has given up all hope, and then finally we come to this beautiful climax of personal testimony, "my Lord and my God."

Notice that for Thomas the journey with Christ was a progression downward, not upward. Do not be discouraged if things do not seem to be getting better and better each day. As nice as that would be, it is not often reality. Many times, people begin to follow Christ out of a sense of duty. The following has a burdensome characteristic that is unmistakable. Have you ever heard anyone say, "I have to go to church." Or perhaps, "it is my obligation to tithe/serve/witness/worship." There are many times

that we are obedient to the Lord but only under a sense of obligation

This sense of obligation often turns to serious questions. What is the way? How come I've been carrying out all of this duty, but I still do not know the way? Why hasn't the way been made clear to me? I would do the will of God if I only knew what the will of God was! There are many who get frustrated because God has not, in their opinion, revealed himself in either the timing or the manner in which they desire.

Through crisis this person typically will find an opportunity to drop out of faithfulness to Christ. They come to the point of needing a burning bush experience. This is a dangerous place to be. In fact, the last spoken blessing of Jesus was spoken to doubting Thomas. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who did not see, and yet believe." As doubt has grown in many people's mind, they have dropped away from Christ and Christian service, and refused to come back unless there is a miracle.

How blessed you are if you do not require miracles! If you have what James Montgomery Boice

calls a “satisfied faith” rather than a subjective faith you will receive the blessing of which Jesus spoke. Those with a subjective faith will continually struggle on a slippery slope, and subject themselves to the possibility of accepting demonic counterfeits.

## How to avoid the journey of doubt—

As we see from Thomas, the journey towards **doubt begins with skepticism followed by self-inflicted confusion**. Anyone who takes this journey will, before long, find themselves saying, "I will never believe!"

The journey often begins with **suspicion**. That is, with a grim outlook on life that clouds every move. A legalism of religion sets into the heart, one that is missing the ingredients of vibrancy. When you just go through the motions, you'll get grumpy! And when you are a grumpy person just going through the motions, you'll begin to see only the worst things.

Do you know someone at church who goes through the motions with a grumpy outlook? They attend church out of a sense of duty, they perform their service because they do not want to have the public embarrassment of quitting, and they are convinced that everything is going to end in total

disaster. This type of service, as seen in Thomas at the episode of the sickness and death of Lazarus, is indicative of one who has great potential to become a doubter.

If you find yourself being a skeptical servant, you need a revival! At minimum, get a good book, a tall glass of iced tea, and find a shade tree under which you can refresh the spirit. Find ways to improve your prayer life and your personal walk with Jesus Christ. Discover ways to be enriched by the Word of God. Rediscover a freshness of vibrancy in your faith. Skeptical service is the first step on the way to serious doubt.

The next step is **self inflicted confusion**: even though things can be as plain as day right in front of you, you will still ask for a further explanation. These individuals are often not so much looking for answers as they are looking for opportunities to delay.

And, of course, the most dangerous step to take is the one that says, “**I will not believe!**” Have you come to the place where you do not believe that

God can reveal himself? Do you have an "I'll believe it when I see it" kind of attitude?

If so – you may be Thomas' twin!

## **The Way Out.**

If you have gone from skepticism to cynicism and self-inflicted confusion, and now you find yourself in wholehearted unwillingness to believe, you need to get back to following Jesus quickly.

Avoid demand for proof. The quality of the proof is often a devil-inspired unachievable demand that God will not allow. If God were to prove Himself at your demand, He would dishonor His nature. God has already given sufficient proof to believe in Him and trust His Son as Savior. You have likely accepted this proof before, and need to be willing to do so again. The proof of the trustworthy nature of Scripture is plenty of proof for anyone who wants to believe.

Avoid the desire for prestige. Perhaps your doubt comes from your circle of influence. Even in your church, you may have surrounded yourself with people who look up to you. You have found power in becoming the church-skeptic. The expression of your doubts about the church's plan, vision, purpose, and

leadership has given you a leading role in the congregation (at least among fellow skeptics). Beware—this prestige may be the very tool used to keep you from a vibrant faith. Satan has created a trap that has led into a period of spiritual malaise for you and your family. It is far more important to be at one with the Father and the church than for the details of daily ministry to be performed according to your liking.

Avoid spiritual laziness. Your doubts may come from the lack of spiritual meat nourishing your soul. Begin to devour healthy Christian resources, Bible studies, sermons, devotions, and learning materials.

Avoid the temptation to seek application. We live in an application and results-based society. In truth, many have bowed to a false god named **Pragmatism**. Your desire should be to feast on the Word of God regardless of temporary application. Look for the truth, not the use. Filling your mind with Biblical truth will result in plenty of application when

the time is right. To apply results before learning truths gets the cart in front of the horse.

Finally, once again bow down before God's Son, Jesus Christ, and confess "My Lord, and My God." Your renewed confession of faith will be a powerful antidote to the schemes of Satan in your life.

If this resource is helpful to you, pass it on to someone else!

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