

Notes on St. Thomas

Presented to St. Thomas Episcopal Church, College Station, Texas
by Chip Hill, July, 2020

I. Introduction

- a. Who was St. Thomas? Historically, relatively little has been written about him considering his stature as one of Jesus's twelve disciples. As a member of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, College Station, Texas, I was curious to learn more about him and suspected that other parishioners would have similar interests. So, I decided to do some research and develop a summary of (I hope) relevant information about the person St. Thomas Church is named for. *Notes on St. Thomas* is that summary.
- b. Sources I suspected might provide a broader perspective included New Testament references, writings associated with St. Thomas that don't appear in the New Testament, and tradition stories such as his missionary travels. To these I added St. Thomas artwork, at the recommendation of Dr. Adam Seipp. I soon discovered that most St. Thomas literature is narrow in scope, focusing on specific events, such as the "Doubting Thomas" narrative (John 20:24-28). But thankfully, a relatively new book: *Saint Thomas the Apostle: New Testament, Apocrypha, and Historical Traditions*, by Johnson Thomaskutty¹, addresses and integrates most of the sources I was interested in. Therefore, I relied heavily on Thomaskutty's research, and acknowledge that here without citing him at every appropriate instance in the paper.

II. St. Thomas References in the New Testament (NT)

a. Background

- i. The NT is focused on Jesus and there is minimal specific information about his disciples. Examples of important disciple themes that do emerge highlight Peter and James reaching out to the Jewish community, and Paul and Barnabas reaching out to the Gentiles (Acts of the Apostles). Thomas (I will abbreviate from St. Thomas) first appears when he is listed as one of Jesus's disciples in Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts. Importantly, however, he is then part of three principal dialogues in the Gospel of John, and the name Thomas appears seven times in that book. This section of the paper will explore these three Thomas dialogue references in John.
- ii. As an aside, Thomas's name is sometimes given as Didymus Judas Thomas. Didymus comes from three references in the Gospels, such as "Thomas, who was called Didymus." Thomas is a derivation of the Aramaic word for twin, and Didymus is the Greek word for twin, but John does not provide information on how Thomas acquired that name. Judas comes from some of the Thomas-centric writings discussed in section III of this paper. Several of these section III writings, such as the *Acts of Thomas*, also assert that Thomas was Jesus's biological twin, which placed him on a higher spiritual

level than the other disciples. However, the NT provides no comment on the biological twin reference.

b. First John Reading, 11:1-12:11 (Thomas embraces Jesus's mission)

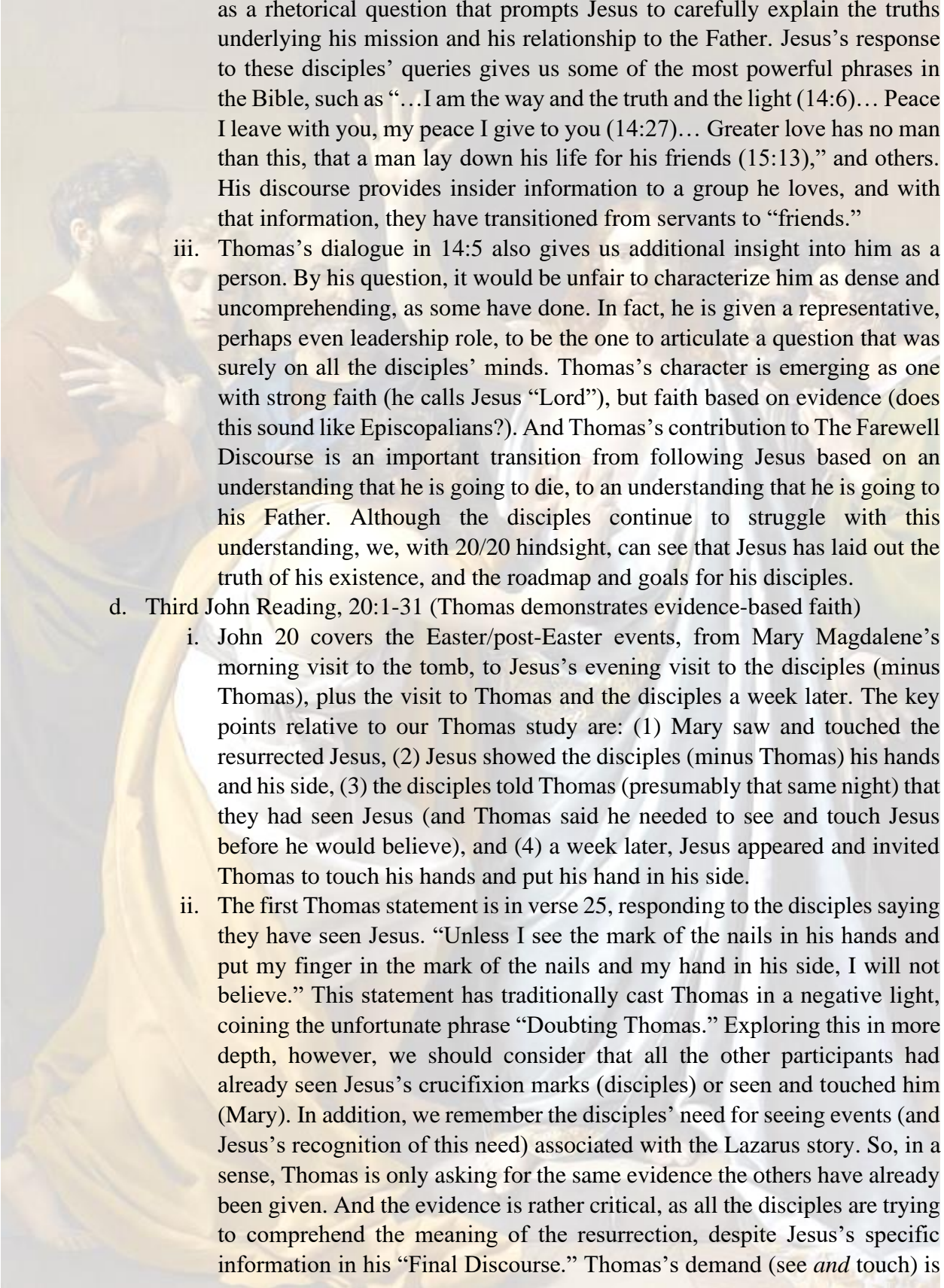
i. This reading covers the period, roughly, of the Lazarus story up to the events prior to Palm Sunday. To paraphrase, Jesus hears from Martha and Mary that their brother, Lazarus, is sick at their home in Bethany and they ask Jesus to come. Jesus decides to wait two days, and then tells the disciples he is ready to go. Thomas then plays a key, perhaps *the* key role in the dialogue that follows. The disciples remind Jesus that the Jews just tried to stone him in Judea. Jesus is aware of the danger, but says he's going to awaken Lazarus, who has fallen asleep. The disciples misunderstand, so Jesus tells them Lazarus is really dead, therefore when Jesus raises him they may believe. Now the key line, Thomas says, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (11:16).

ii. The rest of the dialogue and narration up to verse 11:45 involves the raising of Lazarus. Important as Lazarus's death/raising is, Thomas's words provide a prophetic bridge to later events. Thomas (apparently) was the only one who realized Jesus was going to Bethany, ultimately to *his* death and resurrection. In fact, the Lazarus raising is the principal trigger event for this. The chief priests and Pharisees discuss the realization that this event might cause all men to believe in Jesus. Caiaphas then finishes this discussion of their concern by saying that Jesus must be killed. Thomas's willingness to die with Jesus begins to clarify what appears to be Thomas's special understanding of, and relationship with, Jesus. And Jesus's understanding that the disciples need visual evidence of his miracles at this point in their relationship, i.e. "seeing is believing," also perhaps foreshadows Thomas's future request for evidence.

c. Second John Reading, 13:1-17:26 (Thomas helps clarify Jesus's mission)

i. The context of these four chapters in John has been referred to as "The Farewell Discourse," in which Jesus explains the complex relationships between heaven and earth, and the various aspects of his leaving. It includes the description of Jesus washing the disciples' feet and the naming of Judas as the betrayer in chapter 13, and his concluding prayer in chapter 17. In, arguably, some of the most important dialogue in the NT, Jesus reveals the way forward for the disciples, telling them that they will act with his authority if they love him, that he is going to his Father and will prepare a place for them, and that he will send the Holy Spirit to comfort them after he is gone. Whereas much of chapters 11-13 is the narrator speaking, chapters 14-17 are mostly Jesus's words.

ii. In John 14:5, Thomas is the first of three disciples (the others are Phillip and Judas (not Iscariot)) to seek additional understanding when he asks, "Lord, we do know not where you are going; how can we know the way?" This is another seminal input from Thomas, in that the narrator presents it



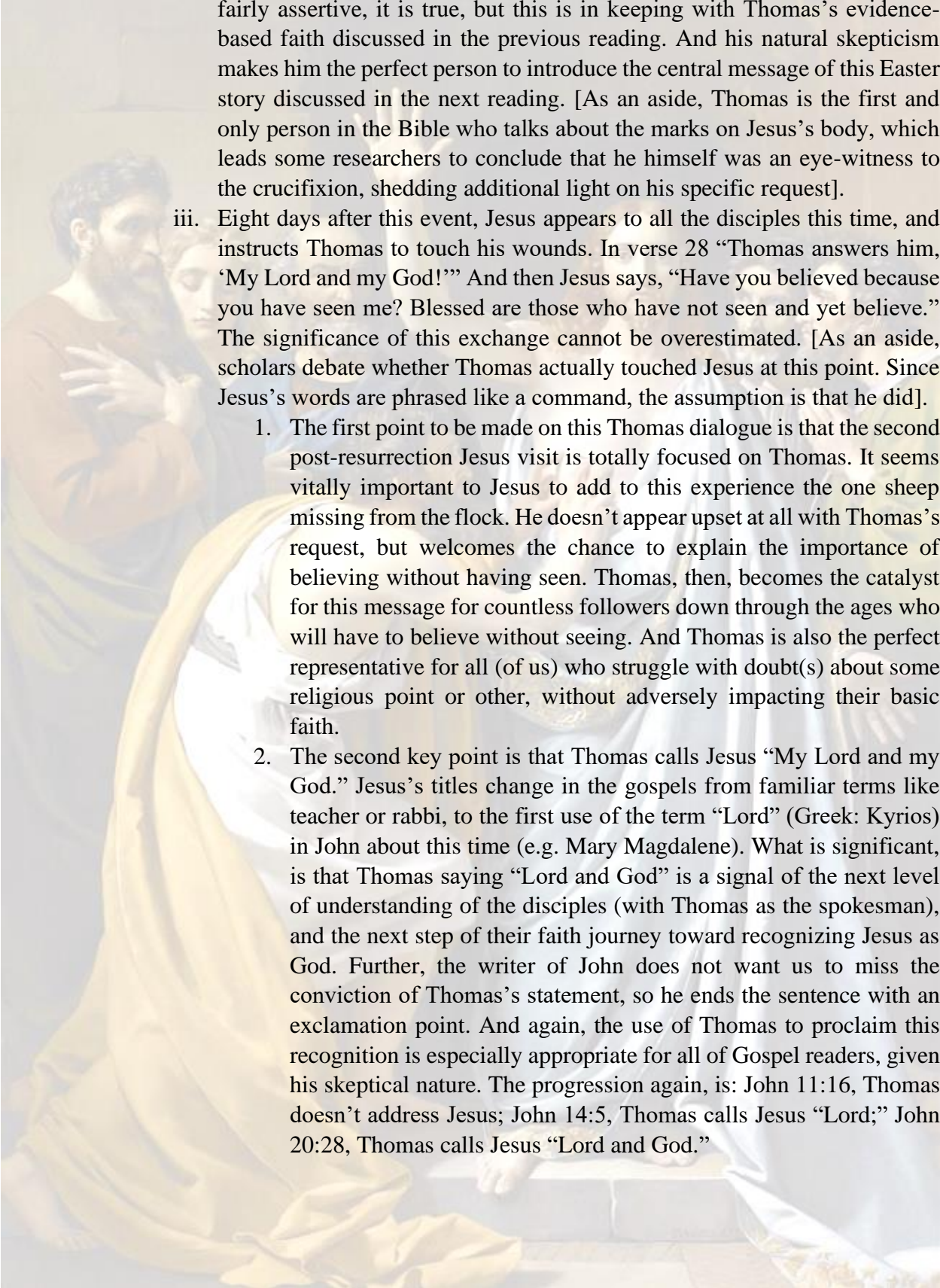
as a rhetorical question that prompts Jesus to carefully explain the truths underlying his mission and his relationship to the Father. Jesus's response to these disciples' queries gives us some of the most powerful phrases in the Bible, such as "...I am the way and the truth and the light (14:6)... Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you (14:27)... Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (15:13)," and others. His discourse provides insider information to a group he loves, and with that information, they have transitioned from servants to "friends."

iii. Thomas's dialogue in 14:5 also gives us additional insight into him as a person. By his question, it would be unfair to characterize him as dense and uncomprehending, as some have done. In fact, he is given a representative, perhaps even leadership role, to be the one to articulate a question that was surely on all the disciples' minds. Thomas's character is emerging as one with strong faith (he calls Jesus "Lord"), but faith based on evidence (does this sound like Episcopalians?). And Thomas's contribution to The Farewell Discourse is an important transition from following Jesus based on an understanding that he is going to die, to an understanding that he is going to his Father. Although the disciples continue to struggle with this understanding, we, with 20/20 hindsight, can see that Jesus has laid out the truth of his existence, and the roadmap and goals for his disciples.

d. Third John Reading, 20:1-31 (Thomas demonstrates evidence-based faith)

i. John 20 covers the Easter/post-Easter events, from Mary Magdalene's morning visit to the tomb, to Jesus's evening visit to the disciples (minus Thomas), plus the visit to Thomas and the disciples a week later. The key points relative to our Thomas study are: (1) Mary saw and touched the resurrected Jesus, (2) Jesus showed the disciples (minus Thomas) his hands and his side, (3) the disciples told Thomas (presumably that same night) that they had seen Jesus (and Thomas said he needed to see and touch Jesus before he would believe), and (4) a week later, Jesus appeared and invited Thomas to touch his hands and put his hand in his side.

ii. The first Thomas statement is in verse 25, responding to the disciples saying they have seen Jesus. "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." This statement has traditionally cast Thomas in a negative light, coining the unfortunate phrase "Doubting Thomas." Exploring this in more depth, however, we should consider that all the other participants had already seen Jesus's crucifixion marks (disciples) or seen and touched him (Mary). In addition, we remember the disciples' need for seeing events (and Jesus's recognition of this need) associated with the Lazarus story. So, in a sense, Thomas is only asking for the same evidence the others have already been given. And the evidence is rather critical, as all the disciples are trying to comprehend the meaning of the resurrection, despite Jesus's specific information in his "Final Discourse." Thomas's demand (see *and touch*) is



fairly assertive, it is true, but this is in keeping with Thomas's evidence-based faith discussed in the previous reading. And his natural skepticism makes him the perfect person to introduce the central message of this Easter story discussed in the next reading. [As an aside, Thomas is the first and only person in the Bible who talks about the marks on Jesus's body, which leads some researchers to conclude that he himself was an eye-witness to the crucifixion, shedding additional light on his specific request].

iii. Eight days after this event, Jesus appears to all the disciples this time, and instructs Thomas to touch his wounds. In verse 28 "Thomas answers him, 'My Lord and my God!'" And then Jesus says, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." The significance of this exchange cannot be overestimated. [As an aside, scholars debate whether Thomas actually touched Jesus at this point. Since Jesus's words are phrased like a command, the assumption is that he did].

1. The first point to be made on this Thomas dialogue is that the second post-resurrection Jesus visit is totally focused on Thomas. It seems vitally important to Jesus to add to this experience the one sheep missing from the flock. He doesn't appear upset at all with Thomas's request, but welcomes the chance to explain the importance of believing without having seen. Thomas, then, becomes the catalyst for this message for countless followers down through the ages who will have to believe without seeing. And Thomas is also the perfect representative for all (of us) who struggle with doubt(s) about some religious point or other, without adversely impacting their basic faith.

2. The second key point is that Thomas calls Jesus "My Lord and my God." Jesus's titles change in the gospels from familiar terms like teacher or rabbi, to the first use of the term "Lord" (Greek: Kyrios) in John about this time (e.g. Mary Magdalene). What is significant, is that Thomas saying "Lord and God" is a signal of the next level of understanding of the disciples (with Thomas as the spokesman), and the next step of their faith journey toward recognizing Jesus as God. Further, the writer of John does not want us to miss the conviction of Thomas's statement, so he ends the sentence with an exclamation point. And again, the use of Thomas to proclaim this recognition is especially appropriate for all of Gospel readers, given his skeptical nature. The progression again, is: John 11:16, Thomas doesn't address Jesus; John 14:5, Thomas calls Jesus "Lord;" John 20:28, Thomas calls Jesus "Lord and God."

III. Thomas in the Apocryphal Documents

a. Background

In addition to Thomas's appearance in the New Testament, he also appears in several apocryphal, or noncanonical documents that were present in early Christianity. Four of these documents will be discussed here in their approximate chronological order: the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Book of Thomas the Contender*, the *Acts of Thomas*, and the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*. Although they don't carry the same historical authority as the Gospels, they are of the same general historical period, and circulated among certain faith communities, especially Edessa, within the Syria Bishopric. Christianity started there as early as the first century CE, traditionally by an evangelist (either Addai or Thaddeus) sent by Thomas. There are also strong linguistic connections, as Syriac is a derivative of Aramaic. For these reasons, these writings provide additional context about the early traditions associated with Thomas as a person, and his influence on emerging beliefs.

b. The *Gospel of Thomas*

- i. The *Gospel of Thomas* is a collection of 114 sayings (Greek: Logia) attributed to Jesus. They are referred to in the writings of early church personalities including Hippolytus, Origen, Eusebius and Cyril of Jerusalem. The literary style is not as polished as the Gospels. But there are significant word and content similarities with Matthew, some with Luke, and a few with Mark. The Thomas references are found in Logion 1 and Logion 13.
- ii. Logion 1 concerns secret sayings that Jesus spoke and Didymus Judas Thomas recorded, implying Thomas is receiving secret information not available to the general public. Thomas is, thus, an authoritative recorder and interpreter of Jesus's sayings, especially to communities that believed Thomas was Jesus's twin, such as the Syriac Christians.
- iii. Logion 13 is a twist on Matthew 16:13-20, where Jesus asked the disciples who people say he is. In this version Thomas basically says his mouth is incapable of saying adequate words. Jesus then takes Thomas aside and tells him three things (Thomas does not repeat these to the other disciples). Thomas is presented as closer to Jesus and mature enough to get these secret sayings. Jesus has previously told the disciples that James will be their leader after he is gone, but Thomas is seen as at a higher spiritual level.

c. The *Book of Thomas the Contender*

This book contains sayings of Jesus, and conversations between Jesus and Thomas that were heard and recorded by Matthias (most likely the disciple Matthew). The assumed time frame of the events is between Jesus's resurrection and ascension. The main instruction themes of the book may be generalized by the following: (1) Thomas must know himself to know the Savior (and the depth of his knowledge); (2) There are three groups of people: those who are ignorant, those who are perfect (have perfect knowledge), and those who work toward the majesty of perfection.

Thomas is in the second group and should work toward the third. (3) Thomas should abstain from bodily pleasures, flesh will end, and only the soul lives on and must remain pure. Throughout these sayings, Jesus refers to Thomas with several personal titles including “Brother Thomas,” “My Twin,” and “True Friend.” Concerning the twin issue, it has been suggested that a convenient description of their relationship stopping short of biological twin, might be “spiritual twin.”

d. *The Acts of Thomas*

- i. Like other major noncanonical Acts (Peter, Paul and John), this book incorporates Gospel materials that would have been available, and combines them with popular legends and religious instruction. The basic format addresses Gospel-like teachings, the deeds and words of Thomas, and Thomas’s martyrdom.
- ii. There are a number of events and passages in the book that mirror those in the Gospels. There is a reference to the bridal church and the bridegroom king, Thomas participates in an exorcism with demonic confessions, there are cautions against adultery, there are talks reminiscent of the Sermon on the Mount, Thomas rides on a colt reminiscent of Jesus’s entry into Jerusalem, and he suffers beatings and imprisonment. This section of the book’s theological themes include purity, humility, temperance, the cross and salvation, sacrificial lifestyle, charity, physical and psychological healing, and a religious conversion from the old life to the new.
- iii. The *Acts of Thomas* say that Thomas visited India. His likely travels went from Andrapolis on the Malabar Coast, to King Gundaphoros’s kingdom in northwestern India, and then to King Masdai’s kingdom near Mylapore (east coast). He is presented as an itinerant missionary preacher, a recluse and a pauper. Among the miracles he is said to have performed: he rescued a youth from snakebite, exorcised the devil from a woman, resurrected a murdered adulterous woman, and healed a man’s wife and daughter.
- iv. While Thomas was in Mylapore, he angered King Masdai by converting members of the royal family, and was eventually hunted down and killed with spears. There are Gospel parallels with Jesus’s trial and death. Thomas was buried in Mylapore, but his relics are claimed by several churches from Ortana, Italy to India. The picture to the right is of the early Thomas tombstone, now at the Ortana church. The *Gospel of Thomas* contains tradition-rich historical information about Thomas performing missionary work beyond the Greco-Roman world. Most of these stories can’t be verified, but what can be verified is a Thomas-focused Christian tradition in India.



e. *The Infancy Gospel of Thomas*

- i. A principal objective of the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* is apparently to fill in the gaps in Jesus’s childhood, as Luke’s account of the twelve-year old

Jesus in the temple is the only childhood story the Gospel writers included. Thomas, “the Israelite philosopher” is the observer and narrator of these events. The book says that Thomas and Jesus were from the same region, that Thomas knew Jesus and his family very well, and it gives detailed information about Jesus’s family relationships and conversations at Jesus’s ages of five, six, eight and twelve. It is not necessary to cover the text in depth, but a key element is the description of various childhood miracles, including Jesus healing his brother James from a deadly snake bite, making clay sparrows that fly off, healing the diseased, raising the dead, and so on.

- ii. Based on this book, since Thomas was already a (childhood) friend of Jesus (and James), one can infer this could be a reason why Thomas is not listed as one of the disciples that Jesus “calls” in the Gospels. This early friendship and witness of Jesus’s miracles might also help explain his later description as a “mature believer,” who was selected to receive secret Jesus revelations. The historical basis of this work and the underlying oral traditions are questionable, but they do give us a feel for early perceptions about the character of Thomas.

IV. Thomas in Indian Traditions

a. Background

As discussed, oral and written traditions say that Thomas, as one of Jesus’s disciples who performed missionary journeys after the resurrection, travelled to India. There are at least two versions for why Thomas was chosen for India: it was Thomas’s character to choose the farthest and “greatest” land, or his destination was chosen by lot. Although details of Thomas’s factual or mythical presence in India probably reveal less about him than his sayings or writings, they are included here for the additional context they do provide.

b. Early Indian References

The first point to be made is that India as a geopolitical region “in the east” was known to the ancient western cultures. Evidence goes back to 1000 BCE of Indian connections with Israel, including trade with King Solomon’s kingdom and perhaps an early Jewish presence. The Persians, Greeks and Romans increased engagement with India (it was becoming known for its spices) starting after the 6th century BCE. Books about India, including maps made from visits, were written by historians like Scylax of Caryanda, Hecataeus of Miletus, Herodotus, Ctesias of Cnidus and others, all in the pre-Christian era. And Alexander the Great’s invasion of India in 327 BCE introduced additional exposure. Contact with India increased after 47 CE when the discovery of a new trade wind and route greatly reduced the travel time. So it appears likely that Thomas would have been well aware of India as an important nation at the eastern end of the known world, and that the ability to travel there was becoming much



easier in his lifetime (Thomas reportedly went to India in 52 CE and preached there until his death in 72 CE). The painting on the previous page shows St. Thomas arriving in Kochi, 52 CE.

c. Early Thomas References

It appears Thomas travelling to India was at least feasible, but what evidence do we have that that he travelled there? Early church fathers Eusebius and Jerome wrote that Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, sent Pantaenus to India around 190 CE, “at the request of the Christians in India.” Pantaenus’s successors, Clement and Origen, write that Indian Christianity was widely known by the end of the second century. Syrian copper plates, dating from 230 CE, discuss the founding of the Church of Malabar on the Indian coast. The Syrian document *Didaskalia Apostolorum*, around 250 CE identifies several apostolic missionary trips including Thomas’s to India. There is a certain Bishop John at the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE who represents the churches of “Persia and Greater India.” And St. Ephrem, St. Gregory, St. Ambrose, and John Chrysostom all produced writings connecting Thomas to India. It should also be noted that some early historians connected Thomas to Parthia (Persia), instead of India. However, the Parthian empire’s uncertain border with northwest India could possibly explain this (mis?) identification.

d. Later Thomas References

Over the years, several shrines to Thomas were built, including his tomb in Mylapore. King Alfred the Great sent two Catholic clerics from England to visit the tomb in the 9th century, and Marco Polo visited it in 1292. Vasco de Gama came in 1498, (the Portuguese later destroyed churches and writings of the “Thomas Christians” in the 16th century). Thomas was said to have established seven “and a half” churches in the Kerala region of India, none of which still exist, but later churches



were built at some of the traditional sites. More recently, the St. Thomas Pontifical Shrine was built at Azhikode, Kerala which contains a Thomas relic (arm bone).

There is also an ancient (6th or 7th century) symbol called the St. Thomas Cross or Nasrani Cross (image at right) associated with the Nasrani Christian sect. Characteristics include: the cross is bare (no Christ effigy), the four edges are floral in shape (tree of life), a lotus flower lies beneath the cross (Buddhism cultural adaptation), there are three steps below (Golgotha, or three decks of the Ark), and there is a descending dove (Holy Spirit).



Christianity today is India’s third-largest religion with 28 million followers. The Thomas community of India (the most prominent sect) retains elements of its Syrian/Persian/Indian roots with a focus on asceticism, self-denial and a higher realm of existence; reflective of the character and teachings of Thomas as their spiritual father.

V. Thomas in Art and Iconography

a. Introduction

How a historical figure is characterized by artists can provide some information about what is known or thought about him/her. Thomas, especially “Doubting Thomas,” became a fairly popular art subject for a period of time in the early to mid-1600’s. But, historically, he still lags well behind figures like Jesus, Mary, Peter, etc. In fact, excepting Caravaggio, historian reviews of masters that chose Thomas as a subject, almost without exception don’t include their Thomas paintings or sculptures among their most significant. Despite the relatively modest numbers, however, this section will look at what can be added to our knowledge of Thomas by some of the available Thomas artwork.

b. Symbols. Perhaps one of the most important indicators of how the artist understood Thomas was how they pictured him, how they dressed him, and what objects they included in the artwork. Here are some examples.

- i. Spear. Perhaps the most popular object to include in Thomas art not including renditions of the Doubting Thomas is a spear. This alludes to the tradition that says he was martyred with spears in India. One story has Thomas rejoicing that he is dying by the same instrument that killed his Savior. Numerous artists have picked up this theme including Rubens, El Greco, Velazquez, the Kooroth icon, and artwork from churches in Germany and Austria (illustration list at the end of the paper). Rubens did a separate painting of the martyrdom but for full effect, included sword, spear and stone.



18th C German Statue



Church of St. Rupert



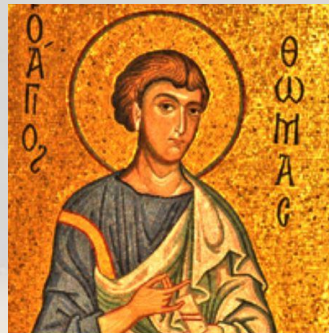
Martyrdom of St. Thomas, Rubens

- ii. Book/Scroll. A second popular object, although not as popular as the spear, is Thomas holding a book or a scroll. Thomas has the reputation as a philosopher, and one critic suggested a book or scroll could be used to write down passages of scripture. But I could find no specific references to the inclusion of these objects other than they are not unusual in any artwork related to saints. In the icons discussed later, the object is almost always a scroll, and several include the words “My Lord and my God.” Artists who

include this prop are Rubens and Velazquez (spear and book), George, the Orthodox image, and the icons. The Indian portrait by George, et al, has substituted a staff for the spear.



St. Thomas, Velazquez



Orthodox image, Sicily



Indian image, George

- iii. Carpenter's square. This is listed in one review as on a par with the spear as a common Thomas item, but it was uncommon in the artwork I reviewed. This refers to a story about an Indian king who was searching for an architect who could build a Roman-style temple. Thomas came forward, was given the money and the king left for a long trip. Coming back, he found that Thomas had given the money to the poor and when challenged, explained to the king that his "temple" would be in heaven. A 17th century Spanish relief (above) shows Thomas holding a carpenter's square. Concerning this idea of Thomas the builder, it should also be noted that tradition says Thomas built seven or more churches in India.



- iv. Age. Although we have no idea what Thomas looked like, if we consider some of the apocryphal documents, we may believe that he was about the same age as Jesus. That would put him in his 50's coming to India in 52 CE, and dying in his 70's in 72 CE. The El Greco and Bernini portraits below give their ideas of Thomas as a young adult. In Orthodox images (see Sicily image above), he is usually clean shaven. He is, perhaps, middle aged in the Indian icons, and older in the 1964 Indian stamp. Not much can be gleaned from two depictions of Thomas as an old man by Rubens and Gaulli, except he is assumed to be bald and bearded.



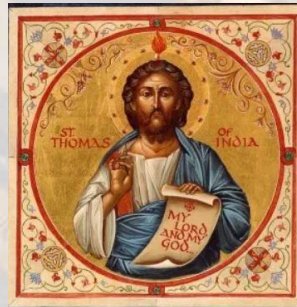
Thomas, El Greco



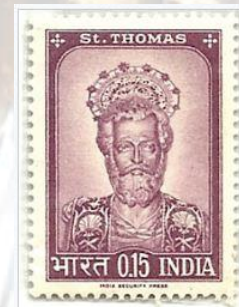
Saint Andrew and Thomas, Bernini



Kooroth icon



Madhya icon



1964 Indian stamp



St. Thomas, Gaulli



St. Thomas, Rubens

- v. The Virgin Mary's Belt. This symbol appears in several pieces of artwork and is included here for completeness. Jacobus de Varagine compiled a very popular collection of legends and stories about the saints in the middle of the 13th century called the *Golden Legend*. One of the stories says that St. Thomas was absent at the Assumption of St. Mary and wouldn't believe she was taken bodily into heaven. Then a girdle that was around her body fell down to him, after which he believed. The two examples presented on the next page show a clean-shaven Thomas.



15th Century Painting



1497 il Pastura Triptych

c. Doubting Thomas

This is the most popular subject for Thomas artwork, and, potentially, a much richer target for interpretation. As mentioned in this paper, Thomas actually touching Jesus in the doubting episode is not known but assumed. Some artists approached this by emphasizing the divine Jesus without/before Thomas touching him. Verrocchio's statue, for example, focuses on the process of the divine Jesus making his body available and Thomas's hand haltingly reaching forward. Bloch's painting takes a further step back by having Thomas cowering in shame while Jesus waits.



Verrocchio, 1483



Christ and St. Thomas, Bloch

Caravaggio's painting, by far the most famous of these paintings, takes the scene in the extreme opposite direction. Not only is Thomas's finger going aggressively into the wound, it is being guided by Jesus. The divinity of Jesus is seemingly stripped away by the lack of a halo and the graphic nature of the images. Controversial then, and now, it cleared the way for touching being the accepted presentation, as the other artists Navez, Guercino, the St. Mark's mosaic, and the earthenware show.



Incredulity, Caravaggio



Incredulity, Navez



Incredulity, Guercino



12th century mosaic



1520 Earthenware

VI. Conclusion

a. Summary of the Research

St. Thomas was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. He emerges as a key figure in the Gospel of John during the critical period of Jesus's pre-crucifixion communications with his disciples, through his post-resurrection disciple visits and instructions. Thomas plays a central role in connecting Lazarus's death to Jesus's death, understanding Jesus's relationship with his Father, and using his evidence-based faith to grasp Jesus's divinity. His emergence as a spokesperson and mature disciple is supported by the various apocryphal documents reviewed. These infer that he has been a close friend with Jesus since childhood and is his "spiritual twin," so is worthy of receiving special instruction, and he pursues the mastery of secret teachings he has been given. Tradition then says he sought out challenging missionary work in the far east and leaves a legacy of ascetic and spiritual qualities with the Indian Christian church that developed there as a result of his efforts. Artwork on Thomas clarifies that there was strong belief down through the years in his missionary work and martyrdom in India, and his qualities as a builder and philosopher

ii. Summary for St. Thomas Episcopal Church, College Station

After the research for these notes, there is still a lot I don't know about St. Thomas. But what I do know is he deserves more than the Doubting Thomas footnote to history and a pejorative definition. Much more. From our biblical sources he is the kind of person who intelligently seeks knowledge and enlightenment, and then "goes all in" as we would say, on a faith that should be a model for all. He shows courage, humility and leadership qualities. He is the patron saint of India, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan, architects, builders, carpenters, stone-masons, surveyors, geometricians, theologians, blind people ("blessed are those who believe without seeing") and people in doubt. All in all, he is someone worthy of admiration by Episcopalian Christians, and St. Thomas Church can be proud it is named after this Saint.

Charles H. "Chip" Hill, July, 2020

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Illustrations

1. Watermark. The Incredulity of St. Thomas, Francois-Joseph Navez, 1823
2. Page 6. 3rd – 5th Century St. Thomas Tombstone, Basilica of San Tommaso Apostolo, Ortana, Italy
3. Page 7. St. Thomas Arriving in Kochi, Marthoma St. Thomas Pontifical Shrine
4. Page 8, Marthoma St. Thomas Pontifical Shrine, Kodungallur Keral, India, credit A Wandering Mind
5. Page 8. St. Thomas Cross, credit Ocoy.org
6. Page 9. 18th Century German Statue of St. Thomas, credit Richard Stracke
7. Page 9. St Thomas the Apostle, Church of St Rupert, Weisspriach, Lungau, Austria
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9. Page 10. The Apostle St. Thomas, Diego Velazquez, 1620
10. Page 10. Orthodox image of St. Thomas in Sicily, credit Richard Stracke
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