

=THE APOSTLES=

Lesson 7

The Apostle Thomas

AIM: to teach my pupils the facts about the Apostle Thomas.

POINT OF CONTACT: Since the word “Thomas” and the word “Didymus” (another of his names) mean “twin,” Thomas no doubt was a twin. You might start the lesson off by asking the pupils if they know any twins. Ask them their names, where they live, how they came to know them, etc. Then tell them that the lesson for today is about a twin.

INTRODUCTION: Thomas has been called “doubting Thomas.” This comes from the fact that he doubted the resurrection of Christ. His doubting was to our benefit, however. Augustine said, “He doubted that we might not doubt.” Let us notice the facts concerning Thomas.

- I. THOMAS WAS A TWIN. Obviously, he was not an only child. A twin has peculiar problems in becoming unselfish, etc. (Teacher, speak to the children about giving and taking and how to relate to one’s self with his brothers and sisters.)
- II. THOMAS WAS BORN IN ANTIOCH.
- III. NOTHING ABOUT THOMAS IS MENTIONED IN MATTHEW, MARK AND LUKE EXCEPT THAT HE WAS ONE OF THE APOSTLES. Three events are recorded about him, however, in the Gospel of John.
- IV. THOMAS WAS WILLING TO DIE FOR CHRIST. See John 11:16. When the disciples were astonished that Jesus intended to go again to Judæa, where a little before the Jews had threatened to stone Him (John 11:7, 8), Thomas said that he would share the danger and said to the other apostles, “...Let us also go, that we may die with him.”
- V. THOMAS WAS INQUISITIVE. See John 14:5, 6. When Jesus spoke of going to prepare a place for the apostles, Thomas said, “...Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?” In answer to this, we have the great statement of John 14:6, “...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Here we find the importance of being inquisitive. We would never have had this beautiful statement had Thomas not been inquisitive. We should learn all we can. We should ask questions of those who know more about a particular subject than we. After all, this is what education is. We think of education as passing a test, taking a course, getting a diploma, etc. This only represents an education. Education is the acquiring of knowledge. Much knowledge can be acquired simply by asking questions of wise people.
- VI. THOMAS WANTED TO BE SURE OF JESUS’ RESURRECTION. See John 20:24, 25. Thomas was not at the first meeting when the Lord showed Himself to the apostles. When Thomas heard of the resurrected Christ, he said, “...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.” Then you recall the wonderful statement that Thomas made when he saw the scars: “...My Lord and my God,” John 20:28. Thomas wanted to be sure. This is not a bad thing. We should be sure of our faith and sure of our salvation. We should reexamine it periodically to make certain of the hope that is within us. Salvation is a “know-so” thing. Thomas wanted to be sure. Every person should be sure he is saved.
- VII. THOMAS WAS ON THE SEA OF GALILEE WITH SIX OTHER DISCIPLES WHEN JESUS CALLED TO THEM FROM THE SHORE AND TOLD THEM WHERE TO CAST THE NET. See John 21:1-8.
- VIII. THOMAS WAS WITH THE REST OF THE APOSTLES IN THE UPPER ROOM AT JERUSALEM AFTER THE ASCENSION. See Acts 1:13. In other words, he helped in the establishing and in the

perpetuating of the church at Jerusalem. No doubt he was one of the ones who won souls on Pentecost and helped in the spreading of the Gospel after this great occasion.

- IX. THOMAS, IN LATER YEARS, PREACHED IN PARTHIA AND PERSIA. From there he went to India (according to tradition). While in India, he was threatened with death if he did not stop preaching. He refused to stop preaching and was martyred. Remember what he had said back in John 11? He had said he wanted to die for Christ. The opportunity came; he accepted it, and he did die for his Lord. It is interesting that the martyrs did not die because of their belief; they died because they propagated their belief. They did not die because of conviction; they died because of practice. They did not die because of doctrine; they died because of spreading the doctrine. The world does not mind our believing something. The Devil does not mind our having a doctrine or even, perhaps, having a worship service. Persecution comes when we try to spread the truth to others.