

Law & Order, XIII

Doubting Ditto

July 24, 2016



Welcome to where we're coming to know and grow in God's Word!

Are you a sincere skeptic? Doubting Thomas was. **We're resolving every incidental inconsistency that *insincere* doubters use to deny truth, reject Jesus, and claim His throne.**

Thomas is the only missing Apostle when Jesus appears; and, he never lives it down! They were all rebuked for doubting. So, **why is Thomas singled out?** And, **why wasn't he with 'em?**



Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem a few days to receive His Spirit. (Acts 1:4-5) Then, one week after His resurrection and ascension, Jesus appears again. Let's read **John 20:21-31**. No verse is left out or out of order.



Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "**Receive the Holy Spirit.** If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." Now **Thomas** (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, **was not with the disciples when Jesus came.** ... **A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them.** – John 20:21-24, 26 NIV

This passage is problematic; and, the critics cry *contradiction*; because, John says Jesus' *third appearance* is on the shore. (Jn 21:14) So, **was the Spirit given that first night? That would contradict Jesus telling 'em to wait a few days for it.** (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5) But, **if we add another appearance, the shore can't be the third.** The reason John numbers the appearances is to make it very clear that here (in this passage) he's describing Jesus' *second appearance*. So, let's back up a bit, and just read it *that way*.

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were **together**, [minus **Thomas**] with the **doors locked for fear of the Jews**, Jesus came and **stood among them** [for the first time] and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. **Again** [on the following Sunday (John 20:26)] **Jesus said**, [now to all Twelve] "**Peace be with you!** [And, a little later, fulfilled His promise, saying] As the Father has sent me, I am sending **you** [His Twelve]." And with that he breathed on them and said, "**Receive the Holy Spirit** [just as He had promised, the Sunday before, to anoint them with "*in a few days*" (Acts 1:4-5)]. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." **Now** [to set the scene] **Thomas** [an Aramaic word for *twin* (Taumā), having the same origin as the Hebrew word for *twin* (ta'owm)] (called **Didymus**), [the Greek word for *double* (Taumā)] one of **the Twelve**, [who received the Spirit at this second appearance] **was not** [as in "*hadn't been*" (*ēn ou*)] with the disciples when Jesus came [the Sunday before]. – John 20:19-24 NIV

Thomas is the only Apostle known only by the nickname he was given as an Apostle. *Thomas* became a *name* about 500 years later. The disciples had different names in different languages. But, **only the *Twin* has the same name in all three: *the double*.** But: **Who was Didymus the double of?**



The chief priests, elders, and temple officers, arresting Jesus, were with Him every day at the Temple. (Luke 22:47-53) Yet, after He greets ‘em, He has to tell ‘em who He is; (John 18:4-5) and even after that, they *still need* Judas to betray Him with a kiss. *Why? They knew what He looked like; they just didn’t know which one He was,* even though He’s right in front of ‘em, talking to ‘em, just Him, and eleven men, one of whom was called *the Twin*.



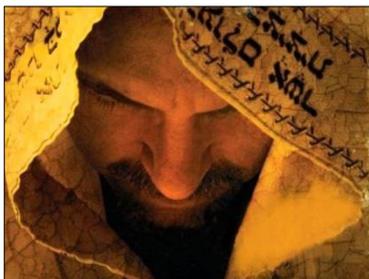
Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is **the man**; arrest **him**.” – Matthew 26:48 NIV

How did Judas’ kiss betray Jesus? By identifying Him to those who knew what He looked like. I think Thomas looked like *Jesus*. A lot. Like, enough to be Jesus’ body-double.



King David used a dummy-double to distract his foes. (1 Sam 19:13) And, King Ahab went into battle in disguise while Jehoshaphat, in royal robes, was chased as Ahab. (1 Kings 22:29-33)

They recently used a decoy to distract protestors and the media at the Freddie Gray trial.



With Jesus’ Rock Star status, a lookalike would’ve been a practical security measure and a necessity for His fans *and* foes. These same elders, priests, and officers had been foiled before.

... they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus **hid** [*kryptō: concealed*] Himself and went out of the temple, going **through the midst of** [*mesos: from among*] them, and **so** [*houtō(s): in this manner*] **passed by.** [*paragō: mislead; departed*] – John 8:58-59 NKJ

Was this a miracle or a security measure? “Everybody switch tallits!

Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him but **Jesus** [*facing His attackers*] said to them, “**I have shown you ...**” [And, though He’s right in front of ‘em] **Again** they tried to seize him, but he **escaped** [*exerchomai ek: came out from among*] their grasp. – John 10:31, 39 NIV

If Thomas drew Jesus’ killers to himself, he’s got’a be one of the most courageous of the Twelve.

He said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.” “But Rabbi,” they said, “**a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you ...**” Then **Thomas** (called **Didymus** [*or: the Twin of Twins*]) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” – John 11:7-16 NIV

He doesn't imply that Jesus' previous escapes were miraculous, and is *certain* that whatever worked before *won't* work again, at least not on the same stoners; but, he's ready to die trying.

Why wasn't Thomas there when Jesus rose? He's nearby. Word's out that the Word's out. Everyone argued all day before Jesus appeared. So, why wasn't Thomas there? ***God didn't want him there.***

... **God** raised [Jesus] from the dead on the **third day** and **caused** him to be **seen**. He was **not seen by all** the people, but by **witnesses** whom **God had already chosen** — by **us [every Apostle except Thomas and many other disciples]** who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. — Acts 10:39-43 NIV

Why would God want one of His witnesses to not be there? Well, **if he looks like Jesus, he can't be anywhere near where He'll first appear without causing all kinds of ... *doubt.***

So the other disciples **told him**, **[when they returned from the ascension, on the night of Jesus' resurrection]** "We have **seen** [*horaō: beheld*] the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I **see** [*eidō: examine; interview; visit with*] the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, **I will not believe it** [If he spent three years as a deceptive double, his extreme reluctance to believe everyone is actually quite understandable; he'd be intimately aware of the workings of this type of deception]." **[Then]** **A week later** [*bringing us back to the beginning of this second encounter*] his disciples were in the house again, and **[this time]** Thomas [*the Twin*] was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them ... — John 20:25-26a NIV



Wait. **Why are the doors locked *again*?** Fear? Prudence? It's more than prudence or it wouldn't be emphasized as part of the story. And, they'd feared a religious frame-up; but, now they've *seen* Jesus alive and coming into His power, glory, and authority. **They're praying to Jesus as to Jehovah!** (Acts 1:24-26) And, *this is the step too far. This is where the skeptic has to draw the line. It's one thing to accept Jesus as Teacher, Healer, or Savior, but Creator, Sustainer, and Judge?* That requires submission at a much, much deeper level.

I can just hear Thomas: "You're *praying* to Him?! Based on what? A guy you didn't recognize, and didn't see come in, showed you scars you didn't properly examine? Were they wax? Did you double-check the door *before* he appeared? Did he slip in and lock it behind him? Nobody go near those doors. He said a few days; it's been a week. How long we gonna wait?"

Though the doors were **locked**, **[just as they'd been before]** Jesus came and **stood among them** [*just as He had before*] and **said**, [*just as He had before — only, this time to all twelve*] "**Peace be with you!**" [And Doubting Didymus did a royal double-take! And, before Jesus breathed His Spirit into His Twelve, He needed to address the Twin] Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; **see my hands**. [Lit. "*Behold My hands*". I can only picture Jesus holding His hands out to the sides as He had on the cross, exposing not only the nail marks, but any and every rope burn and scar] Reach out your hand and put it **into** my side. Stop **doubting** [*apistos: not trusting; not wanting to believe*] and **believe** [*pistos: be trusting*]." — John 20:26b-27 NIV

There comes a point when the skeptic must decide from which side of the fence he or she will continue their search for truth. The insincere skeptic will never make such a commitment; because they're seeking their own version of truth, not Truth itself.

Thomas said to him, **"My Lord and my God!"** [And, the eleven said, **"See?!"**] Then Jesus told him, "Because you have **seen** [horaō: to behold; to take heed; to obey as requested] **me**, [having examined His scars] **you have believed**; [Picture a disciple who looks like a "before photo" of Jesus, touching the scars of the "After"] [The plural of didymus (didumoi) was used to refer to the Zodiac Twins, *Dioscuri*. Paul describes a ship's figurehead of 'em (Acts 28:11); and, one twin son (Castor) is mortal while the other (Pollux) divine] **blessed are those who have not seen** [eidō: examine; interview; visit with] and yet have believed." [Well, that leaves out all twelve!] – John 20:28-29 NIV

"Blessed are those who have not seen" what? Jesus, in His flesh. And, **"yet have believed/trusted" what? Jesus in His Word.** The First Covenant, Old Testament Word became flesh; but then, the Last Covenant, New Testament *flesh* became *the Word*. Ready for the rug to be pulled out: **Thomas wasn't the last, but the first to see Jesus and Jehovah as One ... but, by His Word.**



Ten nights earlier, at the Last Supper ...

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If **you** [Thomas] really knew me, **you** [Thomas] would know my Father as well. **From now on, you** [Thomas] **do know him and have seen him.**" ["And therefore, having My Word to trust, have no need of any further proof."] – John 14:1-7 NIV

But, **the Twin resisted the Word**; and, instead of receiving this blessing, exchanged it for distrust, disbelief, and doubt. **Instead of opening the Word, he's locking the door.**

Even after everyone he's trusted urges him to trust. Even after he and everyone, "even those who pierced Him" (Rev 1:7) saw that light show. **This is the level of skepticism in the Twin. But, seems Jesus chose the ultimate skeptic to bless every skeptic thereafter.**

Jesus doesn't scold him. Instead, He invites him to satisfy his doubts by honestly examining His flesh for himself. And, this is when Jesus says, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you," (to help others believe without seeing) and *then* breathes on them. (John 20:21-22)

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But **these** [including the story of Thomas] are written that **you may believe** [by an examination of the Word] that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in **his name** [which just happens to be, **"the Word of God"** (Rev 19:13; John 1:1)]. – John 20:30-31 NIV

Are you a sincere skeptic? Are you seeking your own version of truth, or Truth itself?

Put your fingers in His Word and He'll show you He's alive.