

Small Group Study Questions – April 13

Opening Prayer

Scripture - John 20 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “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.” A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

What do you make of Jesus’ message of “peace be with you” to the disciples?

What do you make of Jesus’ response to Thomas?

Many have wondered, what is the place of the doubter in the story? Why would the gospel writers have included these doubting and disbelieving figures?

And what about use of ‘The Twin’ as it pertains to this doubter?

From Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*:

The titles of the Gospel of Thomas and the Book of Thomas the Contender (attributed to Jesus’ “twin brother”) may suggest that “you, the reader, are Jesus’ twin brother.” Whoever comes to understand these books discovers, like Thomas, that Jesus is his “twin,” his spiritual “other self.” Jesus’ words to Thomas, then, are addressed to the reader: “Since it has been said that you are my twin and true companion, examine yourself so that you may understand who you are ... I am the knowledge of the truth. So while you accompany me, although you do not understand (it), you already have come to know, and you will be called ‘the one who knows himself.’ For whoever has not known himself has known nothing, but whoever has known himself has simultaneously achieved knowledge about the depth of all things.”⁷²

Historians and scholars believe that there was an entire community of Thomasine Christians who were rivals, some say successionists, to the Johannine community. Does that change how you view this pericope and if so, how?

Resurrection Reconsidered by Philip Riley is the book that I have in my library.

<https://www.amazon.com/Resurrection-Reconsidered-Thomas-John-Controversy/dp/0800628462>

Closing Prayer.

Rest well!