



Easter 3 B Rev A
Epistle

ARTICLE NO.
2006.4
I John 1:1-2:1

A Word to Thomas, and other doubters
I John 1:1-2:1

Collect

O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and **our hands have handled, of the Word of life;** (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:



Glen Miller



"we" is the "royal we". It means I.

RSV holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

NKJV holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

Philips NT 1972 For you hold up **in your hands the very word of life**. Thus can you give me something to be proud of in the day of Christ, for I shall know then that I did not spend my energy in vain.

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. (Matthew 1:23, KJV 1769).

Much of this tract is commentary - don't take it as Gospel. It is here to encourage meditation and study. Use your gift of discernment, to find the truth.

A word to Thomas and other doubters

I am writing this not as "gospel" nor history, nor even as a mystical interpretation, but rather it is a simple story that contains some truth, but may not be what actually happened.

"What is Truth?" asked Pilate of Jesus - but came no answer .

His evangelists, you and I, have been seeking the answer to Pilate's question. This is one answer.

Not that this is Truth necessarily but that it contains some truth. I hope that through this story, some part of God's great Truth will trickle down to you, as it has to me, in a manner that touches your heart. And perhaps one day, suddenly, instantaneously, you will understand something that you have been questioning all along, which seemed before to be a mystery , and is no longer.

The story begins in A.D. 130

Introduction by the messengers.

"We have come from Ephesus, with a message from John the Apostle who is the son of Zebedee, and the brother of James and who was with Jesus when they tied him to the cross. John waited with Jesus, and with Mary His mother until Jesus was lifted down and taken to the cave and entombed. Reluctantly, after he could tarry no more because it was the Sabbath eve, took the two Marys home.

John was later with the eleven when Jesus showed the wounds in his side.

And to Thomas, who would not believe that His body was real, He said "touch me" and Thomas saw the gash on his side and felt the warmth of His flesh. And Thomas knelt and from fear whispered 'My Lord and my God', and unspoken, 'I believe'.

Yet he did not. For he had seen the locked doors, and yet somehow Jesus had entered the room.

And Jesus asked Thomas "Have you believed because you have seen me?" But he knew that Thomas did not believe. And Thomas did not answer.

He turned to the Apostles, who were standing amazed at the scene . and said " those *who have come to believe* even though they had not seen

+ Me, are happy and lucky and blessed"

But Thomas who **had** seen, and **not** believed was not happy.



Thomas the twin, according to John. Didymus means twin. There is a suggestion that Thomas was Jesus's "twin brother", due to his name. Perhaps He was called twin because he taught an alternate Gospel that was very similar in many aspects to Jesus's Gospel, just one little difference, Thomas rejected Jesus' s human birth. But God had chosen Thomas for Jesus, and Thomas became a great Missionary. he took his Gospel to Syrian and India, and perhaps even to China.

I John 1:1-2:1

It's only a story

“It was on that same day, that John brake bread with Jesus, and they ate fiah together.

We carry John’s last instructions to everyone in the Church, and a special message to Thomas the doubter who denies that our Lord was a man of flesh with human nature and a soul, just like us.

Sit still, and I will warm this chilly night air with John’s words. And if Thomas the doubter is here with us, know that Jesus loves you. Hear the testimony of John whom the Lord loved the most, and who prays on your behalf. And think on Jesus Christ who listens to His servants and hopes to know you.

I now speak for John.

‘That which was from the beginning - eternal truth, Christ, the Word of Life, who I have heard, who I have seen with my eyes and looked upon at the cross, whose warm blood has anointed my hands, and whose cold body I felt in the tomb, this God, in the form of a man came to us, and has known us, and taught me about life eternal.

I write to all who still doubt. I send my servants to you with this blessing that if you will take into your heart this truth of God, and will fellowship with my servants, and also with one another, you can **know** the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ.

By these words, which are the light of God, nothing will remain hidden from you, and you will understand what is life eternal, to know God. And you will have joy in this life and will be blessed, and happy, and lucky.

Share with my servants the bread of life which is Jesus Christ, and walk in the light. Drink His blood to cleanse you from sin. But, if doubting, you say that you have no need to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ, then you walk in darkness.

And if you say you have no sin, then you make God to be a liar, who has sent His Son to cleanse you of your sins.

Doubter, you must trust me. For I am close to the Lord, and He says that He wants to **know** you.

Admit you are sinful, repent and share with us the joy of the Lord. Have fellowship with these my servants. And Jesus Christ the righteous will cleanse you even now. And He will offer you to the Father, and the Father will take you in.’

END

The Views expressed here are strictly those of the author and probably disagree with what you have previously thought. Read other commentaries - meditate on the original KJV.

It's only a story**What was happening in Christianity at that time**

At this moment in history, A.D. 130, the Church was beginning to define itself, and the disagreements about the nature of Jesus were becoming a stumbling block to unification, to the formation of the one holy catholic Church.

In this letter, though it was not a letter in the normal sense, since it was addressed to the entire Church, also to those outside the fellowship of the followers of Paul’s teachings, John is clarifying some statements in his Gospel which had inadvertently fuelled the fires of what was later to be identified as “Docetism”, or the belief that Jesus did not have a real body. John’s mysticism in his Gospel was beyond the understanding of the simple folk who were followers. Rather than try to understand the spiritual message from John, they took the words at face value. When John stated that Jesus did something inhuman (like superman), people believed it was because of His divine power He could do this, and because of the divine power, they suggested that Jesus did not really suffer on the cross, (it was a dogma of the Church that the divine nature suffers not at all). It was their simple answer to the difficulties they were having with understanding the contradictions in the scriptures about Jesus’s nature.

The Gospel of Thomas which circulated during the 1st. c. was condemned before A.D. 110 by Ignatius, 3rd. Bishop of Antioch, who had been a disciple of St. John the Apostle. There is some thought even that Ignatius was an auditor of St. John.

On his way to Rome and martyrdom, Ignatius wrote seven letters to the Churches against other teachings and he refuted some of the ideas of the gospel of Thomas, but at least half of the sayings in the gospel of Thomas echoed the synoptic Gospel sayings, so the gospel was still popular. The RC and Anglican Church have accepted these seven letters from Ignatius as genuine; the Protestant churches reject them all. The Gospel of Thomas was never included in the canon of the Church.

Later tradition- a story called *The Assumption of Mary*, has Thomas being forgiven by Mary for his doubt, and his final reconciliation with the other Apostles.

In 1 John, the author is addressing some of Thomas's "errors" by emphasizing the human nature of Jesus, and his ordinary human behavior. He makes a strong statement that Jesus's body was real. And in chapter 4, John talks about the antichrist, (this name only appears in the Johannine letters) by which he means Thomas, who had that Jesus was **not** born of Mary.

In other Gospels, the authors had similar concerns, and introduced into their story statements that refuted Thomas's tradition. For example:

- Jesus's statements on the cross, where He tells us all that He is going to Paradise that day, which is the place for all human souls, whereas a spirit would have gone straight to the Father.
- His appearance after the resurrection where he is described eating food and drink with the brethren, which proved he had an internal digestion system - not needed by spirits.

These statements were to correct the mistakes of the teachings of Thomas.

Perhaps, and this is a guess, the statements refuting Thomas's teaching were included in the Greek Gospels, and not the original Aramaic Gospels which had been written before Thomas was causing problems. John's gospel was written early in the 2nd. c. some 50 years later than Paul's letters, and 30 years after the last of the synoptic Gospels. And Thomas already had a large following at the time John wrote. So let's presume that John's Gospel, or perhaps his "letter #1" which may have been written in Greek, were read by the scribes who were translating the Aramaic Gospels. They might have edited the originals to support John's anti-Thomasian position, and so we see these snippets of dialog, and argument to deny Thomas's teaching; snippets that would seem out of place in any writing simultaneous with Jesus's mission. Were there any Gospels written simultaneous with Jesus? It is my pious hope that someone was reporting on Him, and that the scribes he so often mentions, were working for him. There were several wealthy women who followed him around who certainly could have paid for a scribe. And perhaps Matthew, who must have known how to write to do his job, and perhaps encouraged one of his scribes to follow him, was the earliest author. Matthew is always considered to have been writing for a Jewish audience, and that would agree with what we know of the original converts. There is in the literature quotations from an earlier Gospel of Matthew that has never been found (it's probably somewhere in the Vatican Archives among the 27 miles of shelved books!).

Paul called it "my Gospel" because he had taken complete ownership of the teaching that Jesus had entrusted to him.

"impassibility" - a doctrine of the Church. = not sensitive to man's passion, has not man's passionate nature.

Catholic Encyclopedia

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1 John 1:1-2:1

All about the Jewish aversion to drinking Christ’s “blood”.

“The Torah prohibits consumption of blood. Lev. 7:26-27; Lev. 17:10-14. This is the only dietary law that has a reason specified in Torah: we do not eat blood because the life of the animal is contained in the blood. This applies only to the blood of birds and mammals, **not to fish blood.**” <http://www.jewfaq.org/kashrut.htm>

Since most, if not all of the followers during the 1st. c. were practicing Jews, there was great aversion to the idea of drinking Christ’s blood in this Eucharistic ritual, and many backed away when they heard of it for fear that they would be cut off from their own people - which is, of course, precisely what Christ expected of his followers. The Eucharistic ritual was a stumbling block to Jewish conversions, and the Evangelists had to show that it was more important to share the Eucharist with the brethren, than to continue fellowship with their own people.

Here is what God the Word told Israel.

Le 3:17 *It shall be* a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood.

Leviticus 7:26, 27 Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of **fowl or of beast**, in any of your dwellings. Whatsoever **soul** it be that eateth any manner of blood, even **that soul shall be cut off from his people.**

Le 17:10 And whatsoever man *there be* of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against **that soul** that eateth blood, and **will cut him off from among his people.**

Le 17:11 For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your **souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.**

Le 17:12 Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No **soul** of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.

Le 17:13 And whatsoever man *there be* of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust.

Le 17:14 For *it is* the life of all flesh; **the blood of it is for the life**

Amori Christi et Ecclesiae –
Glen C. Miller OSV

Now you see one of the reasons that the brethren lived apart from their families, and neighbors. Once they partook of the Eucharist, they were cut off from the observant Jews.

1Sa 14:33 Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, **Ye have transgressed: roll a great stone unto me this day.**

1Sa 14:34 And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay *them* here, and eat; and **sin not against the LORD in eating with the blood.** And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and slew *them* there.

Here is what God the Word/Jesus Christ told his followers at the synagogue in Capernaum.

Joh 6:53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

James instruction at Jerusalem, to Paul and Barnabas of their conversion of nonobservant Jews living outside of Judea (in Gentile nations).

Ac 15:20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood.[but by this he may have meant to observe the Levitical law of Lev. 7:26, against drinking the blood of birds or mammals. The Eucharist was surely observed.].

Recommended Books

ISBN

Four empty rectangular boxes for listing recommended books.

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Extract from The Assumption of Mary (Latin) date unknown

Then the most blessed **Thomas** was suddenly brought to the Mount of Olivet, and saw the most blessed body going up to heaven, and began to cry out and say: O holy mother, blessed mother, spotless mother, if I have now found grace because I see thee, make thy servant joyful through thy compassion, because thou art going to heaven. Then the girdle with which the apostles had encircled the most holy body was thrown down from heaven to the blessed Thomas. And taking it, and kissing it, and giving thanks to God, he came again into the Valley of Jehoshaphat. He found all the apostles and another great crowd there beating their breasts on account of the brightness which they had seen. And seeing and kissing each other, the blessed Peter said to him: Truly thou hast always been obdurate and unbelieving, because for thine unbelief it was not pleasing to God that thou shouldst be along with us at the burial of the mother of the Saviour. And he, beating his breast, said: I know and firmly believe that I have always been a bad and an unbelieving man; therefore I ask pardon of all of you for my obduracy and unbelief. And they. all prayed for him. Then the blessed Thomas said: Where have you laid her body? And they pointed out the sepulchre with their finger. And he said: The body which is called most holy is not there. Then the blessed Peter said to him: Already on another occasion thou wouldst not believe the resurrection of our Master and Lord at our word, unless thou went to touch Him with thy fingers, and see Him; how wilt thou believe us that the holy body is here? Still he persists saying: It is not here. Then, as it were in a rage, they went to the sepulchre, which was a new one hollowed out in the rock, and took up the stone; but they did not find the body, not knowing what to say, because they had been convicted by the words of Thomas. Then the blessed Thomas told them how he was singing mass in India—he still had on his sacerdotal robes. He, not knowing the word of God, had been brought to the Mount of Olivet, and saw the most holy body of the blessed Mary going up into heaven, and prayed her to give him a blessing. She heard his prayer, and threw him her girdle which she had about her. And the apostles seeing the belt which they had put about her, glorifying God, all asked pardon of the blessed Thomas, on account of the benediction which the blessed Mary had given him, and because he had seen the most holy body going up into heaven. And the blessed Thomas gave them his benediction, and said: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

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