

# John 20:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

## Analysis

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**But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.** John identifies Thomas with both Aramaic name (אֶתְمָאָתָה, "twin") and Greek equivalent Didymos (Διδυμος, also meaning "twin"). This naming pattern (John 11:16, 21:2) emphasizes Thomas's identity while explaining terms for Greek readers. The phrase "**one of the twelve**" confirms Thomas's apostolic status despite his absence—his failure to gather doesn't forfeit his position, though it costs him Easter evening's blessing.

Thomas's absence remains unexplained. Unlike Judas's deliberate apostasy, Thomas simply wasn't present when Jesus appeared. Perhaps grief isolated him; perhaps fear scattered him; perhaps practical errands delayed him. Scripture's silence invites caution against harsh judgment. Yet his absence demonstrates gathered fellowship's importance—blessings flow through community. The corporate gathering received Christ's peace, commissioning, and Spirit (vv.19-23); Thomas's isolation meant missing resurrection's initial joy. His story warns against forsaking assembly (Hebrews 10:25) and illustrates how isolation breeds doubt while fellowship nurtures faith. Providence uses even unwise absence to birth testimony—Thomas's doubt becomes vehicle for Christ's greatest resurrection proof.

## Historical Context

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Thomas appears in all apostle lists (Matthew 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15, Acts 1:13) and receives special attention in John's Gospel. He demonstrated devotion willing to die with Jesus (John 11:16), asked honest questions about Christ's way (John 14:5), and now struggles with resurrection faith. Later tradition calls him "Doubting Thomas," but this nickname oversimplifies—Thomas demanded evidence all apostles initially lacked (Luke 24:11, Mark 16:11).

Early church tradition (Acts of Thomas, 3rd century) places Thomas's missionary work in Parthia and India. The Mar Thoma Church in Kerala, India, claims foundation by Thomas around 52 AD. While these traditions lack biblical confirmation, they demonstrate early Christianity's missionary expansion and Thomas's honored place despite recorded doubt. Archaeological evidence in India (Thomas Cross inscriptions) and Syrian Christian liturgy preserving Thomas traditions suggest historical kernel behind legends.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does Thomas's absence demonstrate the spiritual danger of isolating from Christian community during trials?
2. What does Scripture's sympathetic treatment of Thomas's doubt teach about Christ's patience with honest struggles?
3. How can God use even our failures and absences to accomplish greater purposes in His providence?

## Interlinear Text

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Θωμᾶς	δὲ	εἷς	ἐκ	τῶν	δώδεκα	ὁ	λεγόμενος	Δίδυμος
Thomas	But	one	of		G3588	the twelve	G3588	called
G2381	G1161	G1520	G1537			G1427		G3004
οὐκ	ἦν	μετ'	αὐτῶν	ὅτε	ἦλθεν	ὁ	Ἰησοῦς	
not	was	with	them	when	came	G3588	Jesus	
G3756	G2258	G3326	G846	G3753	G2064		G2424	

## Additional Cross-References

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**John 11:16** (Parallel theme): Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

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