

John 20:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

Analysis

Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side—Jesus directly addresses Thomas's specific demand (v. 25): "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." Christ quotes Thomas's exact requirements, demonstrating omniscient knowledge of a conversation He wasn't physically present for. The invitation to touch proves Jesus's body is physical—bearing crucifixion scars eternally. These wounds are not defects but glorious trophies of accomplished redemption.

The verb "thrust" (βάλε/bale, from βάλλω/ballō) means to throw, cast, or plunge—stronger than gentle touching. Jesus invites invasive examination, meeting doubt head-on with tangible evidence. The scars in His hands (where nails pierced) and side (where the soldier's spear struck, John 19:34) permanently mark Christ's body. Even in glorification, He retains crucifixion wounds—the Lamb appears "as it had been slain" (Revelation 5:6).

And be not faithless, but believing (μὴ γίνου ἀπιστος ἀλλὰ πιστός/mē ginou apistos alla pistos)—The present imperative μὴ γίνου (mē ginou, "stop being") suggests Thomas was in danger of persistent unbelief. ἀπιστος (apistos, faithless) means without faith, untrustworthy, unbelieving. Christ calls Thomas from unbelief (ἀπιστος) to faith (πιστός). This is gracious confrontation—Jesus doesn't reject the

doubter but provides evidence while commanding faith. Doubt must be resolved through encounter with the risen Christ, not accommodation or intellectual argument alone.

Historical Context

Thomas's demand for empirical proof reflects Greco-Roman epistemology valuing sensory evidence. Yet even ancient skeptics recognized eyewitness testimony's value. Jesus provides exactly what Thomas required, validating reasonable investigation while ultimately calling for faith.

The permanence of Christ's wounds holds profound theological significance. In Jewish sacrificial system, the lamb was consumed—evidence of sacrifice disappeared. But Christ's eternal scars testify perpetually to His finished work. Hebrews 10:12 says He "sat down" at God's right hand—work complete. Yet Revelation 5:6 shows the Lamb "as it had been slain" standing—wounds visible eternally.

Early church fathers saw Christ's retained wounds as proof against Docetism (the heresy that Jesus only seemed to have a physical body). Ignatius of Antioch (c. 110 AD) emphasized Christ's physical resurrection against such errors. The wounds demonstrate:

1. identity—same Jesus who was crucified
2. physicality—real body, not phantom
3. continuity—resurrection transforms but doesn't discard the crucified body.

For Thomas, representing honest doubters across history, this encounter became transformative.

Tradition holds he later preached the gospel in India, martyred for faith in the risen Christ. The doubter became a bold witness—evidence encountered and faith exercised.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Why does Jesus retain His crucifixion scars eternally, and what do they reveal about the nature of His redemptive work?
2. How does Jesus's response to Thomas balance providing evidence with calling for faith—and what does this teach about apologetics?
3. What is the difference between honest doubt that seeks resolution and obstinate unbelief that refuses evidence?

Interlinear Text

εἴτα	λέγει	τῷ	Θωμᾶ	φέρε	τὸν	δάκτυλόν	σου	ἄδε
Then	saith he	G3588	to Thomas	Reach	G3588	finger	thy	hither
G1534	G3004		G2381	G5342		G1147	G4675	G5602

καὶ	ἴδε	τὰς	χεῖρά	μου	καὶ	φέρε	τὴν	χεῖρά	σου	καὶ
and	behold	G3588	hand	my	and	Reach	G3588	hand	thy	and
G2532	G1492		G5495	G3450	G2532	G5342		G5495	G4675	G2532

βάλε	εἰς	τὴν	πλευράν	μου	καὶ	μὴ	γίνου	ἄπιστος
thrust	it into	G3588	side	my	and	not	be	faithless
G906	G1519		G4125	G3450	G2532	G3361	G1096	G571

ἀλλὰ	πιστός
but	believing
G235	G4103

Additional Cross-References

John 20:25 (Faith): The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, 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.

John 20:20 (Parallel theme): And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

Psalms 78:38 (Parallel theme): But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.

Luke 24:40 (Parallel theme): And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet.

Mark 9:19 (Faith): He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

Romans 5:20 (Parallel theme): Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

Matthew 17:17 (Faith): Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

Luke 9:41 (Faith): And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.