

## THE FORTY DAYS · POST ONE OF FOUR

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**A City That Did Not Know***Days 1–8 · Jerusalem · Thomas*

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# A City That Did Not Know

*Jerusalem · The Locked Room · Thomas · “My Lord and My God”*

Days 1–8 After the Resurrection

**John 20:26–28 (NIV)**

*“Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.’ Thomas said to him, ‘My Lord and my God!’”*

## THE SETTING

## Jerusalem Had No Idea

Picture Jerusalem the morning after the resurrection. The city was enormous, swollen to three or four times its ordinary size with Passover pilgrims from across the empire. The Temple courts were filling again for morning prayers. Life was resuming its ordinary rhythm.

The Sanhedrin had returned to its routine. The case of the Galilean was closed. There had been a brief alarm about a missing body — some women’s report, quickly dismissed. The chief priests could breathe again. The movement would dissolve now that its leader was gone. It always did.

*And in a room somewhere in the city — a room with a locked door — eleven men sat together in the rubble of everything they had believed.*

**John 20:19**

*“On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them.”*

*“The locked door tells you everything you need to know about the state of the disciples on resurrection Sunday evening. The resurrection had been reported. It had not yet been encountered. And until you have encountered it yourself, you keep the door locked.”*

SUNDAY EVENING

## He Came Through the Locked Door

John 20:19 does not tell us how Jesus got into the room. It simply says he “came and stood among them.” The door was locked. He was suddenly there. This tells us something precise and important about the nature of the resurrection body.

He was tangible, physical, recognisable — the same Jesus, with the same wounds — and yet the physics of matter presented no barrier to him. Paul describes this in 1 Corinthians 15 as a *σῶμα πνευματικόν* — a spiritual body, not immaterial or ghostly, but physical existence freed from the constraints that sin and death imposed on matter.

*Εἰρήνη* · His First Word · John 20:19

*Peace — shalom. Not calm. Wholeness restored.*

His first word was *εἰρήνη* — the Greek for the Hebrew shalom. Not the absence of conflict, but wholeness, completeness, right relationship. He said it twice. The first peace was gift; the second was sending. The disciples who received the peace were immediately given the mandate to carry it into the world.

*ἐνεφυσήσεν* · He breathed into them · John 20:22

*The new-creation breath — Genesis 2:7 in a locked room*

John 20:22: “He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” The Greek word is the same as Genesis 2:7 when God breathed life into Adam. John is layering a new-creation moment onto the first creation. The risen Christ performed over frightened disciples the same breath-giving act God performed over the dust of the first human. The community of the resurrection is a new creation, animated by a breath that was not available before Easter morning.

THE THEOLOGY

## Four Things That Happened Simultaneously in That Room

<p><b>Shalom 1</b></p> <p>Peace was declared — not around the wounds, but through them. The risen body still carried the marks. Grace always comes to us through what it cost.</p>	<p><b>The Commission 2</b></p> <p>“As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” The mission was not conquest. It looked like the one who came through locked doors, showed his wounds, and breathed peace into frightened people.</p>	<p><b>The Breath 3</b></p> <p>He breathed on them — enephysen — the same Greek word as Genesis 2:7 when God breathed life into Adam. A new-creation act performed in a locked room.</p>	<p><b>The Authority 4</b></p> <p>“If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven.” The community of the resurrection is given the ministry of announcing the forgiveness the cross accomplished.</p>
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THOMAS

## The Man Who Wasn't There

John does not tell us where Thomas was. He was simply not there — absent from the most significant gathering in the history of the world. While the other ten experienced the risen Christ in the locked room, Thomas was somewhere else in Jerusalem, carrying the full weight of Saturday's grief without any of Sunday's news.

**John 20:25**

*“Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”*

Thomas was not being irrational. He was being precise. He had heard ten witnesses — ten people he knew, trusted, had travelled with for three years — and it was not enough. He wanted direct encounter. And what Jesus would give him was exactly that.

### Who Was Thomas?

Thomas appears three times in John before the resurrection — and each appearance reveals something different:

**John 11:16** — When Jesus says he will return to Judea (where people had tried to stone him), Thomas says: *“Let us also go, that we may die with him.”* This is not doubt. This is gloomy courage.

**John 14:5** — Thomas asks: *“Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”* — the honest question that prompted Jesus’s “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” Thomas’s doubt produced one of the greatest declarations in Scripture.

**John 20:24–28** — Thomas refuses to perform a faith he does not have. He states his conditions precisely. Jesus meets them exactly. Thomas makes the fullest confession in the Gospel.

*The lesson of Thomas is not: stop doubting. It is: bring your real questions to the real Jesus. He will come back through locked doors for them.*

DAY 8

## Eight Days Later — Jesus Came Back Specifically for One Person

Think about what those eight days were like for Thomas. He was still with the group — present every morning when the others woke up with the glow of what they had seen still visible in their faces. He sat at meals with men who had touched the risen Christ. And every time, he said: *I was not there. I have not seen. And until I do, I will not believe.*

This is not stubbornness. This is integrity. Thomas refused to perform a faith he did not have. He was unwilling to claim to believe something he had not personally encountered, regardless of social pressure. From the outside, it looks like failure. From the inside, it was the most honest thing anyone in that room was doing.

*And on Day 8, in the same locked room, with the same closed doors, Jesus came back. For Thomas.*

*“Jesus walked into the locked room and turned to Thomas before he said anything else. He quoted Thomas’s own conditions back to him, word for word. He did not say ‘your doubt was wrong.’ He said: here is exactly what you asked for. The risen Christ accommodated himself entirely to the specific needs of the most sceptical disciple in the room.”*

THE CONFESSION

## “My Lord and My God” — The Theological Summit

ο ■ Κ ■ ρ ■ ι ■ ς ■ μου ■ κα ■ ο ■ Θε ■ ς ■ μου ■  
*Ho Kyrios mou kai ho Theos mou*

## “My Lord and my God!”

John 20:28 · Thomas · Day 8 of the Forty · The Theological Summit of John's Gospel

Four words in Greek. Eight syllables. The Gospel that began with “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God” ends here — with the doubter who needed the most evidence making the fullest declaration. Faith that has passed through the fire of honest doubt and come out the other side carries a weight that untested faith does not.

ο ■ Κ ■ ρ ■ ι ■ ς ■ μου ■  
*Ho Kyrios mou*

### “My Lord”

In the Septuagint (Greek OT), *Kyrios* is the translation of the divine name YHWH. Every time a Greek-speaking Jew read the name of God in Hebrew Scripture, the text said *Kyrios*. Thomas was placing Jesus in the position of the God of Israel — using the personal pronoun *mou* (my) to claim the same intimacy as Psalm 23: “The Lord is my shepherd.”

ο ■ Θε ■ ς ■ μου ■  
*Ho Theos mou*

### “My God”

*Theos* leaves no ambiguity. Thomas was not calling Jesus a great teacher, a prophet, or an angel. He was saying: this man is the Creator, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The one whose name was too holy to pronounce. John's Gospel has been building toward this confession since its opening verse: *the Word was God*. The doubter arrives last and says it most fully.

### Dominus et Deus — The Roman Political Dimension

The Emperor Domitian required his subjects to address him as *Dominus et Deus noster* — “our Lord and God.” This was not metaphor. It was enforced political theology.

When John recorded Thomas's confession as *ho Kyrios mou kai ho Theos mou*, his first readers — living under Domitian's imperial cult — would have heard the direct counter-claim immediately. The words Thomas spoke to the wounded man in the locked room were the same words the Emperor demanded from the whole empire.

*There is only one Lord. There is only one God. And he still has the marks of nails in his hands.*

WHAT WE USUALLY MISS

## Five Depths Beneath the Familiar Surface

**1. Jesus came back specifically for the one who doubted**

The Day 8 appearance was targeted. Jesus did not simply appear and wait. He came back because Thomas had not been there, and arranged the scene around Thomas's specific stated conditions. The God who knows what we need before we ask knows exactly what you said in his absence — and provides exactly what you need.

**2. Thomas's confession is the theological summit of the Gospel of John**

The entire Gospel — from “In the beginning was the Word” to the resurrection appearances — builds to its theological climax in Thomas's eight words. John placed this confession at the end of his resurrection account deliberately. The doubter says what the evangelist has been arguing throughout.

**3. “Blessed are those who have not seen” is addressed to every reader of this Gospel**

John 20:29 is not a gentle rebuke of Thomas. It is an extension of blessing across time to every person who would receive the Gospel through testimony rather than direct encounter — which is every Christian who has ever lived. Jesus was looking through Thomas at us.

**4. The resurrection appearances were deliberately private — and that is significant**

Jesus did not appear to Pilate or Caiaphas. Every appearance was private — to individuals, small groups. This has sometimes been used against the resurrection. But it misunderstands the nature of the new creation: it always begins small, in ordinary places, among ordinary people. A locked room. A garden. A lakeside. The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed.

**5. The forty days were not passive waiting — they were a curriculum**

Acts 1:3 is explicit: Jesus was “speaking of the kingdom of God” for forty days. The disciples who emerged were not the same people who cowered in the locked room. They were systematically reconstructed in their theology, courage, and understanding. The locked room was not a failure. It was the first classroom.

## Study & Reflection

*The disciples kept the door locked even after hearing testimony from multiple witnesses. Is there an area of your own faith where you have heard good testimony, intellectually received it, and yet the door is still locked? What would it take to open it?*

John 20:19 · Luke 24:41 · Mark 9:24

*Jesus said ‘peace be with you’ and then showed them the wounds. The peace came through the wounds, not around them. Where in your own life are you expecting God’s peace to bypass the wounds rather than come through them?*

John 20:20 · Philippians 4:7 · Isaiah 53:5

*Thomas refused to perform a faith he did not have. Is there something about God, about faith, about the resurrection, that you are perhaps performing belief about rather than owning honestly? What would it look like to bring that directly to Jesus, as Thomas did?*

John 20:25 · Hebrews 4:16 · Psalm 62:8

*Jesus came back to the locked room specifically for Thomas — eight days later, with the exact words Thomas had used to state his conditions. What does it tell you about the character of the risen Christ that he arranges appearances around individual needs rather than collective convenience?*

John 20:27 · Matthew 18:12 · Luke 15:4

*‘Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’ You are in this blessing. What does it mean to you that Jesus specifically pronounced this blessing over the position you are already in? Does believing without seeing feel like second-best, or does Jesus treat it as first-rate faith?*

John 20:29 · 1 Peter 1:8 · Romans 10:17

*Thomas said ‘My Lord and my God’ — not ‘the Lord,’ not ‘a lord.’ Personal, possessive, intimate. Can you say ‘my Lord and my God’ with that same weight — not as liturgy but as the honest position of your life? If not quite — what stands between you and that declaration?*

John 20:28 · Romans 10:9 · Psalm 63:1

## Dig Deeper

### John 20:19–31

The complete locked-room narrative as one literary unit — Sunday evening through Day 8. Note how John frames the chapter around Thomas’s confession as its destination.

### 1 Corinthians 15:1–11

Paul’s early creed, written within 25 years of the events, listing the appearances in sequence. The oldest written account of the resurrection in the New Testament.

### Acts 1:1–5

Luke’s explicit summary of the forty days: “presenting himself alive by many proofs” and “speaking of the kingdom of God.”

### Genesis 2:7

The parallel creation-breath to John 20:22. The same Greek word *enephysēsen*. Read alongside John with the new-creation lens.

### Key Scriptures

John 20:19–31 · John 1:1 · Genesis 2:7 · 1 Corinthians 15:1–11 · Acts 1:1–5 · Philippians 4:7 · 1 Peter 1:8 · Romans 10:9, 17

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**“Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”**

John 20:29 · A City That Did Not Know · The Forty Days · Post 1 of 4

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