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THE FALLEN HEROES OF FAITH – LESSON 10

THOMAS

The Apostle Thomas, also called Didymus (the twin) is unfortunately only remembered only as “Doubting Thomas” by most Protestant Christians. Why is that? It is because when Jesus appeared to the remaining ten apostles in an enclosed, secured, locked room after his resurrection only Thomas was absent. When Thomas returned, they told him about it, and he did not believe them. Most people think it was because he did not believe Jesus had risen from the dead, therefore labeling him as a doubter. I am skeptical of that view. There had already been sufficient personal witness and encounters that I think all eleven were certain of his resurrection although only a few had personally seen him.

My personal opinion is that he may have thought his fellow men were playing a practical joke on him. That could be why he responded so vehemently to them in John 20:25 where it says, ***“Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails...his side...”*** I will not believe you guys. (my rendering). Then Jesus appeared and he knew they had told the truth. Thomas was so overwhelmed that he declared in verse 28, ***“My Lord and my God”***. Yes, he knew right then that Jesus was indeed God!

With that experience along with the Holy Spirit outpouring at Pentecost, Thomas became one of the most travelled missionary evangelist apostles of the group. To call him a “doubter” is a serious mistake. Let me explain why I say that.

Thomas began preaching the gospel to all countries east of Israel. (there were none to the West.) He preached throughout all of Parthia which included present-day Iraq and Iran and Afghanistan. Parthia was free from Roman control and many Jews of the Diaspora had fled to Parthia for safety from Roman persecution. It extended even through present-day Pakistan and into India.

It was his work in India that garners the most attention today. He preached from Northern India where he entered the large sub-continent all the way down to its southern tip on the Indian Ocean. He obviously had some knowledge of their language as Bartholomew had been there also and had translated the gospel of Mark into an Indian language (probably Hindi).

Thomas’ preaching in the southern city of Madras was converting so many of the people to Christianity that it infuriated the local Hindu priests. They conspired to kill him. They knew of his daily habit of early morning prayer and his regular place of prayer in downtown Madras. On the chosen day, converts informed Thomas that the priests were coming to get him. Thomas fled the city. He went to a hill on the outskirts of town to hide there and continue to pray. The

priest learned of it, and they sought him out and found him. They proceeded to spear him to death as he prayed.

I have been to Madras, now renamed Tamil in the state of Tamil Nadu, where he was martyred. The Roman Catholic Church has built a small church on that site where he was killed in honor of his memory. The three southern states of India have a strong Christian presence because of Thomas' work in India.

Thomas "gave his all" for Jesus.