

The idea of resurrection was and is hard for many to believe, even for the disciples of Jesus. The disciple Thomas was a prominent unbeliever in the resurrection, until he met the resurrected Jesus face to face. The Apostle John uses the account of Thomas to introduce the purpose for his Gospel record, that the readers might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing they might have life (John 20:30–31). In the words of Jesus to Thomas, they who have not seen but believe, are blessed. The account of Thomas moves the reader from his unbelief, through his persuasion, to the promise of blessing on others who believe.

**I. *Unbelief (20:24–25)***

1. *Thomas's occasion for unbelief:*

He had missed the earlier appearance of Jesus to the disciples, who like Thomas had struggled to believe until seeing Jesus (cf. John 20:9; Luke 24:11, 34; John 20:20).

Thomas was not uniquely weak among the disciples, but rather a devout though somewhat pessimistic follower of Jesus (cf. John 11:16; 14:5).

2. *Thomas's conditions for belief:*

In line with his pessimistic and pragmatic character, the report of others was not sufficient for Thomas, but rather he demanded personal, material evidence before he would believe.

**II. *Persuasion (20:26–28)***

1. *The appearance of Jesus (v.26):*

The miraculous appearance of Jesus demonstrated His new resurrection body and divine ability, proved the veracity of the disciples' report, and announced the peace with God that His death had purchased for them. (Peace has a special emphasis in this chapter—verses 19, 21, and 26—and is explained in John 14:27 and 16:33.)

2. *The presentation of evidence (v.27):*

Almost word for word Jesus responded to the demands made by Thomas and called upon him to believe, as he had said he would do.

But beyond the material evidence Thomas wanted, Jesus removed grounds for doubting His personal, physical resurrection and revealed that He knew what His disciples said without being there. He proved His predictions true (Mark 8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:34; John 2:19), proved Himself the Son of God (Romans 1:4), and proved His success in justifying sinners (Romans 4:25).

3. *The response of Thomas (v.28):*

Responding to Jesus with “my Lord and my God,” Thomas showed his understanding of the deity and sovereignty of Jesus. Jesus's appearance to him was enough to persuade him both that Jesus was risen and that He was his Lord and God.

**III. *Blessing (20:29)***

1. *Thomas believed because he saw the resurrected Jesus.*

This is best understood as a statement, rather than a question, to contrast with others who would not see, yet believe, and to encourage those readers who could not see, but needed to believe.

2. *Jesus blessed future believers, who will have not seen but believe.*

Only chosen witnesses saw Jesus (Acts 10:41) and after the ascension, none could see Jesus.

Yet without seeing Him, many would believe as Thomas did in Jesus's bodily resurrection, deity, and lordship. They would be “blessed,” privileged by divine favor in becoming children of God (John 1:12), receiving forgiveness of sin (Acts 10:43), having a living hope (John 14:1–6), receiving the Spirit of God (John 15:26), and more.

John's purpose for writing is that the readers, who could not see the resurrected Jesus, would believe the eyewitness reports and believe. By believing they would receive this promised blessing. Peter understood and wrote about the same experience of not seeing, yet believing, and having great joy (1 Peter 1:8–9).

This is the Easter message, that Jesus died for our sins and was raised again that you might have life. Let all who have not believed, come and believe that Jesus is Lord and God. Let all who have believed rejoice and be filled with “inexpressible and glorious joy.”