

THE HOLY APOSTLE THOMAS

—Commemorated October 6th—

Thomas was one of the twelve Apostles of Christ. After Christ's Ascension into Heaven, the Apostle Thomas received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, along with the other Apostles. Thereafter, having been invested with power from on high, each Apostle went to preach to a different part of the world, as the Holy Spirit appointed. The Apostle Thomas was chosen to go to India and the neighboring Asian nations.

This is something that cast uncertainty into the Apostle. As he was wondering how he could even set out for such a long journey, Christ appeared to him one night and said, **“Do not fear, Thomas. Go to India and preach the Gospel, and My grace will be with you.”**

In those days, it just so happened that there was certain Indian man named Amvani in Jerusalem, whom King Goundiaphoros had sent in search of a skilled builder who could construct a royal palace for him. One day, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Amvani and asked, **“Would you like to buy one of my slaves, who is an exceptionally skilled builder?”** “Yes, I would,” replied Amvani. Then Christ presented Thomas to him, and they agreed on the purchase price of three vessels of silver. Christ drew up the agreement as follows: **“I, Jesus, the son of Joseph the carpenter, sold to Amvani my slave Thomas,”** and the remainder of the usual language found in such agreements. When Amvani asked Thomas to confirm that he was indeed a slave, Thomas pointed to Christ and admitted, **“Yes, this is my Lord, who purchased me for a great price, as a compassionate master.”**

Thus, Thomas became Amvani's servant. The following night, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Thomas again, gave him the silver that He received, and encouraged him with the following words, “Take the money from your sale, and My grace will be with you.” Afterwards, Amvani and Thomas embarked by ship for India. When they arrived, Thomas was presented to King Goundiaphoros, who asked the Apostle what he knew to build with wood and what he could build with stones. To this, the Apostle replied that he is experienced in producing of plows, paddles, and yokes out of wood, and that he could construct columns, temples, and royal palaces with stone. Having heard

this, the king asked him, “Do you think you can build a palace for me at the location of my choice?” The Apostle replied affirmatively, something which greatly gladdened the king, and he immediately took Thomas to the site where he desired to build the palace. When the Apostle saw the area, he agreed that it was indeed a spot fit for a King’s home. Then the king said, “Make a drawing of the building you have in mind, so I can see if it is to my liking; because I have to travel to another to another region for some important matter, and I will be absent for three years. But I want the palace to be ready when I return. The Apostle Thomas proceeded to make an impressive drawing that caused the king to declare, **“You are truly a master craftsman, and it befits you to work for kings.”**

Without delay, the king ordered that gold be given to the Apostle, so that he obtain all the necessary materials to construct the palace, and he asked the Apostle to begin laying the foundation as soon as possible. And so, a vast amount of gold and silver was given to the Apostle, along with wheat, wine, oil, and other provisions that would be necessary for the workers. Thereafter, the king departed for another region, while the Apostle Thomas began to secretly disburse all the money and other items into the hands of the poor, in this manner building a palace for the king in the kingdom of heaven. The Apostle also began preaching the Christian faith daily, and performing great miracles. Many of the idolaters who heard and witnessed these things believed in Jesus Christ, and they came to be baptized.

After some time, certain people who lived in the region where the Apostle Thomas was preaching went to see King Goundiaphoros. The king, greatly desiring to learn how much progress had been made with the construction of his palace, asked the visitors about this. **“Do not expect to see, Your Majesty, any buildings or palaces from that foreigner, because he distributed all the gold you gave him to the poor. And not only that! He is preaching a completely unknown God to the people, he performs extraordinary signs, and does not eat at all.”** Upon hearing this, the King became enraged and summoned that the Apostle be brought to him at once. When the Apostle Thomas was brought before the king, the king asked him if he had started construction of the palace. The Apostle replied, **“The type of palace I have been taught to construct by the true architect Jesus Christ, Your Majesty, has been built to completion**

and it is unimaginably beautiful.” The king said, “Let us go see it right now.” To this the Apostle replied, **“Presently, you are not in need of this palace; when, however, you depart from this world, you will find it very useful.”** Thinking that the Apostle was being sarcastic, the king cried out with rage, “I command that this deceiver be locked up in the dungeon along with the person who brought him here.”

As the Apostle was bound in shackles, one night the king’s brother unexpectedly fell ill and passed away. This was through divine providence, and it was to be only temporary and for benefit of all. For when this occurred, an angel of the Lord took his soul and brought it to heaven and began showing him the beautiful dwellings that exist in the land of the righteous. He then asked him in which one of these homes he would like dwell. The king’s brother, taking note of one exceptional home, pointed to it and asked the angel to let him take up residence there. The angel then replied, **“You cannot dwell in this palace because it belongs to your brother—the foreigner Thomas built it for him.”** The king’s brother then said, **“Please, let me go back to my brother, so I can purchase it from him, and then I will return here again.”**

Then the angel returned the soul to the earth and it went back into its body. The king’s brother then opened his eyes and, having regained consciousness, asked for his brother, to whom he related how his soul had left the earth and then finally requested, “Give me the palace you have in heaven, and I will give you as much gold as you want for it.” When the king heard this, he was dumbfounded, and he asked quietly, **“I have a palace in heaven?... How?”** His brother then assured him, **“Yes. Even if you are unaware of it, you have a palace in heaven, which the jailed foreigner built for you. I saw the exceptional splendor of this palace with my own eyes when the angel took me up to heaven.”**

Upon hearing this, the king immediately released the Apostle Thomas and Amvani from the dungeon, and falling at the Apostle’s feet, both the king and his brother begged for forgiveness for their previous conduct. The Apostle Thomas, in turn, thanked the Lord and proceeded to baptize them and all the rulers. Seeing that their leaders had turned to Christ through baptism, steadily the common people also started coming to faith in Christ.