Didymus Thomas jako model nawrócenia po nawróceniu

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Krótkie cv:

Didymus Thomas as a model of conversion after the conversion

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# Introduction

It is remarkable that, while in current research the Introductory Hymn has been hermeneutically approached in various ways, the Epilogue of John’s Gospel -which is as important in each text as the Prologue- has not been thoroughly examined. This occurs, although in this text

**a)** there is a significant Confession, of the same importance with the Prologue (ὁ Κύριος καὶ ὁ Θεός // ὁ Λόγος - Θεός μονογενής. ὁ ὤν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ Πατρὸς). This significance is also evident by the direct dialogue (which also implicates the reader / listener) and the use of the possessive pronoun (*μου*), perhaps by someone who is included in the ἡμεῖς of the Prologue (cf. ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ [1, 14]).

**b)** This “ἡμεῖς” in the prologue of 1 John refers to this particular narrative as a testimony, since it refers to witnesses whose **sense of touch has also been satisfied**: Ὃ ἦν ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς, (1) ὃ ἀκηκόαμεν, (2) ὃ ἑωράκαμεν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν, (3) ὃ ἐθεασάμεθα καὶ (4) αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν. περὶ τοῦ Λόγου τῆς ζωῆς (1, 1). Indeed, touch is a strong evidence that the Logos σάρξ (not just body) ἐγένετο, a declaration in which, as evident in the Epilogue of John, the fact He has risen in the flesh is also included.

In this discussion, Thomas will not be examined due to his testimony, but as a character who experiences **conversion after conversion:** while he has believed and is part of the group of the Twelve (representatives of the 12 tribes of Israel), in a way that **it is not attested** in John, he has the need to experience another shocking event to fully embrace his faith. This particular method –***not to become unfaithful but a full believer***– is, aber, referred to by the Risen one ***as not ideal***. In the Beatitude, He exalts those who do not require vision / examination to believe[[1]](#footnote-1). The paradox is that:

***a)*** while the way of Thomas’ faith is devalued, touch is considered a paramount evidence of testimony in **the prologue of 1 John**, where Thomas is part of the ἡμεῖς of the senders.

***b)*** the unique nature of the event is also validated by the following fact: John (of the four evangelists) selects this sign as the required testimony and Scripture ***in the end*** (the culmination) of his Gospel. In this epilogue –diverging from the rest of the Evangelists– he assures that he has chosen to record only those things are absolutely needed in order **(1)** to **believe** in the true identity of historical Jesus as the Son of God, and **(2)** in order for them to **have life**, through faith (as he emphatically repeats) **in His name**. “Name” does not only denote “Son of God”, but also “ὁ Κύριός μου καὶ ὁ Θεός μου” found in Thomas’ fierce confession[[2]](#footnote-2).

1. **Two kind of conversions after conversion in John**

Regarding the conversion after conversion of the disciples through their progression into faith, the following remarks should be made:

1. In the heart of the Introductory Hymn, which, guides the listener to the content of Joh., special emphasis is placed on those who ***(παρ) ἔλαβον αὐτὸν*** (i.e., the true light) in active voice and aorist[[3]](#footnote-3). Those who “received” Jesus, have also received grace / power to become “children of God”, because ***ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν*** (and not in a supernatural way, which is not always portrayed positively, but negative in order to be juxtaposed to the other births, and especially that of Isaac, son of Abraham. This rebirth is connected with the emphatic “*πιστεύουσιν* εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ”. Therefore, those who received Him, displayed in direct contradiction to “ιδίους or the world”, are constantly believing (Present continuous: πιστεύουσιν), although the verb is surrounded by verbs in aorist: ἔλαβον - ἐγεννήθησαν. Since those who believe are mentioned, rather than those who believed -as it is evident from the main corpus of the Gospel, we can deduce that faith is not something fixed[[4]](#footnote-4).
2. Moreover, Thomas followed the Logos incarnate without being part of the “schismatics” of chapter 6 (which constitutes the core of Logos’ public action). That is, he did not follow πολλούς ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ, οι οποίοι ἀπῆλθον εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω καὶ οὐκέτι μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ περιεπάτουν (instead of walking back 12:19. cf. 1:15, 27, 30), because they were scandalized (σκανδαλίστηκαν), as they considered «σκληρά» (apparently “cannibalism” -cf. “Θυέστεια δεῖπνα”) His words in the Synagogue of Capernaum, regarding the true manna, i.e. the true eating of the flesh (not of the body) and drinking of His blood (as Son of Man), as prerequisites in obtaining ***ζωήν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς / εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. (ἀνάσταση τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ).***
3. Furthermore, at the beginning of this specific section, which describes the first schism in the audience (the Johannine community), Jesus replies to the challenge / invitation -during the Passover period- for a sign as potent as the one Moses performed, ***ἵνα ἴδωμεν καὶ πιστεύσωμεν*** (6:30-31). However, the following answer is heard: ***καὶ ἕωράκατέ με καὶ οὐ πιστεύετε*** (6:35). Then (when the schism took place), the Twelve were asked if they want to ὑπάγουν. It should be noted that the aforementioned verse is the first in Joh. where the group of the Twelve is mentioned. In their name (and, hence, Thomas’) Peter responded: «Κύριε, πρὸς τίνα ἀπελευσόμεθα; ῥήματα ζωῆς αἰωνίου ἔχεις. ***Καὶ ἡμεῖς πεπιστεύκαμεν καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ Ἅγιος τοῦ Θεοῦ*** *(6, 68-69).* It should be noted that the enthusiastic Simon will betray the Lord during the most important time of the Crucifixion. He is the one who ***a)*** answers that they have believed (***πεπιστεύκαμεν*** = the temporal aspect denotes a duration spanning from the past to the present) on the basis of ***ῥήματα ζωῆς αἰωνίου*** of the Logos incarnate and, surely, he confesses that ***b)*** He is the Holy of God (instead of “Christ” Mk 8:28, the Son of the living God Mt. 16:16, as attested in the Synoptics). He will need a second “call” in ch. 21 to shepherd the sheep! Hence, the faith of the Twelve is not perfect, although at the end of Chapter 6 there is a discreet mention that the Twelve took the the discipleship from the Father as granted: καὶ ἔλεγεν· διὰ τοῦτο εἴρηκα ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐλθεῖν πρός με ἐὰν μὴ ᾖ δεδομένον αὐτῷ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρός (6, 65).The problem of the possibility of conversion to faith after the initial conversion is implicitly evidenced from the first epilogue of John, where, as already mentioned, the following is found:

30Πολλὰ μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλα σημεῖα ἐποίησεν **ὁ Ἰησοῦς** ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν [αὐτοῦ],

ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ·

31ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται (A) ἵνα ***πιστεύ[σ]ητε* ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ χριστὸς - ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ**,

καὶ (B) ἵνα πιστεύοντες **ζωὴν** ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ. (20, 30-31)

The Gospel of John is authored so as the listeners, who are probably already believers, after the signs of the meeting of the Risen One with **the (double) turn of Mary Magdalene** in a garden in the morning and Thomas in a house with «τῶν θυρῶν κεκλεισμένων»,

***a)*** believe that (the historical) Jesus is (1) the one who the Law of the Prophets and the Greeks expected as Christ the Messiah, (2) He is the Son of God (cf. the Confession: [creator] Lord and [judge] God [the only Son of God] who came in the flesh (Christology) and

***b) through faith, the listeners can have life (eternal) in His Name[[5]](#footnote-5).*** It should be noted that the “ἵνα πιστεύ[Σ]ητε” is unclear, as textual criticism cannot definitely provide a *lectio difficilior potior*. The fact that the listeners of John’s Gospel were possibly believers is proved by their assumed knowledge of narratives found in the Synoptics, such as the existance and function of the circle of the Twelve, or Mary Magdalene who is found abruptly, without any explanation, in the Epilogue of John[[6]](#footnote-6). 1 John is concluded with the following sentence: Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ἵνα εἰδῆτε ὅτι ζωὴν ἔχετε αἰώνιον, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ Ὄνομα τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ (5, 13).

A final implicit mention of John in regards to the possibility of conversion after the conversion, but towards the “opposite direction”: According to Ratzinger, in the Last Supper, John added a new dimension in the prophecy which Jesus referred to in regards to His path as following: instead of the lexeme used by the Septuagint (ὁ ἐσθίων ἄρτους μου), the evangelist choses the term τρώγειν, a term used by Jesus in the Sermon on the bread; the eating of flesh and blood, and, hence, the communion of the mystery of the Eucharist (John 6:54-58). Thus, the psalmic quote foreshadows the Church of the time of John and of all the eras that the Church celebrates the Eucharist […] καὶ γὰρ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς εἰρήνης μου ἐφ᾽ ὃν ἤλπισα, ὁ ἐσθίων ἄρτους μου, ἐμεγάλυνεν ἐπ᾽ ἐμὲ πτερνισμόν (Ψ. 40 [41]:10; Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me – KJV). The shuttering of friendship enters the community of the Church, when -through the course of time- people receive His bread and then betray Him. As Blaise Pascal has noted on the basis of similar experiences (see *Pensées* VII 553), the passion of Jesus, His fight with death, endures until the end of the world. Conversely, we can claim that: Jesus, at that time, placed on His shoulders the betrayal of all ages, the diachronic passion of becoming the object of betrayal, by sustaining the ultimate need of History until its very bottom. Besides, it is clear from 1 John, that the Johannine community faces a traumatic schism in its core, due to Christology and the Ethics of certain members who are accused as “antichrists”.

Therefore, in John, there is the possibility that every believing disciple, who, having obeyed a specific call, has been baptized – regenerated by water and Spirit, can turn his back on the Logos incarnate. Hence, faith definitively requires “rebaptism”. Let us observer the stages of “conversion after the conversion”. Let us focus on Thomas.

# Thomas the twin

* Didymus Thomas appears in the narrative foreground, **in the second half of the Gospel**, when John describes the pivotal fact of the Crucifixion of the Lamb / Jesus and its ascendance to Heaven. It is intertwined with the final phase of Jesus Christ’s life, during which, knowledge / experience is of high importance to faith in Jesus as Christ and Son of God. Thomas’ call has not been recorded, contrary to the five that participate in the first sign of Cana, which is accompanied by the replacement of the Temple. Essentially, Thomas is presented after the last mention of a key witness of John’s Gospel, John the Baptist, who did not perform signs but served as a credible Voice to the Logos – a Lamp of Light – Νυμφαγωγός. He (Thomas) **does not provide testimony, but doubt;** he appears in the narrative foreground during the winter of 30 C.E., in the context of the Festival of Lights / Rededication of the Temple **(Hanukkah).** He is presented for a short period, just after the spring of the same year, when he participates in the Last **(pre-Passover) Supper** and he reappears, in a closed space, **eight days after the Crucifixion**, as a witness to Christ’s presence. His appearance is mentioned in John, during the two of the three last weeks that the Gospel elaborates in its narration. His first appearance is on the third day of the second week, while Jesus stays in Perea, his second is on the fifth day of the third week in a house in Jerusalem (the evening in which the dinner and the washing takes place), while his third is on the “eighth day”, the Sunday after the Resurrection, again in a house in Jerusalem.
* It is in the same section acts also **the “beloved disciple”** -a person whose origin, like Thomas’, is unknown. We probably know about the call of the former, as he is identified as the anonymous person that, along with Andrew, followed the Lamb of God as Shepherd, obeying the testimony of John the Baptist, when they spent the night with Him (1:40). Although he is not directly contrasted to the beloved disciple, Thomas has several characteristics which are antithetical to the former. It should be mentioned that both are protagonists of the second half of John, but they are displayed on antithetical parallelism.

1. While the beloved disciple remains anonymous, Thomas’s name is explained, without him being a companion / complementary to “Matthew, the tax collector”, as happens at the synoptic tradition (Mk 3:18, Mt 10:3, Lk 6:15; an exception is Acts 1:13 “Philip and Thomas”). Moreover, in contrast to Simon, who was afterwards named Cephas – Peter (1:42), his given birth name is explained more than once: twice (and a third time in Ch. 21, which is considered as an epilogue, although it is not attested in all manuscripts). Naturally, the repetition of Thomas’ etymology in conjunction with the narrative regarding the character constitutes a paradox and a surprise to the listener, who focuses on him. Someone probably would expect Didymus Thomas to be the beloved disciple, and not the potential unbeliever. However, in John the brothers of the Lord are ignorant to His identity, although they seem to walk with Him (2:12, 7:3). In the final dialogue, from the beginning it is mentioned that he is one of the Twelve (20:24), he is constantly referred by the Evangelist with his name (3 times), while a pronoun (“he”) could be used. However, it should be noted that the Good Shepherd never addresses him by name**.**

**2)** Thomas always speaks in the first person when conversing with the other disciples or the Lord, while his stance is not discussed by the narrator – witness and his community. Jesus himself remarks to him: “καὶ μὴ γίνου ἄπιστος ἀλλὰ πιστός”. Only before the resurrection does the narrator note the ignorance of the disciples for specific words of the Lord (2:22); this is attributed to their lack of the Spirit, a situation which he comments and clarifies (7:39).

**3)** While the beloved is in the court of the High Priest and under the Cross, receiving the woman / mother of the crucified Jesus “εἰς τὰ ἴδια”, as someone familiar, a relative of the archetypical Man – High Priest – King, Thomas is absent, even at the first appearance of the resurrected Jesus. It should also be noted that the beloved student is the first eyewitness to the empty tomb, along with Simon Peter.

**4)** While the beloved provides emphatic testimony of the flow of blood and water from the side of the new Adam, and receives His mother “εἰς τὰ ἴδια”, Thomas -although “Didymus”, does not wish to limit himself to seeing the marks of the nails, but to touch; specifically, the side of Jesus. He is not content with vision, but wishes to use the powerful sense of touch, thus casting doubt on the testimony of the beloved. Nonetheless, he remains with the rest of the disciples and is not completely detached. 5) Essentially, the beloved student provides testimony and records, apart from others, Thomas’ lack of faith in his books: The Gospel of John and 1 John. He does not, however, criticize Thomas, as he is also part of the “ἡμεῖς” in the Prologue of 1 John. He mentions the sign as a pivotal proof of faith to Jesus as Son of God; this sign, along with vision, strengthens the proclamation of the eyewitnesses!

In all three times, Thomas does not comply with the proclamations of the Lord in regard to His glory, nor with His answers in questions posed by the Twelve or “named” members of the Group (e.g., Simon Peter). In the first scene, the others have already reminded the Lord that He returns there where they wished His death. In the second scene, Simon Peter has already asked where the Lord is headed to. In the third scene, the other disciples have already confirmed that they have seen the Lord, like Magdalene, while Simon and *the other* have informed them about the empty tomb. Thomas emphatically dismisses the testimony of the rest of the eyewitnesses and distances himself with “ἐὰν μὴ ἴδω”.

Although Thomas is contrasted to the ideal disciple, Thomas **is connected to two of the three scenes with very important proclamations,** which someone would think that their recipient would be the beloved student. The first time is the Lord, who characterizes Himself as ἡ οδός καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωή, while the second time is the confession (ὁ Κύριός μου καὶ ὁ Θεός μου) that comes from Thomas, without being clear if he employs the sense of touch. The confession is probably connected to the fact that the Risen Christ is the Creator of the Universe, and the Judge of the World.

Thomas is closely intertwined **with the way – “progression”.** In the first scene, he is seen with the Twelve and Jesus, beyond Jordan, where they have found refuge during the winter (Feast of the rededication of the Temple – Hanukkah), after the attempted stoning (10:31) and arrest of the Lord (10:41) in Jerusalem. There, John the Baptist paved the way of the Lord. Thomas also notes “ἄγωμεν ἵνα συναποθάνωμεν”, as he is not convinced by the words of the Logos incarnate that the resurrection (obviously from Hades) of His friend Lazarus is imminent. In the second scene, in the night of the eve of Passover during the parting speeches of the Lord, he casts doubt on the destination of His “exit”, and thus on the way to reach Him. The Lords answers him that “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but **by me** (KJV)”. In the third scene, eight days after the first day of the week, it is Jesus, who travels miraculously (behind closed doors) to him (Thomas), so as to have a personal meeting and a revelation. Thomas, however, does not receive any authorization to “go out” – missionary work. Moreover, the invitation to touch Jesus is in contrast (antithetic parallelism) to the “Touch me not” uttered to Mary Magdalene, who was the first to venture into the tomb. Furthermore, there is her confession, that Jesus will be the Judge on the ultimate day: Ναὶ Κύριε, ἐγὼ πεπίστευκα ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ὁ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐρχόμενος (11. 27).

Thomas has been characterized by modern researchers as pragmatist (realist) and sarcastic. Nevertheless, he is not a flat character. It has already been emphasized that the contrast between the name “Didymus” and his character, as presented in John, intrigues the listeners, even causing them to identify with him.

## 2. Scene 1 (11:13-17)

* This the first appearance of Thomas in the narrative scene, in the context of one week, the second in John, and -more specifically- the third day since the announcement of Lazarus’ illness by heralds from his sisters. It is identified with the day of the death of the “friend”. The fact that the scene takes place in Bethany, beyond the river Jordan, immediately recalls the valid (as emphasized by the believers in that place) testimony of John about the Lamb “του αίροντος την αμαρτίαν του κόσμου / πνευματοφόρου Υιού του Θεού”, although it was not accompanied by signs. Indirectly, it nods towards the following / conversion of the first five disciples. They had initially turned towards the Baptist, who acted in the desert, so as to validate the “εὐθύνατε τὴν ὁδὸν Κυρίου, καθὼς εἶπεν Ἠσαΐας ὁ προφήτης”. Their second conversion was due to the testimony of the Baptist and it was inaugurated with their question towards Jesus: “where do you reside?” Therefore, for the listener of John, the conversion is combined with a progression behind the Lamb as a Shepherd and co-habitation, since the way has been straightened by another teacher, Pro-*dromus*. It should be noted that the first scene of conversions had been completed in Galilee with the proclamation -in direct speech- of the “unknown” to the Synoptics “άδολου Ισραηλίτη” Nathaniel, who paradoxically disappears from the narrative: “Σὺ εἶ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, σὺ βασιλεὺς εἶ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ (1, 49).” In the answer of the omniscient Jesus, who was already by his side at the fig tree, the Son of Man is identified with Jacob’s Ladder which now connects the upper to the lower world, instead of the temple. The signs of “re-creation / law-giving” follow in the marginal Cana, as well as the substitution of the Temple (which, as the navel of the earth, unites heaven and earth) by Christ (and by His resurrected body) and the fact that many persons in Jerusalem (especially on Easter day) believed in Him “θεωροῦντες αὐτοῦ τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐποίει.” Conversely, He did not believe in them “διὰ τὸ αὐτὸν γινώσκειν πάντας”.
* In the beginning of ch. 11, Jesus, in direct speech, calls to the disciples to “ἄγωμεν εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν πάλιν”; they address Him as “Rabbi” and they assess that, by returning to Judaea, He places Himself in mortal danger, because He had **just** committed blasphemy: “ῥαββί, νῦν ἐζήτουν σε λιθάσαι οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, καὶ πάλιν ὑπάγεις ἐκεῖ;” He progressively explains to them that the initial “ἄγωμεν” does not refer to Judaea in general, but specifically to him (Lazarus, “our friend”). While the “Good Shepherd” has already a) declared the arrival of His glory (without foretelling the mockeries, as recorded by the Synoptics), b) remarked that He is glad for the disciples, because they will believe, as he was not there and yet he knew death. At his point Thomas appears in the narrative, addressing his fellow disciples and acting as a “prophet of sufferings”. It is the only time that the term “συμμαθητής (fellow disciple)” is found in John, and the only time that a disciple addresses the whole group of the Twelve in the first plural person. Of course, it should be noted that Thomas still follows the group behind Jeus, although, in his view, the Master is heading towards death – Hades.
* Naturally, we must recognize that a careful listener of John would not consider Thomas’ words as utopian, although they may initially seem so. Of course, this specific course is concluded with the Resurrection of Lazarus, who was dead for four days, and the glory of the Logos incarnate, who raises him solely by the power of His Word. However, in the end, as it is evident from the narrative, this Resurrection becomes the excuse on which the verdict of His conviction to death is delivered by the Council of the High Priests and the Pharisees, on the basis of the prophetic (according to John!) word of the High Priest of that year: “οὐδὲ λογίζεσθε ὅτι συμφέρει ὑμῖν ἵνα εἷς ἄνθρωπος ἀποθάνῃ ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ μὴ ὅλον τὸ ἔθνος ἀπόληται”.
* In a second re-reading of the text, the listener perceives the following irony: a) Thomas, who is typically seen on his course to die (with Jesus), disappears after the arrest of Jesus, who presents Himself to the mixed (Roman and Judaean) military unit with “I am”, while b) the Lord has already cared so that no one from those given to Him from the Father is harmed: “ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· Εἶπον ὑμῖν ὅτι «ἐγώ εἰμι». Εἰ οὖν ἐμὲ ζητεῖτε, ἄφετε τούτους ὑπάγειν· ἵνα πληρωθῇ ὁ λόγος ὃν εἶπεν ὅτι «οὓς δέδωκάς μοι οὐκ ἀπώλεσα ἐξ αὐτῶν οὐδένα» (18, 8-9)”. There is a nod to the words of Jesus Himself, as they were heard in High Priest Prayer (17:12). To Jesus, the phrase “ὀστοῦν οὐ συντριβήσεται” in the ritual of the Hebrew Passover referred to the integrity of Israel’s community c) Thomas, who should be a de facto believer, since he witnessed the Resurrection of Lazarus, who was a personal friend of the disciples (therefore, his friend as well) and dead for four days, and the subversion of his own words, is still an “unfaithful” regarding the Resurrection of the Lord. In any case, Thomas walks along Jesus on His way to Hades, by exhibiting love towards Him, rather than faith in the wisdom of His proclamations.
* By examining the narrative, we can conclude that, to the listener of John, the Lord walks towards any friend of His who is “sleeping” to awake him with a powerful word, but He also delays His arrival if He so chooses. The following passage includes the female protagonists Martha and Maria and the shocking declaration: “I am the resurrection”. In the witnessing of the resurrection, there are several factors involved: the powerful word of the Lord (who has previously offered light through clay to a blind from birth man), smell (“ἤδη ὄζει”), and touch (freeing the dead man from the gauzes applied to the dead). It should be noted that, afterwards, the resurrected friend of Jesus and the disciples does not thank them but remains in apathy. The protagonists are still his sisters. This passage, which is connected to the winter festival of Lights (Hanukkah), is concluded with Jesus retreating again to Ephraim: “Ὁ οὖν Ἰησοῦς οὐκέτι παρρησίᾳ περιεπάτει ἐν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις, ἀλλὰ ἀπῆλθεν ἐκεῖθεν εἰς τὴν χώραν ἐγγὺς τῆς ἐρήμου, εἰς Ἐφραὶμ λεγομένην πόλιν, κἀκεῖ ἔμεινεν μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν” (therefore including Thomas).
* The ultimate Easter exodus of Jesus is the next point in the Johannine narrative; the third and final week is inaugurated: Ο οὖν Ἰησοῦς πρὸ ἓξ ἡμερῶν τοῦ Πάσχα ἦλθεν εἰς Βηθανίαν, ὅπου ἦν Λάζαρος, ὃν ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν Ἰησοῦς (12, 1). Many persons wait for Him at the shrine; they “ἀνέβησαν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἐκ τῆς χώρας πρὸ τοῦ Πάσχα ἵνα ἁγνίσωσιν ἑαυτούς”. The disciples are not included amongst those.

## 3. Scene 2 (14:3-6)

* The second scene where Thomas intervenes takes place at night, after the washing. It is part of the second section of the farewell speeches, which commences with the following words of the Lord, after the descend of Judas into darkness. In particular, the following can be discerned: a) the immediate ascertainment of His majestic glory as the son of Man by God (the lexeme “δοξ\*” is repeated four or five times in this phrase), b) the search for Him and its lack of results by the “τεκνία” and c) the delivery to the students of the new command on love inside the community as an identifying trait of “Christianity”. Only in this second section of the Lord’s “farewell” is he interrupted by four disciples. They are: a) Peter, b) Thomas, c) Philip and d) Jude. Essentially, these four questions, that do not coincide with those posed on the night of Easter by the sons towards the father, create a chiasmus. While at the beginning there is a mention on the Lord’s course towards a place that the disciples cannot follow Him, in the last question of Jude there is a mention to the arrival of the Lord and the Father in the heart of every disciple: “Λέγει αὐτῷ Ἰούδας, οὐχ ὁ Ἰσκαριώτης· Κύριε, [καὶ] τί γέγονεν ὅτι ἡμῖν μέλλεις ἐμφανίζειν σεαυτὸν καὶ οὐχὶ τῷ κόσμῳ; Ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ με τὸν λόγον μου τηρήσει, καὶ ὁ Πατήρ μου ἀγαπήσει αὐτὸν καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐλευσόμεθα καὶ μονὴν παρ᾽ αὐτῷ ποιησόμεθα”. Possibly, Jude, having a worldly view of the Messiah, asks the Lord to reveal Himself not only to His circle but also to the world. In the conlusion of this section we find “Έγείρεσθε, ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν”.
* In the third section of the farewell speeches, the predominant question is the destination of Jesus’ exodus. In the last part (after the vine and the words on the *Paracletus / Holy Spirit*), we hear the paradoxical complaint of the Lord (two other questions have been already posed by the disciples in ch. 14) “Νῦν δὲ ὑπάγω πρὸς τὸν πέμψαντά με, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐρωτᾷ με· «Ποῦ ὑπάγεις»; ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι ταῦτα λελάληκα ὑμῖν ἡ λύπη πεπλήρωκεν ὑμῶν τὴν καρδίαν (16, 5-6)”. In this section, He clarifies to His friends that He is headed towards the Father: “ἐξῆλθον παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ ἐλήλυθα εἰς τὸν κόσμον· πάλιν ἀφίημι τὸν κόσμον καὶ πορεύομαι πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα. Λέγουσιν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ· «ἴδε νῦν ἐν παρρησίᾳ λαλεῖς καὶ παροιμίαν οὐδεμίαν λέγεις» (16, 28-29).” At his point it is clarified that Jesus has previously (hence, in this scene as well) spoken in similes and proverbs.
* In any case, it is proven that in the farewell speeches of the Lord in John the main theme is where is the direction of Jesus’ exodus and ascendance. To the listener, these speeches seem like a continuation of the call / conversion of the disciples in the desert, where the initial question of Andrew and the other disciple towards the Lamb / Shepherd was “ποῦ μένεις;”. Then, it was dusk (the tenth hour), while now it is night. Then, the Word -who is constantly in the Father’s bosom- became real flesh, showed them a (temporary) refuge, where they spent the night with Him, experiencing the first phase of the rebirth, which will probably be concluded with their own pains, according to ch. 16. That scene, as it has already been mentioned, has been sealed with the appearance of Jesus; initially to Nathaniel (who then disappears from the narrative) as Bethel – Temple – Ladder which connects the lower to the upper. In this scene, Thomas was not an eyewitness, as the circle of the Twelve had not been formed. Maybe the listener of John rightfully presumes that Thomas has been informed of these facts by the first five disciples. Thomas was certainly present when the Good Shepherd mentioned that He was the gate through which the sheep receive abundance of life. From this section of the farewell speeches (ch. 14-16) it is proven that, to complete the conversion, the knowledge of the place of the Lord’s ultimate exodus is necessary; so is following Him to the end.
* We focus on Thomas’ words. As we have already mentioned, in the examination of the section of Ch. 14, first comes the question of Simon Peter, which is about the direction / exodus of the Lord. He, as the Son of Man, has simply declared that he will be “ευθύς” glorified by God (the word “Father” is not used), and that his “τεκνία” will seek Him but they will not find Him. Essentially, in this context two courses are purposefully “confused”: a) the horizontal course towards the Passion and / or Glory (to the Greeks?) and b) the vertical course toward heaven – ascendance. It should be noted that in 7:33-34, 8:21 to which the Lord refers to in 14:33 the place of escape (?) is implied to be the diaspora of the Greeks and Hades. Peter probably understands -at least initially- point (a). Hence, he rushes to emphasize that he will follow Him immediately and that he will sacrifice his soul for Him. The nighttime scenery predisposes the listener negatively, as he already knows that “he who walks at night stumbles”. Of course, this the night before Easter, when the remembrance of Exodus is revived and gives birth to expectations for a course a new Promised Land.
* The Lord responds to Peter by using probably an exclamation rather than a question mark: Τὴν ψυχήν σου ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ θήσεις (!). Afterwards, having prophesized the triple negation of Simon at 3:00, He mentions the following: 1) the place which only He will prepare, 2) the return in order to receive the Twelve / Eleven in Himself and be inseparably together, 3) the house of the Father as the destination, which is exceptionally spacious: it has many dwellings (μονές) to accommodate all of them. The location of this magnificent house is undetermined (Judaea? Greece? Heaven?). At the core of this extensive speech there is the subtext of turbulence as a reaction from the disciples (something that the listener perceives as intuition: exodus is only possible through passion), while serving as a remedy is the faith to the Father and the Son.
* This time Thomas addresses Jesus. It is the only time that his name is not explained. He repeats Simon’s question and doubts the words of the Logos incarnate that specify they know exactly the Way to the place He is headed to. This time, Thomas does not reiterate the first opinion he had expressed in ch. 11, that the Son is headed towards Hades; in this context he seems to be vindicated in the invitation “let us walk with Him in order to die with Him”. The following take place: a) Jesus addresses Thomas with the well-known speech -marked with the use of conjunctives- that He is the way, and the truth, and the life. Afterwards b) He excludes every other way to the Father, c) finally, he reassures them: “Εἰ ἐγνώκατέ με, καὶ τὸν Πατέρα μου (“μου” for the first time in the farewell speech) γνώσεσθε. Καὶ ἀπ᾽ ἄρτι γινώσκετε Αὐτὸν καὶ ἑωράκατε Αὐτόν.” To the Greek audience, there could be a connection of these words with the final words of Socrates, who was condemned by the leaders of the people, especially as attested in Phaidon. Socrates was talking about knowing yourself (not about a Father) and the liberation of the soul from its tomb, the body, so as to ascend, along with the mind, to heavenly spheres and especially the sun.
* From Jesus’ answer, which is typically to Thomas but is essentially addressed to all of the disciples, as the second plural person is used, we could conclude that, in their view, the destination was the Temple; Jesus cleansed it, near the time of Easter, when He was commencing His public action and declared that He would substitute it as the House of His Father, for Whom He was full of zeal. This zeal (= love) will eventually consume Him. Besides, the way towards which the Baptist directed in the desert by inviting people to convert, according to John, was recalling of Isaiah (ch. 40) and the liberation of Zion, and especially of the Temple. This liberation, as way or method, required the full conformation to the Torah. Apparently, in the mind of Thomas and the rest of the disciples the 617 mitzvot (commandments) were deeply carved; they were the ways which metaphorically led to the Temple and meeting with God. It should also be noted that on the night of Passover, when the exodus to Sinai was revived, a Psalm to conclude the others (a Hallelujah) was sung. This psalm is known to the Greek Orthodox worship as the “άμωμος”, the most extensive of the Psalms. It is Psalm 118, according to the Septuagint, which places emphasis on the exercises, the commandments and the truth that the Torah offers, as well as the life. When the cleansing of the Temple takes place, the narrator / commentator remarks that even the disciples could not comprehend that Jesus was talking about His body, which would be resurrected after three days. In strategic points of the farewell speech, Jesus also talks about the Spirit, which will not only function as the *Paracletus* of the students and Prosecutor of the world, filling the void He was to leave behind Him, but would also lead the students into all the truth, that is to Him. Possibly, the Spirit is the abundant grace that was mentioned in the Prologue – a term that does not appear in any other place.
* After the dialog with Thomas, there is another one in regard to the highest wish of Moses and all of the personalities of the Old Testament; the appearance of the Father (unveiling???). Philip, “ἐκ Βηθσαϊδά τῆς Γαλιλαίας”, a well-known character from the call in Ch. 1 and his mediation to the Greeks, asks: “Κύριε, δεῖξον ἡμῖν τὸν Πατέρα, καὶ ἀρκεῖ ἡμῖν! Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Τοσούτῳ χρόνῳ μεθ᾽ ὑμῶν εἰμι καὶ οὐκ ἔγνωκάς με, Φίλιππε; ὁ ἑωρακὼς ἐμὲ ἑώρακεν τὸν Πατέρα· πῶς σὺ λέγεις· «δεῖξον ἡμῖν τὸν Πατέρα;» Οὐ πιστεύεις ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί ἐστιν; Τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν ἀπ᾽ ἐμαυτοῦ οὐ λαλῶ, ὁ δὲ Πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένων ποιεῖ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ ”.
* In the conclusion of the farewell speeches, as it has already been mentioned, the disciples (hence, Thomas as well) no longer double that He is headed towards the Father from who he came. They only ask themselves for the short term between His arrival and their new meeting. Moreover, they now think that they comprehend more fully His words (and, hence, Jesus’ words to Thomas), “17 Εἶπαν οὖν ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ πρὸς ἀλλήλους· Τί ἐστιν τοῦτο ὃ λέγει ἡμῖν· «Μικρὸν καὶ οὐ θεωρεῖτέ με, καὶ πάλιν μικρὸν καὶ ὄψεσθέ με;» καί· ὅτι «ὑπάγω πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα;» 18 ἔλεγον οὖν· τί ἐστιν τοῦτο [ὃ λέγει] «τὸ μικρόν»; οὐκ οἴδαμεν τί λαλεῖ. 19 Ἔγνω [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἤθελον αὐτὸν ἐρωτᾶν, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· περὶ τούτου ζητεῖτε μετ᾽ ἀλλήλων ὅτι εἶπον· μικρὸν καὶ οὐ θεωρεῖτέ με, καὶ πάλιν μικρὸν καὶ ὄψεσθέ με; (16, 17-19) […] 28 ἐξῆλθον παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ ἐλήλυθα εἰς τὸν κόσμον· πάλιν ἀφίημι τὸν κόσμον καὶ πορεύομαι πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα. 29Λέγουσιν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ· ἴδε νῦν ἐν παρρησίᾳ λαλεῖς καὶ παροιμίαν οὐδεμίαν λέγεις. 30 νῦν οἴδαμεν ὅτι οἶδας πάντα καὶ οὐ χρείαν ἔχεις ἵνα τίς σε ἐρωτᾷ· ἐν τούτῳ πιστεύομεν ὅτι ἀπὸ Θεοῦ ἐξῆλθες. 31ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς Ἰησοῦς· ἄρτι πιστεύετε; 32 ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ ἐλήλυθεν ἵνα σκορπισθῆτε ἕκαστος εἰς τὰ ἴδια κἀμὲ μόνον ἀφῆτε· καὶ οὐκ εἰμὶ μόνος, ὅτι ὁ πατὴρ μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ ἐστιν. (16, 29-32). Για τον Ιησού βεβαίως ο λόγος με παρρησία είναι ο μεταπασχάλιος: Ταῦτα ἐν παροιμίαις λελάληκα ὑμῖν· ἔρχεται ὥρα ὅτε οὐκέτι ἐν παροιμίαις λαλήσω ὑμῖν, ἀλλὰ παρρησίᾳ περὶ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἀπαγγελῶ ὑμῖν (16, 25).

## 4. Scene 3 (20:24-31)

* It is the most characteristic scene that involves Thomas and is of uttermost importance as the conclusion of the Gospel. It is a trilogy: a) appearance of the Risen Christ εἰς τὸ μέσον of the disciples οὔσης οὖν ὀψίας τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ τῇ μιᾷ σαββάτων in a space they had resorted to διά τον φόβον των Ιουδαίων, b) proclamation of the disciples to Thomas, c) appearance of the Risen Christ to Thomas. Two events have preceded it: a) viewing the empty tomb (and the paradox of the εντετυλιγμένου σουδαρίου) by Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter and the beloved student, who εἶδε καὶ ἐπίστευσε (20:8), b) the revelation of the Risen Christ to the weeping Mary, a revelation accompanied by the command to proclaim (intertwined with the verb “αναβαίνω”: «Μή μου ἅπτου, οὔπω γὰρ ἀναβέβηκα πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα· πορεύου δὲ πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου καὶ εἰπὲ αὐτοῖς· ἀναβαίνω πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα μου καὶ Πατέρα ὑμῶν καὶ Θεόν μου καὶ Θεὸν ὑμῶν». ἔρχεται Μαριὰμ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ ἀγγέλλουσα τοῖς μαθηταῖς ὅτι «ἑώρακα τὸν Κύριον», καὶ ταῦτα εἶπεν αὐτῇ. (20:18).
* In this scene a) after the miraculous entrance in the middle of the disciples (as miraculous as the exit from the tomb) we have a demonstration of the hands and the side, as well as the joy of the disciples who witnessed the Lord in their midst. He, maintaining the marks of the nails, as well as the sign of the spear on His risen body – something not compatible with the Jewish beliefs on the risen body– blesses them twice by mentioning “peace” recalling His prophecies after the farewell speech regarding his own Pax (14:27. cf. μικρὸν καὶ ὄψεσθέ με [16:16-19]). After the first blessing, he shows His hands and His side (not the feet – Lk 24:39-40) so as to cause joy (as already prophesized; 16:20) which contradicts the fear of the Judaeans and the pains they had endured. After the second blessing, He imbues them with the Holy Spirit, effectively creating a new mankind (Gen 2:7, Ez 37). After the Pentecost, they are sent forth (apparently to the Greek diaspora), like the Father had sent Him forth. The Pentecost is not about speaking in tongues, but it is in regard to forgiveness of sins (cf. Christ = He who lifts the sin of the world – cf. 1 John 1:7). It should be noted that the absence of Thomas does not automatically mean that he does not partake of this grace (a grace necessary for each disciple, so as to know every truth; in a related event (Nu 11:17, 26) the gift of the spirit to the 70 elders is also given to the absent elders Eldad and Medad.
* In this scene b) it is stressed in the imperfect (ἔλεγον) and the present perfect (ἑωράκαμεν) the fact of viewing the Lord and Thomas’ answer with the negatives “μη”. Essentially, Thomas rejects for the third time, as the preaching of the disciples (which completes their sending) is preceded by the testimony of the empty tomb from the two witnesses and the proclamation of Mary Magdalene to her “brothers” in regard to where He rises: ἀναβαίνω πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα μου καὶ Πατέρα ὑμῶν καὶ Θεόν μου καὶ Θεὸν ὑμῶν» as well as the «ἑώρακα τὸν Κύριον».
* The scene (c) is inititiated as the first one, something that proves that fear is not completely expelled. The 8th day is a foretaste of eternity, while it is suggested that it is one of the Saturdays, when the first Community remembered the Resurrection. After the Peace blessing, there are no gifts from the Holy Spirit to Thomas (nor a personal invitation to him), who repeats his own words. In this specific scene -apart from the fact that the Lord enters through the gate- it is proven that He is omniscient, as He repeats verbatim what Thomas said to his fellow disciples. It should also be noted that He only addresses Thomas, as if he has come towards Him, while his infidelity is not connected to the lack of providing of Holy Spirit (the sperm of God – the Anointment). While in scene (a) the disciples rejoiced, in (c) there is not record of emotion, but awe, as Thomas is not explicitly mentioned as touching the sides of the Human, King, High Priest. The alternation of “me” and “you”, as uttered by the Lord, is impressive. In Thomas’ confession, the Risen Christ is projected as his own Lord and God, as he personally came to reveal Himself to him, without hesitating to accept Thomas’ clay hand touching the wound on the side of the new Adam – a wound that initially shed blood and (then) water, the elements out of which the new Eve / Church is built with. Thomas bursts into a confession, that suggests that Jesus in the Creator and Judge, and especially (and personally) of the one that is unfaithful. It should be noted that “my [God]” is prominent in speeches of biblical figures that receive special calling and especially in the words of Mary Magdalene (my Lord – my Rabbi). The last speech of the Incarnate Logos follows. There is the beatitude for those who believe without word / examination. Apparently, “ἰδόντες” includes touch.
* In the final comment of the beloved student (who has withdrawn “εις τα ίδια” with His mother) and his community in regard to the many signs He performed before His disciples, this specific event is to be evaluated as a sign, and hence, it ends the cycle that begun in Cana: “Ταύτην ἐποίησεν ἀρχὴν τῶν σημείων ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν Κανὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας καὶ ἐφανέρωσεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ (2:11).” The book, however, with the aforementioned epilogue, was written with the following purpose: Πολλὰ μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλα σημεῖα ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς (as He is called after His Resurrection) ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν [αὐτοῦ], ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ· ταῦτα (hence the appearance to the hesitant / unfaithful Thomas) δὲ γέγραπται (A) ἵνα πιστεύ[Σ]ητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ (β) ἵνα πιστεύοντες (a double reference to faith) ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ. (20:30-31). The name which becomes the object of faith in Johannine works is “Son of God”, while Lord and God (Creator and Judge?) are connected to every person, and especially those who demonstrate lack of faith. It should also be noted that the Gospel according to John still emphatically names the Risen One “Jesus”, even after His Resurrection, while there is no mention of His assumption (in contrast to Luke, who mentions it twice). Hence, Jesus is still present.
* Of course, this specific scene is in antithetic parallelism to the first appearance of the Risen One, initially as a gardener to Mary Magdalene. That scene takes place in the morning, in an open space (a garden nonetheless). There is the description of Mary moving to the tomb and then a double turn, an address with her name, and a deterring from touch with the phrase: “μή μου ἅπτου, οὔπω γὰρ ἀναβέβηκα πρὸς τὸν πατέρα· πορεύου δὲ πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου καὶ εἰπὲ αὐτοῖς· ἀναβαίνω πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα μου καὶ Πατέρα ὑμῶν καὶ Θεόν μου καὶ Θεὸν ὑμῶν.18ἔρχεται Μαριὰμ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ ἀγγέλλουσα τοῖς μαθηταῖς ὅτι ἑώρακα τὸν κύριον, καὶ ταῦτα εἶπεν αὐτῇ.”

## Conclusion

In the conversion after conversion of Thomas, we have made the following observations:

In regard to Thomas’ conversion, every aspect of the conversions of Isis in the Hellenic / Roman world can be applied: hard, vertical, moral, and mystical (the emotional aspects probably deriving from the latter). It includes all of these elements, as Christ Himself has blocked every other road to salvation for Thomas – those roads were “marketed” at the philosophical schools and at the theatres / spectacles of the mystics. Eternal life and joy, grace and truth (which were ideals both in the Greek and the Jewish world) are offered in abundance only when in exclusive communion with Christ, who is, of course, connected to the Father and the Paracletus. Maybe, if we wanted to borrow the terms, for John faith is the turn from adhesion to conversion. This whole process, in order to be complete, requires many turns, as witness by the revelation of the Risen One to Mary Magdalene, who is -for the first time- found in the narrative front at its very end.

Naturally, the conversion of Thomas is initially connected to faith – dedication to a historical person, Jesus, the son of Joseph from the notorious Nazareth, who is identified with Logos (not the impersonal one proclaimed by Heracletus and the Stoics), but with a person that did not attempt to climb the ladder of cursus honorum as heroes and sons of god did. This specific Human / High Priest acquired flesh (not just body) and died forsaken by the disciples (a scandalous fact in the ancient world), with a painful and disgraceful death (by the standards of that time), convicted by the Jewish and the Roman authorities. In the process of conversion, it is emphasized this continuation by employing the marks of the nails that the Risen One bears on His glorious, risen body, as well as by maintaining the name “Jesus” in the narrative.

The conversion of Thomas is not connected to the authority of the student who witnessed, but, rather, with the community that produces the Johannine literature and verifies in 1 John that a communion with that community is a prerequisite to salvation, as the Messiah / the Logos of Life was witnessed and touched by its members. Thus, Thomas’ conversion, although understated by the Lord, is invaluable to the aforementioned community, because it verifies the testimony of the other disciples to Him for seven days, as well as Mary Magdalene’s.

The conversion of Thomas, although important to the “we” of the community, also bears a personal character. It proves that adopting faith is not something practiced by hysterical women (as claimed by Celsus) and beloved students. It is also pertinent to characters that doubted the words of the Logos, without that being a schism from the circle of the Twelve and although that would mean the risk of crucifixion. Conversion is not solely about emotion, but it involves logic – it requires evidence, not just signs.

Perhaps, indirectly, the conversion of Thomas turns the interest of the converted to the side which bears the mark of the spear, as well as the elements that shed out of the wound; these are of paramount importance to the Johannine community and could be characterized as the “authentic Cana”. Blood, especially, which flows from that wound and precedes water is connected to the true Manna that is provided by the new Adam; it provides -like His flesh- true life.

## General Conclusions

Thomas belongs to the circle of the Twelve, having been accepted through “rebirth” – call, like the first five. While he casts doubt on the words of Jesus, he is does not withdraw from the community he belonged after his conversion, although his absences during the first appearance of the Risen One could evoke such a suspicion. His presence, eight days after, inside closed gates proves that he shares the fear that the ten other disciples feel. Thomas does not insist on his unfaithfulness – unlike those that love the glory of the world than the one of God.

The Risen One is personally coming towards him, knowing Thomas’ words in detail, proving that He is not only the way to Heaven, but also to the Hades of infidelity. Through an appearance of Christ, Thomas is led to a fulfilled / complete faith and proclaims / recognizes Jesus as his Lord and God. Thomas belongs to the “we” of “εθεασάμεθα”, as well as those who bear witness to the Logos of life, who received flesh. The phrase “ο Λόγος σαρξ εγένετο” does not only pertain to the incarnation, but -most importantly- to the Resurrection. Conversely, Jesus is the Son of God, especially as He is Risen. It should be noted that early on, many gnostic texts were attributed to Thomas, which some contemporary researchers regard as valid as the Gospels.

This specific conversion does not occur in an instant: Καὶ τίνος ἕνεκεν οὐκ εὐθέως αὐτῷ φαίνεται, ἀλλὰ μετὰ (35) ἡμέρας ὀκτώ; Ὥστε μεταξὺ κατηχούμενον αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῶν μαθητῶν, καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἀκούοντα, καὶ εἰς πλείονα τῶν μαθητῶν, καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἀκούοντα, καὶ εἰς πλείονα ἐκκαῆναι πόθον, καὶ πιστότερον πρὸς τὸ μέλλον γενέσθαι. Πόθεν δὲ ᾔδει ὅτι καὶ ἡ πλευρὰ ἠνεῴχθη; Παρὰ τῶν μαθητῶν ἀκούσας. Πῶς οὖν τὸ μὲν ἐπίστευσε, τὸ (40) δὲ οὐκ ἐπίστευσεν; Ὅτι τοῦτο πολὺ

παράδοξον καὶ θαυμαστὸν ἦν .(Chrystostomus).

This conversion also contributes to a more complete intergration to a community, as the pivotal and unique moment of conversion after the conversion -which probably causes awe to the person- is used as an evidence, both for truth and for the identity of the “we” of the community, to those who may doubt it. Thus, the scene of Thomas’ conversion was included by the most important witness; it is a powerful evidence and potent enough to lead other “Thomas”, who are part of the Johannine community, to faith. These may doubt the confession / testimony of the rest of the disciples and of Mary Magdalene. In this perfect conversion, the final seal is not that of hearing (as emphasized by established Protestant commentators to John), but, also, the taste of blood that was shed from the wound on the side of Jesus. That wound which Thomas was called to explore but was not detached after having heard the relevant words of Jesus in John 6. That side still provides true life. Faith is a constant struggle.

1. I do not assume that this only refers to those who believe by listening to the testimony of the first eye witnesses, as claimed by the majority of interpreters. In the heart of the public action of the Logos incarnate (Ch. 6) the eating of the flesh and the drinking of His blood is exalted, as the unique method of acquiring life. Moreover, the requirement for γέννηση ἄνωθεν ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ Πνεύματος has already been outlined. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Gospel itself verifies, with the first epilogue, that **this particular appearance is the ultimate sign**, which the Lord ἐποίησε ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν αύτοῦ. Obviously, this completes the circle of those signs that served as an introduction to the public action of the Logos incarnate in chapter 2. Perhaps, it is the most detailed dialogue of the Risen Christ with a disciple, across all Gospels. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. It should be noted that in John there is call to Jesus from the disciples and not the reverse, although in 15:16 it is emphasized by the Lord that: οὐχ ὑμεῖς με ἐξελέξασθε, ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ ἐξελεξάμην ὑμᾶς. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Nonetheless, Thomas became part of the Twelve -in a manner not described by John- by receiving Jesus. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This life replaces the Kingdom (of the Synoptics), is equal to Joy and is symbolized with the copious provision (χάριν instead of χάριτος) of the following “material” elements: light, wine / blood, water / Spirit (= grace?), bread / body. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. In the East, John is read as a means of delving further into the faith during the time of the Roses – the Pentecostarion after the Catechism and the trial of the Holy and Great Lent, which culminated in the Baptism of the Holy Saturday. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)