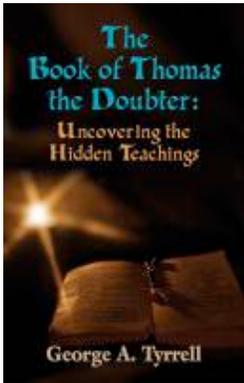


**The  
Book of Thomas  
the Doubter:  
Uncovering the  
Hidden Teachings**



**George A. Tyrrell**



**THE BOOK OF THOMAS THE DOUBTER: *Uncovering the Hidden Teachings*** is a biblical, historical novel based on the Gospel of Thomas and Acts of Thomas uncovered among the ancient Nag Hammadi texts. The book depicts Thomas carrying out Jesus' secret teachings as a disciple and as an apostle in India. In India, there are sites and landmarks commemorating Thomas. Also in India are the Thomas Christians (the Syrian Nasrani), affirming their founder as the disciple Thomas.

# **The Book of Thomas the Doubter**

## **Uncovering the Hidden Teachings**

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*Thomas the Doubter*

**The Book of Thomas the Doubter:  
Uncovering the Hidden Teachings**

**Second Edition**

**A Novel by George Tyrrell**

*George Tyrrell*

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The Doubter's Guide  
2015

Second Edition

*Thomas the Doubter*

## **Dedication**

To Rosanna & family with love

*George Tyrrell*

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*George Tyrrell*

And there were many other things that Jesus did: were they written one by one, I suppose the world itself could not contain the books... (John 21:25)

## **Chapter 1**

### **The Master and the Mystery**

**F**inality! The clang of the cross-bolt locking my cell. Its ominous peal still rings in my ears as I try to write this. First I must numb myself to skittering sounds in dark corners... the stench or rotting flesh... moans and insane cracklings echoing through stony chambers... Cursed am I in this dungeon of Hell!

But I am composed now. For the Christ has consoled me. I will again attempt to write...

From this darkening cell I, Didymos Judas Thomas, write my last testament to the followers of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. I compose this testimony to further record the unwritten teachings of Jesus as he explained them to me alone.

For even now, many false teachings of the Christ are being proclaimed. I will also endeavor to log my struggles as Jesus' disciple and my acts as his apostle in strange lands, including this present land of mystery where I am now held captive. I must write swiftly, for my candle burns low, and I know not what fate awaits me when morning comes...

I was born one of twins, the other died at birth. And it may be a part of me died with him. For as a young man I was

always a restless seeker, a Jew never content with the endless laws and rites of the Temple priests. And I was a man of small patience and little faith. So long as I could not experience or witness what was claimed, I then could not believe.

I can remember journeying home to Caesarea Philippi without hope or solace. For I had traveled to the cities of Damascus and Decapolis to learn the mysteries of the Greeks, and to the desert of the Salt Sea to know the secrets of the Holy Ones. But I learned only of my own ignorance and lack of discipline. I found any initiation offered me, too trying to endure. And what knowledge I did attain only made me more doubtful of my faith.

In need of work and sustenance I stopped at the fishing town of Capernaum by the vast Lake of Galilee. There I could help with the mending and building of boats, for I was a carpenter by trade. I stayed there at an inn. And at each day's end I would fill the hollowness of my soul with strong drink and the company of rowdy men and loose women. And I would drink to excess and some days forget to work.

On such a day I sat brooding in my wine when a companion came by and greeted me. In jest he said: "There is finally a sect you can join O Doubting Thomas. For the preacher called the Nazarene speaks by the Lake this very hour; and he claims his yoke an easy one to bear."

I regarded him with scorn, "Yes, and with only the ignorant babblings of superstition to be heard I am sure." But some wines later I felt the mood for sport and asked to be taken to this preacher; for I merely wanted to expose his ignorance and be amused by him.

So we walked the dusty trail to the lakefront where a crowd was gathered. A man they called Jesus was atop a mound speaking to them. He was lean and sinewy like myself and appeared unwashed, with the dress and look of a beggar. I

came close enough to hear him say to them, “No one knows when the Kingdom will appear except the Father, who is God.”

Still in a jesting mood, I thought to embarrass him with my knowledge. “Tell me, O preacher,” I cried out, ‘do you not speak of the God who is infinite and eternal, who sees in the small circle of this earth even mighty nations as fine dust, a God to whom no image can be compared?’”

He turned his gaze towards me. His eyes were soulful and deep, his features rough and weathered like my own. “You tell the truth as it is written my brother.”

I shook my head to break the spell, and spoke out boldly. “Then why call your God, ‘Father’, as though speaking of a mere man?” The crowd murmured and two visiting Pharisees moved closer with interest.

But the preacher looked unmoved. He turned to the people. “For those with ears to hear, I say to you: To know your God as Father is to know you were all begotten by one and the same God--whether Jew or Gentile, Roman or slave. So in loving your God as Father you can all love each other as brothers and sisters, and there could be peace in the land.”

His face became radiant as he spoke. And I was taken aback to hear words of such simple goodness from someone who looked so coarse and crude as myself.

But I had learned too much in my travels and spoke out again: “So you use the word, ‘Father’, as symbol, preacher. Then why not use the word, ‘Mother’, as well if we are all kindred under this Power?” Again the crowd murmured and the Pharisees clicked their tongues and wagged their heads at him.

The preacher looked prayerful then said: “Amen; I say to you: it is also true that the Almighty bestows loving forgiveness like a woman. And in the same way the Spirit gave birth to all things in the beginning-- like a Mother, God’s Spirit can make you be born again.”

Once more I was amazed at such breadth from a man I deemed ignorant. But I tired of poetry and symbols, I who conversed with the holy ones in the wilderness and wise Cynics on the Highway of Kings. “Hear me O preacher!” I cried. “Your symbol of God as Parent portrays goodness and the great magic of words. But in truth God is not a symbol. What you call ‘God’ may lie far beyond all signs or images and could well not care for persons. So how in truth can we find parental love in that which is so all mighty and beyond our ken?”

This time sounds of fear and protest came from the crowd, and even the faces of the Pharisees became flustered. But the preacher named Jesus merely gazed at me as a father would a foolish child.

And again he spoke: “There are some of you so in awe from the high teachings of the Sadducees, and others so confused from Pagan beliefs, you no longer feel your faith. You who speak of the Divine as lifeless, as uncaring, as a mystery beyond the reach of men...

“Do you truly believe in an all mighty Power who moves only the heavens and not also this very earth, or gives life to just the stars and not to the smallest of creatures, or speaks in the thunder and not in the prophets as well? Do you truly believe such Power dwells only beyond you and not also among you and within each living soul?”

His face darkened and his eyes flashed like fire. With outstretched arms he cried: “Nay! When you pray, you need not lift your eyes to the far off heavens. Instead cover your eyes to pray in the form of the Sh’ma, and gaze inward where God’s Spirit dwells also in each of you like a loving parent. In this way when you cry out, ‘Abba!’ ‘Father!’ God will listen even to you. For even you were finally created from the very dust of the stars!”

The people were overcome by his words. Some knelt and cried out, "Jesus!" Others threw up their hands crying Abba!" "Father!" The Pharisees were huddled together, right hands over their eyes, praying the Sh'ma. And even I began to feel my back hairs rise as an eerie feeling flushed through me. I could no longer speak as tears welled in my eyes.

For strangely, through his presence and his words, this tattered man had somehow answered my gravest doubt and calmed my uttermost fear: the anguish of being cast adrift briefly, only to die in a cosmos that cares not and knows me not. I felt a spark of faith for the first time rising in me faintly.

Then I saw Jesus starting to leave with his small band of followers. I struggled through the crowd and called out his name. He turned to look at me, then smiled. "Be blessed, my brother, for your deep questions inspired my best teachings."

"And your words have begun to inspire my faith," I said breathlessly. Then I found myself saying, "Preacher, I have been told your yoke is easy to bear."

He appraised me with his eyes. "Only if you have nothing in this world that ties you", said he.

"I have nothing," I told him.

He paused and looked upon me solemnly. It seemed he was peering into my very soul. "Tell me your name." When I told him he said, "Tonight we camp on the shore near Chorazin." He walked toward his waiting disciples. Finally he turned. "You can join me there if you wish, Thomas. You will see our fires."

An odd feeling of elation surged through me as I watched the ragged group walk off into the distance. But I could not discern why I would have such a feeling for a peasant preacher leading a tattered band who looked so like beggars. Presently I began asking those around me and in the village about this strange man of whom I heard rumors before. And I heard many

more tales of healings and miracles ascribed to this man, Jesus...

\* \* \* \* \*

With the setting sun I found myself walking the Lake's trail toward Chorazin as though under a spell. Even the waters seemed enchanted, as they turned golden like the sun. For a moment I felt I was beside myself and thought of turning back. But I was compelled to walk on. The waters had turned to shimmering moonlight when I approached the cove where the fires glowed.

Suddenly I leaped back startled by a huge form stepping from behind a bush, and beheld a giant of a man. Two other men, unshaved and fierce looking flanked him. "Declare yourself!" said the large man. When I gave my name their expressions softened.

"I am Simon Peter," said the big one. "And these men are James and John, the sons of Zebedee." The one called James was heavy and thick bearded with laughing eyes. John was younger but looked wise for his years. After we exchanged greetings Peter said, "Follow me. The Master awaits you."

He led me through a score of scattered campfires and the silhouettes of many men and some women sitting in conversation. There was occasional laughter and the whole party seemed in good spirits. We stopped at a hollow in a cliff. Inside, a white robed man sat on some blankets by a fire. I saw it was the teacher called Jesus.

He greeted me warmly and bade me to sit down beside him and tell him about myself. I told him of my quest for faith and spiritual solace, and the knowledge I gained in strange lands, and how it all came to nothing because I was a man of small patience and little faith. But I soon tired of my own talk,

for it was his answers to my questions that brought me to him and sparked my faith.

I could contain myself no longer. “Teacher, I have more questions that burn in my soul.”

“Then I am here to listen,” said Jesus.

Struggling with my thoughts, I said to him: “Tell me, Jesus, what truth are there in the rumors I have heard? Some say you are Elijah proclaiming the Messiah. Others say you are the Messiah. And there are those who say you are the Satan himself. Who are you, and what is the mission of your teachings and healings throughout this land?”

It seemed fateful to find he was a carpenter like myself who left his trade to seek spiritual solace. And I was fascinated to find he sought knowledge in strange lands to the east where he learned teachings beyond the Jewish law.

He spoke of his baptism by John the Baptist and how he was raised up from the waters into a blazing sky and a mighty voice that said, “This day I have begotten you,” and how he became filled with the Spirit and fasted in the wasteland resisting the temptations of Satan.

I interrupted to say, “You have spoken nothing of divine birth, as certain rumors have stated.”

He shook his head saying: “All you must know, Thomas, is that when born of woman you are born into death. When born of the Spirit you are born into life. I was truly born again when filled with the Spirit that day in the Jordan.”

Then my curiosity pressed me to ask, “To what mission did the Spirit ordain you, Jesus?”

He looked at me a long time before he spoke. “This is a riddle I have yet shared with no one, Thomas. But you have a probing mind, and maybe you can help solve it. I will tell you what was revealed to me after the temptations of Satan.”

His eyes took on a distant look as if the visions were appearing before him. Shadows from the fire flickered on his face in strange ways, appearing to change his demeanor from angelic to demonic. I fought inwardly to control my imagination and my senses as he spoke.

“After resisting the hellish temptations I became weak and fell to the ground. I then began to feel my soul expand to become as the Void before anything was. And in a blaze of light the Void burst forth to become the Power of God’s Spirit moving across the face of the deep to fill the empty heavens.

And the heavens finally glowed from the infernos of stars new born; and I saw old stars dying in apocalypses of fire. And everywhere was resurrection from chaos spreading light throughout the darkness.” I became speechless from the magnitude of this revelation and found myself gasping. Jesus then looked at me and said, “Am I revealing more than you can stand, Thomas?”

“No!” I said, laboring to breath more easily. “Do not cease, Jesus. Please go on.”

And again he spoke. “From an apocalypse I saw the earth and other worlds being formed of fire. Great clouds rose up above the firmament of earth to finally bring forth a deluge of rain to quench the fires. Then at last life was formed in the sea and on the earth. And the light of day always returned from the dark of night. And nature’s fruits always resurrected with the return of the seasons.

Throughout storms, floods, and famine life was always reborn. And I saw in the sky the vision of a great Mother forever giving new birth to her babe of life. And below I saw the sons and daughters of men as fallen creatures--the only ones who knew of sin and the omen of death--running naked and afraid...”

*Thomas the Doubter*

Then he paused, his face radiant, nodding his head as if hearing someone speak. I called to him, "Jesus! Do not stop now! Please tell me the rest." He shook himself as if waking from a dream, then smiling he revealed more to me.

It was then a great voice said to me: "All of creation is resurrection, my Son: on earth as it is in heaven, as above as it is below, as without as it is within your very soul. Just as all of creation is forever reborn, so can mere mortals be reborn in their souls even before they die--just as you have now, for they are all part of it.

And now that this Power of rebirth is bestowed unto you: from this day on you will bestow this Power unto humankind so they may be saved from their own evil. The way will be shown to you..."

On hearing this I remained speechless in awe. Then Jesus arose and stared sadly into the darkness saying: "When I finally returned to the Jordan I learned the Baptizer was seized and beheaded by Herod, and his disciples were scattered in hiding.

But as I journeyed alone I found I possessed powers of teaching and healing, for the Spirit was alive within me. I gathered some of the Baptizer's disciples and others along the way and have since traveled about the land seeking to heal the afflicted, teach the unknowing, and help those dead in spirit be born again.

"Then is that your final commission, Jesus, to teach and heal and give new birth to the despaired?"

For a moment his eyes grew distant. "No, Thomas, my revelation is not yet fulfilled. And each night I pray it will finally be made clear to me. For I am often filled with the feeling that the time is short and the end is near. And it is this omen of death that stirs my soul to life because I fear the days are numbered."

But I was still eager to find the answer. “Do you speak of the last days? Could your mission be to succeed the Baptist in announcing the Kingdom at hand?”

And he said to me: “The revelation has shown me resurrection in the scheme of all things. And the Baptist had proclaimed this world’s end and a new earth rising from its ruins. And even now my brother, James, leads the remainder of John’s disciples in declaring this message. But I feel the Spirit within me heralding something even greater than what is now being proclaimed.”

“Then,” I gasped, “Could you, yourself be the coming Messiah?”

“It is told the Messiah will come in leading vast armies,” he said, “ But the Spirit bestows in me only love and peace for the world.” Then he looked weary. “Now it is late. If you wish to stay, Thomas, see Peter. He will have a place ready for you.”

I yearned to ask him more but said, “Yes I will stay, Jesus, but for how long I do not know.”

Most in the camp were already asleep when Peter led me to a sandy place near the shore. Then handing me some blankets, he waved and lumbered off into the flickering darkness I lay a long time under the stars marveling at the God-like visions of this strange man, Jesus.

Were his the specters and voices of madness or of God? Was he truly a great prophet, or but a demon in disguise? If I could but learn the secrets of his powers... I finally fell into fitful sleep with strange apparitions haunting my dreams...

## **Chapter 2**

### **The Miracle of Faith**

**T**he months went by and I never did leave. For I remained under the spell of this strange teacher who never ceased to stir my quest for knowledge. How I now long for those winsome days when we walked the footpaths across the fragrant hills of orchards and vineyards, and traversed the golden wheat basins to the villages of Galilee.

Sometimes we took the routes to Ptolemais and visited the towns along the Great Sea. Along the way we would pass by long trains of pack animals carrying grain to the Hauron or rich fruits to Damascus. Returning to Galilee at dawn we passed farmers with laden donkeys carrying grapes and vegetables to sell.

And always we returned to see the great, blue Lake of Galilee busy with boats netting fish or moving grain across the waters. Sometimes we would circle the vast Lake in a boat, fishing for our sustenance and visiting the towns and villages along the shore. And whenever we stopped, Jesus bestowed his guidance and would often heal an afflicted soul. And I began logging his exploits and his words on a parchment I carried with me.

Often when we camped at night, Jesus would question us about the meaning of his message before he retired to pray. Sometimes we stayed the night at the home of a rich merchant who would question Jesus about his teachings. The talks would begin with supper and last long into the night. And I was amazed that Jesus would feast and drink as though celebrating tidings of great joy. And I would drink to excess and awaken sick in the morning.

In time I grew to know the disciples well. The faithful Peter was a rough, burly man whose moods were hard to predict. At times he spoke impulsively and seemed driven by the Spirit; at other times he withdrew sullenly into himself and would speak to no one. His brother, Andrew, had been a disciple of the Baptist. Unlike Peter he was lean and gentle, but he spoke little and often retired by himself to pray.

James had also been the Baptist's disciple, but later he became heavy with food and drink. He spoke loudly and often in jest. His brother, John, was the youngest but was keen of mind and knew Jesus' teachings better than the rest, although he never questioned them.

Judas Iscariot was keeper of the money, which he would allot in frugal portions. He seemed a worrisome man who would sometimes fret over trifles. I sometimes saw him speak to shadowy men who wore daggers in their cloaks. And there were many more: The fanciful Philip, Mathew the tax collector, the attendant mother of James and John, the wife of Peter, the roamers Thaddeus and Bartholomew, and more...

But unlike the others I could not believe things blindly, not even the teachings of Jesus. Always there were mysteries that troubled me, and I would present them to him whenever we had time together alone. My questions sometimes seemed to trouble Jesus as well. For such questions made him probe more

deeply into the meanings of his message and the nature of his mission.

Yet I think he welcomed my inquiries for that very reason. I believe that from the start this was why Jesus wanted me to stay with his band. These intimate dialogues with the Master gave me deeper accounts of his message and mission than have been ever written before. And I would record his words on my parchment.

One such time was the night we camped by the village of Nain. I was feeling despair in my heart, for I had already witnessed many miracles of healing and rebirth through the power of faith. Yet this seemed the very power I was lacking. So I went to Jesus to seek his counsel. When he greeted me I said, "Master, I need your advice on the matter of faith."

"Then ask what you will, Thomas."

So I said to him: "I have always thought of faith as the ability to believe in something with great confidence and trust. Yet they call me 'the doubter' because my faith is not blind. For I can believe only what my senses behold. And I can trust only what I witness to work well.

"Yet the greatest faith seems to come from belief in things impalpable, without substance like 'God,' 'spirit,' and 'soul'. Tell me, Master, how can there be faith more certain than beholding something tangible and seeing it work well?"

He looked at me thoughtfully. "Do you think you can witness all that exists and works well, Thomas?"

I pondered awhile. "Of course there may be things too distant in the heavens or too tiny on this earth to perceive..."

"True, Thomas, but what of our own realm between the smallest dust mote and the farthest star? Can you smell even what a dog smells or hear all he hears? Can you feel the tides of the moon like the humble crab, or see with your ears like the bat in its cave? Have you seen the aura around one who is

holy? And what are the powers that move the sun and the moon, the heavens and the earth? And why should there not be hidden realms that lurk in the mind and soul and within the very space before you?"

I struggled to regain my hold on reality. "But as the Greeks have taught, we can still gain truth through reason which can correct and extend our senses."

He shook his head at me. "Then, Thomas, you have not understood the story of man's Fall and his curse from the fruit of knowledge."

I was astonished. "But surely, Master, you do not believe in the talking serpent and a magic tree?"

And he said to me: "I speak only of hidden meanings. When as simple creatures the first people gained the power to think and attain knowledge, they then knew of right from wrong and of their own forthcoming death. And they then became fearful and confused, filled with guilt and doubt.

"And with knowledge also came the guile and cunning to fool others, even themselves. With it came the pride to believe they had the knowledge of God, the knowledge to put man's laws in place of God's laws. And through such pride they defile the earth and its creatures and their fellow beings to this very day. Verily I say to you Thomas: man's knowledge has its limits, and his thoughts are as fickle as his senses."

I was suddenly overwhelmed by the prospects Jesus revealed to me. I felt strange; for my whole world was faltering and it seemed the very ground was falling away beneath me. Struggling to compose myself I said, "You have already given me too much to think about this night, Master. Leave me to ponder these things and answer you tomorrow." I walked away slowly, for my legs were trembling and the ground had lost its firmness.

As I lay beneath the black summer sky, the words of Jesus echoed in my soul. I imagined strange forces all around me that I could not know, that maybe the keenest creatures could not know.

Then I remembered the words an old Cynic spoke to me in my travels: “ If creatures of diverse kinds perceive the same flower and each kind receives a very different image, then where do these differing images called ‘flower’ exist? Do they exist in the flower, or in each creature’s senses?”

I then became desperate. For if I could not believe my own senses, on what could I base my thoughts or my faith? Whenever I closed my eyes, demons of chaos pursued me in my dreams...

The next morning I awoke as though I had not slept. As in a trance I climbed the hill of Moreh and gazed eastward upon ancient, rock-hewn tombs. Across the plains of Tabor were the snowy heights of Mt. Hermon.

Could all this be but a mirage, I thought. There must be an answer to this madness. That day I walked as in a daze behind Jesus’ followers, unable to trust my thoughts or my senses. In despair I turned from a man of small faith to one of no faith at all...

I knew little of what was done in Nain that day. With a troubled heart I came to walk with Jesus as we departed from Nain to camp at Mt. Tabor. And I said to him: “Master, since you spoke to me last night my soul has been in turmoil. For now I doubt even my own mind and very senses. I came to you to gain faith, and now I have nothing. What is then left for me O Jesus?”

And he said to me: “To truly know your ignorance is to know your need for faith. Now I say to you, Thomas, deny neither your thoughts nor your senses. Merely know their limits. As the Covenants have taught us: we must first strive to

know and do what is right. Only then will God help us the rest of the way. But we cannot do all of it alone.

I was not yet satisfied. “But if my own powers deceive me, how can I know their limits and when to turn to God?”

So he said to me: “Thomas, you need not believe by faith alone the teachings of men, nor even the thoughts in your heart, nor even what your eyes may see. Instead you must seek until you find their fruits. But when you seek and cannot find, should you then be content to remain ignorant? Or should you then pray to God’s Spirit in you for revelation?”

In anguish I said to him: “Master for so long I have sought the power and solace of God’s Spirit and have not found it. And even as yet I do not know how to turn to God. I do not even know how to pray. O Jesus, how can I become filled with the Spirit and the miracle of faith just as you are now?”

Jesus then stretched out his arms to me. “So now, Thomas, at last you are ready to turn to God.” He laid his hands upon me and gazed long into my eyes. Finally he said, “Yes, Thomas, it is time you learned to tap into the miracle of faith. And you must start by knowing the mysteries of prayer.”

I felt a strange power surge through me, yet still I said to him: “But my prayers have not worked for me; for I am still not sure what it is you call ‘God’. Speak again of to where and to whom I should pray, Master, as you did when I first heard you preach at Capernaum.”

So he said to me: “You remember, Thomas, the same Power that moves the heavens, fires the stars, and speaks in the thunder also moves this very earth, and gives life to its creatures, and speaks in the prophets.

“For as it is above, so it is below, as on earth as in heaven. And so it is the same Power that lives in you, Thomas. For you are a part of it, just as you are a part of this earth and the cosmos. And just as this Power can create order from

turbulence and resurrect the sun from the darkness, so can it make you be reborn into new life as would a loving parent. For as it is without, so it is within your very soul.”

“Yes I remember,” I said to him. “Such were the words that brought me to you. But tell me, Jesus, just what is the soul. I can understand the mind, which I experience as being conscious and aware, unlike a stick or stone. I can also experience knowledge and thought beyond that of the beasts who graze or roam the wilds. But can my soul be anything more than this?”

“All of what you speak is your soul,” said he, “And there is a realm of your soul of which you are not aware; it has a dark side wherein lurks demonic turmoil. But deeper yet lies the Kingdom: your Source, and linkage to the cosmos. From therein can be drawn the power called the Spirit from which you can be reborn into new being.”

I was filled with awe. “Then tell me, O Jesus, what I must do to tap this well of Power, if it is truly in me as you said?”

And he said to me: “There are many ways, Thomas. The most unswerving path is that of silent communion wherein you empty yourself of ceaseless thoughts as it is stated in Scripture: ‘Be still and know I am Yahweh, your God’.”

“Master, my thoughts often do not cease. What if I cannot do this?”

“Then, Thomas, you may chant the Psalms until you are lulled away from worldly things. For your soul must be pure to commune with God’s Spirit in you.”

“Will then my prayers be answered, Master?”

“To pray is not to ask of favors, Thomas,” he said, “but to commune inside with God. If you must speak: then purge your soul by lamenting your doubts and sorrows and you will be uplifted; confess your offenses and you will stand forgiven; give thanks for your blessings and the world will look good to

you. And when purged of your afflictions, sing out your praise and exaltations. Then you will know the Kingdom is within you and spread out before you.”

I was amazed at these prospects and felt my body shaking. “Then need I ask of nothing, Master?”

He said to me: “If you must ask of God take care, Thomas, for if you ask for things unwise you may receive them as a lesson. And only the foolish will ask for the sun to shine, or the rain to fall, or for good fortune to befall them from without.

“For remember, Thomas, you are communing with the Spirit inside you. Outside you the sun will shine and the rain will fall on the good and bad alike. And without your effort, the chance of fortune will fall where it may.”

“Then what is left to ask?” I said, starting to truly see the futility of influencing God.

Again he spoke: “Because the Power works for you inside your soul, Thomas, it is better to ask for the inner strength to overcome strife, withstand temptation, become reborn in the Spirit, and find your calling. For then the Spirit will come alive in you and you will achieve.”

I became speechless in light of all that was revealed, and had much to think upon by the time we reached Mt. Tabor that night.

When we prepared camp at the base of the mountain I felt I was trespassing upon hallowed ground; for higher on this mountain was where Peter and John claimed they saw Jesus become transfigured with auras of light shining forth from his body.

I lay awake that night with Jesus words resounding in my heart; for he had revealed to me a path for attaining the miracle of faith and rebirth. Yet could I who they call “the doubter” achieve such a state? I tried to still my thoughts, to purify my

soul as Jesus said. But my ruminations would not cease. So I began chanting from my heart in the form of the Psalms.

“Please do not desert me now O Lord in this my time of need. For so long I have sought but could not find you. Now I falter by the wayside bewildered and confused. How long, O Lord? How long will you just look on and hide your face from me? I beg of you to set a guard over my mouth and watch the door of my lips. Then for you alone my soul will wait in silence; and I will meditate with you in the watches of the night.”

When I closed my eyes a deep silence fell upon me. I felt neither awake nor asleep, and time had stopped its motion. Then I beheld a glowing Void whose light enveloped me. And it seemed I myself became the light. And I felt the unspeakable glory of being bathed in God... Then I knew not if I was asleep or in Heaven when a great voice spoke to me.

“Yes, Thomas, for you it has been long. And you have yearned and suffered much while your doubts have kept you from me. Now you may ask of me and you shall receive.”

And without moving my lips I found myself saying as if in a dream: “Please grant me the power, O God, to gain the great miracle of faith and to heal and do good works in the world like Jesus. And let your Spirit be with me always.”

Then again the voice spoke: “The way will not be easy. You will find pitfalls and stumbling blocks to bring you to despair. And you will be tested, as the fire tests the metal. You will witness desolation and resurrection. And you will behold mystery upon mystery and be amazed. And you will be called far off into strange lands to see your homeland no more. Do you now still want to be as Jesus, Thomas?”

I felt my soul quaver. But I was filled with the Spirit and found myself saying, “Yes, Lord, I will do what I am called to

do.” Then the Void overcame me, and the radiance of the Spirit filled all my dreams.

When I awoke in the morning I found myself kneeling over a boulder in a position of prayer. The disciples were gathered around me looking as astonished as I. Jesus stepped out from them and reached out his hand to me saying, “Surely, Thomas, this day you have received the Spirit of God”.

I stayed close to Jesus as he prepared to leave Tabor. For my head was swimming and new questions burned in my soul. I told him of my lamentations into the night, and the light that bathed me, and the voice that spoke to me, and the mysteries it foretold, and the tests of fire I would undergo.

Then I asked him, “Could the light and the voice truly be God, Master? Or was all of it just my fervent wishes speaking back to me in the madness of a dream?”

“Again I say to you, Thomas, nothing can be true unless it is born out by its fruits. A prophecy that does not come to be is a false prophecy. But you have spent the night with your soul steeped in prayer. And today I beheld you as filled with the Spirit. Now I say to you: The prophecy will bear its fruits only if you strive to withstand its tests of fire.”

Again I felt my soul tremble. “Master, if I have been reborn in the Spirit. I am again like a babe. I know not the secrets of healing, overcoming, and doing good works in the world. If the Spirit responds to me only in my soul, how can my prayers help and heal others?”

Jesus turned and laid his hands upon me. “Your prayers will work for others by reaching God’s Spirit in them: when you pray with your brethren, when you pray over the sick, and by the laying on of hands as you pray.”

Again I felt his powers surge through me. “And what of those far away, Master?”

“Let those who travel know you will pray for them,” said he. “Ask them to also pray with this knowledge. Join hands with your brothers and sisters to give power to the prayers you send out. Then there is the great prayer of good works and deeds you offer unto God. This is why we travel, Thomas, to give healing and rebirth to those who are not among us.”

His words opened my eyes. And it rang true in my heart that the Spirit waits to be awakened in each person’s soul. We then headed towards Cana. As we walked through the vineyards and wild flowers and passed by the sloping hills of Nazareth, I prayed in silence that the Spirit would grow strong in me so I too could perform good works and deeds.

Before we reached Cana, we came upon a woman weeping and holding a child in her arms. The child’s arm hung bleeding and deformed and he cried from fear and pain. I came to the woman before the others and she cried out to me, “My son has fallen from the mule and his arm is broken!”

Feeling great pity, I took the boy and set him down gently. Then feeling the Spirit in me I stroked the child and looked into his eyes saying, “Do not be afraid, lad, and your arm will not hurt you.” The boy looked at me as if under a spell and became calm. Then I said, “Let this child’s arm be healed in the name of God!” Nothing happened. So I chanted it again even louder. Still nothing happened. How ever many times I implored God and the Spirit within the child for a healing, the arm remained the same.

Jesus then came and bade Peter and John to bathe the boy’s arm and set it straight. Then he turned to me and said: “Faith heals afflictions of the soul such as fear and the pain that comes from fear. And so you have healed these sufferings in this child, Thomas. But those wounded also in the flesh need a bodily remedy as well. For the flesh is more fragile than the soul and is prone to death.”

*George Tyrrell*

So this lesson I learned in my first attempt at healing. With the child calm and his arm set straight, the woman thanked us gratefully and went on her way. But I wondered if my powers were strong at all. For calming a panicked boy seemed such a simple victory.

Little did I know the true tests my fledgling powers would soon endure...

### **Chapter 3**

## **The Cleansing of Demons**

**B**y midday we entered Cana, with its mud-brick buildings and roofs of clay and straw. I was walking next to Jesus and spoke to him. “Master, it is rumored you were once here at a wedding and performed a miracle by changing water to wine.”

“Too many legends are growing about me, Thomas,” he said. “Even now the fox, Herod, is becoming suspicious, believing me a successor to the Baptist. So I say to you now, Thomas: the only true miracles of mortal men are those that come through faith, love, and rebirth in the Spirit.”

Then a group of children ran noisily out to greet us; for Jesus always came with tarts and small gifts for them. Peter laughed, lifting a child high in his arms, and Jesus and the others sat with the children around them. Then some people came in ones and twos. Soon a small crowd was gathered around us. And a young man limped toward Jesus with a rod to support him. Jesus’ eyes seemed to burn into the youth as he said, “How strong is your faith in God, my son?”

“It is feeling strong now, O preacher,” said the young man in awe.

“Then throw down your staff and walk to me.”

The youth dropped his stick and faltered in his steps. Then Jesus laid his hands upon him saying, "Your faith has healed you, lad!" The young man walked more steadily, then shouted, "Praise be to God!" A group of people joined in his praises, and soon the crowd became larger.

I stood with Peter and the others, musing over whether Jesus cured the lad by healing the anguish in his soul. Or could Jesus heal both body and soul I wondered? Then I saw an old woman sobbing. I went over to her and said, "Why do you cry, old woman?"

She looked at me with sadness in her eyes. "My daughter sits at home transfixed by a demon, and I cannot get to Jesus through the crowd."

I asked where she lived, and she pointed to a house across the road. "Then take me to her, woman, and I will try to help."

I entered the house, and in the courtyard I saw a young woman sitting stiff and upright with one arm raised. "She no longer sees, hears, or moves," said the mother. "She is like Lot's wife in the Scriptures who became frozen into a pillar of salt."

I went to the young woman feeling great compassion. Stroking her hair gently, I gazed deep into her eyes. "I am speaking into your trapped soul where God's Spirit waits to heal you." I then laid my hands upon her and felt the Spirit grow strong within me. Remembering the Psalms, I prayed into her soul:

"O Lord, how long must this poor woman bear pain in her soul and have sorrows in her heart all of the day? For she is poured out like water and her heart melts in her breast. Incline your ears to these words. For she is like one who is deaf and does not hear, like one who is dumb and does not speak." I felt my voice grow stronger. "Rouse yourself, O Spirit! Awake! Will you keep her poor soul out forever?"

For a long time she did not move. Then I saw the light come back into her eyes. Her arm dropped to her lap. She looked at me, and both her eyes and mine grew wide with surprise and our mouths both hung open agape. And her mother cried out, “Are you well again, child? Can you speak to me?”

The young woman’s face took on a look of holiness, then she spoke in a strange voice. “Mother, I felt as if I had died and God’s Spirit breathed life back into me.” Weeping and praising God her mother embraced her.

Peter and John were sent to find me, and entered the door in time to see the healing. Peter seemed jealous. “So you have learned the Master’s secrets, and now you perform your own miracles.”

But John said, “Be praised, Thomas, for you have learned well and are doing good works in the world.”

When we caught up with the others, Jesus was preparing to leave for Magdala where we would camp for the night. And I was beside myself with joy and thanksgiving, thinking I could now heal as well as Jesus. We followed a route well around Tiberias of the Gentiles where the dreaded Herod had his palace, then trod with caution through the Valley of Robbers.

Jesus knew of my healings and said to me: “My teachings have taken root in you, Thomas, and you are truly growing in the Spirit. So I say to you now: He who drinks the knowledge from my lips will become as I am, and things hidden shall be revealed to him.”

Peter shuffled behind, mumbling, “He even dressed and looks like the Master now.”

“Already there is a rumor starting in Cana that Jesus has a twin,” goaded James with a laugh.

Jesus then turned and said to them: “There will come a time when you all will heal the sick and teach the unknowing

in place of me.” And the disciples all murmured to each other in wonder as we walked.

After dusk we camped at Magdala. I went off by myself and sat by the Lake to reflect on the day’s events and my new found powers. Unable to contain the joy in my heart, I sang out my praise to God with prayers of exaltation. The dark sky then took on a glow of blue. The moon and stars became radiant, enchanting the sparkling waters.

Then I remembered Jesus’ words: “And when purged of your afflictions, sing out your praise and exaltations; then you will know the Kingdom is within you and spread out before you...”

I slept soundly that night. The next morning we entered Magdala and beheld a wedding feast being prepared. Jesus spoke his teachings that day on marriage and fidelity. After his teachings the bride’s father invited Jesus and the disciples to attend the feast that afternoon.

At the feast all were of great cheer. But I took my leave early from having drunk too much wine. After I awoke from dozing under a tree, I saw an old man and woman seeming afraid to enter their house. I went to them and asked if I could help. The man said, “Our daughter has been practicing witchcraft and sorcery against our wishes. Now she is beside herself and possessed with many demons.”

Now I was not sure I believed in demons; and I felt courage from the wine and my success in healing. I asked their daughter’s name and the man said, “Mary”. I said, “With your permission I will enter the house and speak to her in the name of God.”

They consented, and I entered the house. When my eyes accustomed to the gloom, I beheld what seemed to be two red coals glowing aloft from the corner of the room. Then I saw they were the eyes of something wretched with wild hair and

tangled clothes. I found myself trembling but said, "Be at peace, my sister, for God is with you this day."

Then came strange laughter with a voice hissing like a serpent. "And who are you to speak of God O feeble one?" The form began coming toward me saying: "Is yours the God who cursed humanity from the time of Adam, who reigned jealously and slew even his own worshipers in multitudes, who allows even now unspeakable pain, the fall of the just, and the triumph of the wicked in this world?"

I felt myself moving backward as the form approached. Again it spoke: "Who do you believe unleashes great storms of sand that cleave the bone, or the fires that spew from the mountains, or the rumblings that open the earth to expose the pits of Hell?" I smelled her fetid breath and beheld the face of a demon who shrieked, "Nay! It is Satan who rules this world--and I am his disciple!"

Knocking down a chair I fell backwards to the floor then scrambled in fear from that evil house. Outside I sat on the steps and breathed hard to compose myself, for the old man and woman were standing there. When I finally found repose I said to them, "Fear not, old ones. Jesus is in the village this very day. Come, let us find him and he will help you."

We found Jesus leaving the feast with the others and I told him what happened. But he and the others were weary and heavy with wine. So Jesus decided to camp near Magdala for the night and bade the man and woman to camp with us. He then asked their daughter's name. When told he said, "In the morning I will relieve Mary of Magdala from her demons."

On the way to the encampment Peter and James chided me about my vain attempt to cast out demons. But my thoughts were too deep and troubled for me to reply. For it was as if I had spoken to Satan himself. All my doubts were rekindled and I felt my powers depleted. Once we arrived at camp and saw to

the old ones' comfort, I sought out Jesus. I found him reclining on some blankets by a fire and said to him, "Master, before you sleep there are things I must know."

He opened one eye to me. "Then speak, Thomas."

So I said to him: "Tell me why I have already lost my powers, Jesus. This woman's sickness was not of the body but of the soul, yet the power of faith could not heal her."

And Jesus said: "It takes strong faith to heal the soul, Thomas. And your faith was strong when your healings were not resisted. But when she opposed you in Magdala, faith left your heart, doubt returned to your soul, and you became the one afflicted. I say to you now, Thomas: if the one you are healing has no faith, then the faith you project must be twice as strong. If not, the healing will fail."

Then I told him of what the demon had spoken: the jealous God who cursed humankind, who unleashes fire from the mountains and devastates the earth, who allows suffering and injustice to reign in this world.

"I am now not sure, Master, if the God of our Scriptures is not Satan, and if Satan is not the ruler of this world. Tell me, Jesus, are God's laws and the laws of creation the same laws, or does there reign some force of evil even greater than the merciful God of whom you teach?"

Jesus shook his head at me. "So, my doubting friend, already the Devil has driven all faith from your soul." He lay back gazing into the stars. "Yes, Thomas, the mysteries of nature have a shadow side of darkness and unrest. And turmoil is the untamed state of things without God's laws. But remember again, Thomas, what my earliest visions have shown: God's lawfulness forever creates order from the turbulence. And from such chaos the heavens were born and so was our earth. From the floods, and the fires spewed from the mountains came the land's fertility, just as from the darkness

came light. And in the same way, from your own turmoil you became born again.”

Once more I remembered and felt some peace return to my soul. But I had to know more. “Then tell me, Master, from where come the hideous demons such as the one I confronted this very day?”

And he said to me: “Because persons are part of nature, Thomas, they are also prone to turbulence. And since they fell from simplicity to know of sin and their coming death, they could be confused into madness and separated from God’s lawfulness. And once the soul is in chaos, one becomes possessed as by a demon and may hear Satanic voices and see demonic visions. And when wracked with terror and confusion, one again knows not right from wrong.”

Then again I became troubled and cried, “Why does God allow this? Why does not God purge and heal these wretched creatures?”

And he said to me: “Remember, Thomas, God helps persons on this earth not from above, but in and through persons themselves. Therefore it is our appointed work to bring bodies and souls back in harmony with God’s lawfulness by reaching the Spirit in them through prayer, and kindness, and the laying on of hands.”

But I remained confounded. “Then do demons exist only in one’s heart and mind alone, Master?”

His eyes looked troubled. “No, Thomas, though the demons of turmoil live in the hearts and minds of men, there also exists a Demon of true evil: so real, his flesh can be touched and his face seen by all.”

His words made me tremble. “Tell me, Master, who is this Demon of true evil? Is it the one who entered Mary of Magdela? Or does it exist in realms I am yet to know?”

His eyes saddened, and I thought I saw a tear shine on his cheek. Then he said, "Enough tonight, Thomas, for I must rest if I am to confront the demons of Mary in the morning."

I reclined with my soul not fully at peace. I felt less fearful of the turbulence in nature and in man. And I could view sickness and madness again with less despair. For if God's laws create order from nature's chaos, so might I again tap God's power beneath the turmoil in my soul.

And in the morning Jesus would himself reveal the strength faith needs to conquer the worst of demons. But then I remembered what Jesus said: These demons will not be the worst. What could be that ultimate horror that bought a tear to even the Master's eye...?

In the morning we awoke the old ones and walked with them toward the house where Mary was held possessed. And the autumn season of the desert wind blew in hot and dry from the east. Columns of dust swirled and chased each other like devils in the road before us.

The skin on my face grew taut. The others were becoming irritable. Dogs snarled and snapped at each other in the streets. Then we saw the house shimmering through a yellow haze of dust. When we approached the door, a dried beam of cedar cracked loudly.

"I will go in alone," said Jesus.

"No," said Peter, "I will go in with you. For you may need safeguarding."

Unable to contain myself, I stole into the house behind them. The murk was like that of a tomb, and it carried the stench of death. Then we saw the tattered form crouching in a corner. Strands of hair stuck like webs across a face enraged. Its frothing mouth emitted a growl as it stared with frenzied eyes.

Suddenly it sprang to its feet, its eyes rolled back white with bloodshot veins. Then came a shriek not of this world: “What do you want with the mighty Lilith? Do you think to destroy her?” It advanced toward us and snarled, “Fools! She will drain the blood from your bodies, and leave your bones in the desert for the jackals to gnaw.”

Peter and I drew back trembling. But Jesus stood firmly saying; “I have come to bring Mary out from your madness, O Demon, for you have tarried here too long.” It then moved toward him roaring in a voice like thunder: “And who are you, frail peasant? Do you have the power to oppose the wrath of Satan’s Leviathan? How many of her seven faces can you withstand before you too are destroyed by madness?”

Peter pushed a table between the demon and Jesus to protect his Master, and withdrew in fright as Jesus waved him away. Then Jesus raised his arms toward the fiendish figure saying: “Roll down your eyes O demon. Why do you avert my gaze? Why can you not look into these eyes and see who I am?” Its eyes stared wildly at him as he said: “I am Jesus of Nazareth, and I speak from the Power of Yahweh, your God. Can you not see the glory shining forth from this vehicle?”

I was aghast. And I heard Peter gasp, for he saw it too. An aura seemed to shine forth from Jesus. And the demon also saw the light, for its eyes became wide. Then its face became human, and a woman’s figure fell to her knees crying out in a small voice, “Jesus, stop these fiendish specters and voices who threaten me with foul names and make me feel worthless and low!”

“Then let them show themselves and speak to me again,” said Jesus, “Or do they fear me now that they know who I am?” Her pupils rolled back again so I could see only the whites of her eyes; and she trembled, but no sound uttered from

her lips. Jesus' voice then rose to a frightful pitch. "If they refuse to confront me I will call them out by name!"

Then slowly it rose to its feet, its face grotesque with hair sticking out wildly, its teeth sharp and gleaming, and blood drooling from its lips as it approached Jesus. But Jesus stood firmly saying: "Lilith, you will no longer drain the life's blood from this child of God. I command you in the name of Yahweh to come out! Fly back to the desert regions where you were first banished by the Lord!"

The hellish face of Lilith turned white with rage and fear, and with a shriek she fell trembling to the ground. Then she was lifeless, as though a great force had escaped from the woman's body. But we were astonished to see her rise up again, eyes glowing through streaks of hair, tongue darting like a serpent's. "Be gone O leader of beggars," the new demon hissed. "This woman is worthless and cannot be saved by you."

"Who speaks now?" Said Jesus.

"Belial," came as voice now soft and angelic. "I was once an angel of God, and I can show you the pleasures of Heaven."

Jesus cried out, "Yes, I know you too, O demon of lies who brings wretchedness and guilt into people's hearts!" Again the demon spoke, but Jesus drowned it out with a voice of thunder: "You too Belial! Go out from this woman in the name of God!"

With a roar it came at Jesus, snapping a chair in half with its bare hands. But he held his gaze steady and repeated his command even louder.

The shambled body swayed as if to swoon, but soon steadied itself, its face darkening again. And Jesus said: "You too, Azazel, who has always lusted after the daughters of men. Do you think you can withstand God's power that shines forth from me?"

But each time a demon was purged a new one appeared: Beelzebub, lord of dung and flies; Asmodeus, demon of rage and lust; Nergel, the ruthless, crouching one; and finally Lucifer, the Satan himself. There were seven in all. Some would speak in strange tongues. Others seemed to levitate from the floor. But each time Jesus withstood them, calling them by name, and casting them out until none was left to torture this wretched woman.

And all that time we stood there speechless and amazed.

Mary finally sat staring at nothing as if all the life had left her. Jesus then laid his hands upon her saying, "You are healed by the power of God's Spirit now alive in you." Then he helped her to her feet and hugged her to him. "See my sister, you are no longer separated from God's power and love." "He led her outside into the light where her parents ran to her and embraced her in tears.

Jesus then asked her if she was ready to be baptized in the Spirit. She consented, and Jesus announced that new disciples and those desiring spiritual cleansing would be baptized by the cove in the Lake the next morning. We bade the family farewell and returned to the encampment.

The mysteries I just witnessed brought new questions that puzzled my mind. But Jesus was weary, and the others spoke in voices boisterous and loud. All were in good spirits. And when Jesus entered the camp he went off by himself to meditate and pray.

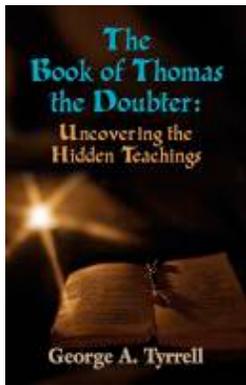
That evening, Peter and John advised those who would be baptized to spend the night in fasting and prayer. With great effort I sealed all doubting questions from my mind and went off to pray. Jesus' triumph over evil made me strong again in my faith. And I wondered if one day my own powers would become as great as his. Then I remembered his words on the way to Magdala: "He who drinks the knowledge adeptly from

my lips will become as I am, and all things hidden will be revealed to him.” And I prayed for such attainment far into the night.

But as the twilight of sleep enveloped me, visions of Jesus and the demons reappeared, and hidden questions flooded my dreams. Of what strange nature was the light shining forth from his body? How could he know each demon by name? Why did the demons become real, far beyond the display of madness alone?

And lurking in the mists of darkness was the ultimate Demon of true Evil whose name and face I did not yet know...

*George Tyrrell*



**THE BOOK OF THOMAS THE DOUBTER: *Uncovering the Hidden Teachings*** is a biblical, historical novel based on the Gospel of Thomas and Acts of Thomas uncovered among the ancient Nag Hammadi texts. The book depicts Thomas carrying out Jesus' secret teachings as a disciple and as an apostle in India. In India, there are sites and landmarks commemorating Thomas. Also in India are the Thomas Christians (the Syrian Nasrani), affirming their founder as the disciple Thomas.

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