

BELIEVING ON JESUS AS LORD

1 Corinthians 1:2 says that the saints are those **“who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ our Lord”**. Romans 10:13 says, **“whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”** Acts 16:31 says, **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved”**. In listing the defining unities that are true of all believers Ephesians 4:5 says for us there is **“one Lord, one faith”**. All true believers have come to recognize Jesus as personal Lord – that is as our God-Master. There is no exception!

In the Septuagint the Greek word Lord (Kyrios) is used for the divine covenant name for God which is YHWH. We see a parallel of this thought by comparing Isa. 45:21-25 with Phil. 2:10-11.

Isaiah 45:23 (NKJV) [YHWH speaking...]

23 I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath.

Philippians 2:10–11 (NKJV)

10 that at the **name of Jesus** every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

11 and that every tongue should confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.

Eventually, everyone will acknowledge Jesus as Lord, but true believers do it now in saving faith! In saving faith we bow before Him as our God-Master. We say with Thomas **“My Lord and my God!”** (Jn. 20:28) This is who Jesus is to us as believers.

Saving faith is from the HEART as Paul shows in Romans 10:9-10. It involves the will. Thomas said **“I will not believe unless...”** but in saving faith his WILL recognized Jesus as His personal Lord. His will submitted to the TRUTH of Who Jesus is as Lord. That is the essence of a saving faith commitment. It is indicative of true repentance.

God (Gk. Theos) is the common word for deity in the New Testament. It refers to the One Who is the **supreme being**. It denotes supreme power holding to the highest authority. To say, **“My God”** is to recognize His supreme authority over you. It is to assume the position of worship and service. It denotes worshipful allegiance and submission to His authority.

In short, to call Jesus, “**My Lord and my God**” is to recognize Him as your personal God-Master Who is your supreme authority! The confession of Thomas ties the entire book of John together. It links with the emphasis on Jesus being God in the prologue starting with the very first verse of the book and brings it to a fitting climactic conclusion.

John 1:1 (NKJV)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the **Word was God.**

John 1:18 (NKJV)

18 No one has seen God at any time. **The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.**

The gospel of John not only develops the theme of Jesus being God but builds to the climax of showing that a saving faith personally accepts Jesus as personal God-Master as illustrated in the experience of Thomas.

“John’s entire purpose in writing this book [John] is that all readers come to confess Jesus as their Lord and God in the same way that Thomas did.” – **ESV Study Bible**

Note Jesus’ response to the confession of Thomas in John 20:29. He did not say, “**Don’t call Me that, don’t you know I am not God!**” No! He accepted it and affirmed that indeed this is what it means to truly BELIEVE. He said, “**Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed.**” (Jn. 20:29)

Thomas in recognizing Jesus as his God had come to have a genuine New Testament saving faith! This is what saving faith in the resurrected Christ means. It recognizes Jesus as personal Lord and God meaning “God-Master”.

Romans 10:9–10 (LSB)

9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

10 for with the heart a person believes, leading to righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, leading to salvation.

The language of Jesus at this point in John 20:29 is very precise. Verse 29 serves as a transition to the purpose statement of the book in verses 30-31. In verse 29 Jesus while affirming the newfound faith of Thomas, at the same time levels a gracious reproof. Jesus acknowledges that Thomas in seeing has believed, but then He says, “**Blessed are those who have not**

seen and yet believed.” There is an emphasis here on those who believe without seeing being blessed. I believe that Christ was making a point.

Not only Thomas, but the entire group of disciples were SLOW to believe the eyewitness testimony of others – that is to believe without seeing. It wasn’t just Thomas who refused to believe until he saw it for himself, but the rest of the disciples also had the same initial response.

True, for Thomas the evidence was mounting. The more eyewitnesses you have the stronger the evidence. So, Thomas had more on him in this sense than the others, but they all needed to hear this emphasis (cf. Mk. 16:10-14).

The Lord graciously accommodated to the weakness of the disciples who insisted on seeing firsthand evidence, but that is NOT the norm for how God works! The Lord does lay out firsthand evidence to eyewitnesses, but then He expects people to BELIEVE based on that testimony. And that is the emphasis of Christ here in John 20:29.

Yes, Thomas and the other disciples had the privilege to see firsthand with their own eyes and on that basis believed. But they were the privileged exception! Following this early apostolic experience all who would believe going forward following the apostolic era would believe on the basis of the apostles’ eyewitness testimony (cf. Jn. 17:20). This is the NORM! And this kind of faith is BLESSED of God. Believing based on apostolic testimony is the blessed NORM going forward.