



### St. Thomas - the Apostle who doubted.

We have heard how Thomas has doubted in the readings of the scripture. There is another story about Thomas I found in Saints from the Gospels. It is a story about how they drew lots to decide which countries they should visit to tell people about Jesus. It fell to Thomas to go to India. He didn't like this idea, and it so happened that a merchant named Abban turned up at that moment, looking for a carpenter to help build a new palace for his king, Gundafor, who was king of Parthia (in what is now Iran).

Because Thomas was a carpenter, he went to Parthia. King Gundafor gave him a great deal of money to pay for the new palace and then went on his travels. When he returned, he found Thomas had given the money to the poor and had spent his time preaching and teaching people the message of Jesus.

Gundafor put him in prison and threatened to put him to death. Before that could happen, the king's brother was taken ill—so ill that everyone thought he was dying. Instead, he recovered and immediately told Gundafor not to kill Thomas. "When I was ill, I was taken to heaven by angels and I was shown a palace more wonderful than any on earth. And I was told such joys are waiting in heaven for all those who believe the Christian message."

King Gundafor was so impressed he sent a message that Thomas should be released from prison and should come to tell him about Jesus. Thomas did that, ending with the story of how he himself had doubted that Jesus had risen from the dead. He added the words Jesus had said once he did believe "Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe."

King Gundafor and his brother both became Christians and, it is said, Thomas journeyed on to India. About the year 1542, many centuries after all this is supposed to have happened, another Christian, Francis Xavier, went on a journey to India. He met a group of believers who had named themselves the Christians of Saint Thomas and who conducted their worship in the way the early disciples had done. So maybe the story is true, after all.