

THE TWELVE DISCIPLES

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INTRODUCTION

This book has been written to give you some information about the 12 Disciples.
A lot of Scriptures and some of the work in research in not mine.
I thought it important to put this book together as growing up in church I learned many little stories about what the Disciples did but never knew much about them personally.
I hope this book will help you understand a little more of the lives of the 12 Disciples and what happened to them.

THE 12 DISCIPLES OF JESUS



Andrew - Originally a disciple of John the Baptist. He led his brother Simon to Christ)

Simon Peter (Andrew's brother) - Rock of the church. A fisherman, Denied Jesus after the crucifixion.)

James (son of Zebedee) - Also a fisherman. A strong person who insisted that Christ's followers "walk the talk."

John (son of Zebedee) - Also a fisherman. A strong person who cared for Jesus' mother and stressed grace.

Phillip - Andrew's close friend, also a fisherman. He led Bartholomew to Christ.

Bartholomew (Nathanael) - Questioning at first, but accepted Jesus of Nazareth. Loyal.

Matthew (Levi)- Once a despised tax collector, he changed his profession and followed Jesus. Wrote the Gospel of Matthew.

Thomas - Doubted the resurrection. Was willing to risk his own life for Jesus.

James (Alpheus' son) - Mentioned in Gospel accounts.

Thaddeus (James' son) - A real follower and preacher of Christ.

Simon - Known as a zealot or patriot. He saw the vision.

Judas Iscariot - Ultimate betrayer of Jesus, who kept the money for the group.

JESUS CALLS THE TWELVE DISCIPLES..

Matthew 10 King James Version (KJV)

10 And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

9 Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,

10 Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

11 And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

12 And when ye come into an house, salute it.

13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.

22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

24 The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.

25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?

26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

27 What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.

28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

40 He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

WHY 12 DISCIPLES?

Twelve is one of the smallest numbers that has a large number of factors, for example 1,2,3,4 and 6 all divide into 12 without remainder. In the Jewish culture of that time, numbers were very significant. 7 was regarded as holy, and, of course the number 40 (as in 40 days and nights) indicated a particular time, very much as we would use the term 'month of Sundays' these days, not to literally mean 31 Sundays, but 'a long time'. The number 12 in the Jewish culture was something very special - signifying perfection. As an example, in revelation, the number in heaven is given as 144,000. Despite what Jehovah's Witnesses say about literally accepting numbers like this, the number 144,000 signified a 'large' number of people (the ,000) and 12×12 - the height of perfection -a very apt number for multitude of people ("whom none can number...") in heaven.

Similarly, the Jews had 12 tribes of Israel. Again a perfect number.

Thus, in order that Jesus should have the correct, or perfect number of disciples, he chose 12. In addition, he chose 72 (half of 12×12) as followers in an 'outer circle' of people who would go out to proclaim the Kingdom.

In addition to the 12 and the 72 of course, Jesus chose 3 specially close disciples (3 is a quarter of 12) Peter, James and John.

Therefore, he chose 12 for a particularly cultural reason. What is more significant, of course, is the diverse characters he chose - 2 belligerent teenage boys (James and John), a couple of fishermen (Peter and Andrew), one of whom tended to bluster and open his mouth before engaging his brain (Peter), a political activist (Simon the Zealot), a hated tax collector and collaborator with the occupying Romans (Matthew), one of two twins who was a skeptical cynic (Thomas) amongst them. Yet all these went on to become wonderful evangelists and ambassadors of the Christian faith thanks to the Holy Spirit working in them. It gives us all hope that a motley crew like his could, with the help of God's Spirit, spread the message all over the then known world. The only disciple that one could normally regard as someone with anything about him was the one entrusted to keeping the common fund held by the disciples - Judas Iscariot, and just look how he ended up.

The name Thaddaeus appears in the list of Apostles given in Matthew 10:3, between James, son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot. In Mark 3:18, the name Thaddaeus appears, again, in the same placement. In Acts 1:13, however, a man named Judas, son of James, is listed below Simon. And in Luke 6:16, Judas (son of James), is listed again among the 12 Apostles, between Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot. In John 14:22, there is a reference to Judas (not Iscariot) who spoke to Jesus. The two names, however, never appear in the same book, lending credence to the belief that they both refer to the same person.

THOMAS

Thomas the Apostle was one of the twelve original apostles of Jesus.

In Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts, he is called Thomas. In John 11:16, he is given a further name, Didymus. On the evening of the day of the resurrection, Thomas declined to believe that Jesus had appeared to the other disciples (John 20:24), hence the term "doubting Thomas." When Jesus appeared again after eight days, Thomas was there also and on seeing Him confessed his faith that Jesus is God (John 20:28).

John 21:2 mentions that Thomas was among those who were at the Sea of Galilee when Jesus appeared to them on another occasion.

PETER (Simon)

Peter's Life Before Christ

The Apostle Peter may have been the most outspoken of the twelve apostles in Jesus' ministry on earth. He certainly became one of the boldest witnesses for the faith. His beginnings were certainly humble in origin. He was born about 1 B.C. and died sometime around A.D. 67.

Peter was originally named Simon. Jesus was the One Who changed Peter's name. Peter means "rock" or literally Petra. He was a Galilean fisherman and was the brother of Andrew. The brothers came from the village of Bethsaida (John 1:43, 12:21). Peter was married. He was also a follower of John the Baptist. Peter, like all humans before their calling, was a sinful man. In fact he was ashamed of his sinfulness in the presence of Jesus Christ (Luke 5:6-8). Peter was perhaps the very first disciple that Jesus called along with His brother Andrew.

Apostle Peter Biography

Peter left his career as a fisherman to follow Jesus.

Fishermen at that time were gruff, unkempt, vile, shabbily dressed, and often used vulgar language. The fishermen of the first century were a man's man. They were full of vigor and had boisterous tempers. This is perhaps why James and his brother John were called the Sons of Thunder (Mark 3:17). Their's was a rough life since fishing was a very physically demanding job. They must have been somewhat fearless too because some of the storms that came quickly upon the Sea of Galilee were fierce and furious. They often caught the fishermen by surprise and could easily capsize the 20 to 30 foot boats they used.

Peter was always putting his foot in his mouth but one thing you could say about Peter was that when Jesus told them (Peter and Andrew) to "follow me" they simply walked away and left everything they had without a second thought (Luke 5:9-1). Consider the fact that this meant that they left everything - all of their fishing boats, their fishing nets, and all the accessories that came with their trade. How many today would be willing to leave their own business to follow Someone that had simply asked them to follow Him?

Peter's Life with Christ

As mentioned earlier, Peter was among the first disciples called by Jesus and he was frequently their spokesman – for good or bad. One thing that he is credited with is the special insight that he had concerning Jesus' identity. Peter was the first to call Jesus the Son of the Living God – the Messiah (Mark 8:29, Luke 9:20, Matt. 16:16-17). When Jesus called him, Peter knew that He was of God and felt unworthy to be in Jesus presence (Luke 5:6-8). Even so, Jesus did not hesitate and told Peter and Andrew that He would make them “fishers of men” (Mark 1:17).

Peter was bold but often times in the wrong. Once he even rebuked the Lord and said that he was willing to die for Jesus even though at the arrest and trial of Jesus he denied Him three times (Matt. 16:21-22). Jesus loved the disciples and knew which of those whom would remain loyal to Him and those who would betray Him (Judas Iscariot). Peter was an eyewitness to the many miracles that Jesus did and also witnessed the Shekhinah Glory along with John and James in the Transfiguration. This was where Jesus' humanity was peeled back to reveal the glory of His Divinity (Matt. 17:1-9).

Peter the Disciple to the Apostle Peter

A disciple means a “follower of” and that is what most Christians actually are today. An apostle is “one sent forth” in the sense of sent forth by God to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. The biblical definition of an apostle and the only one’s that are called apostles in the New Testament had to be either with Jesus during His earthly ministry (like the disciples) or having seen the risen Christ (as did Paul who was taught three years in the desert by Jesus Christ Himself).

After Christ tells the disciples about the end of the age (Matt. 24) He gives them the charge or command of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). This is the very last thing that Jesus tells them (Acts 1:8) and from that point on the disciples (followers of Christ) become the apostles (those sent forth). The designation of their being apostles was never used until after the Ascension of Christ (Acts 1) because before then, they were still following Jesus. After Christ had ascended to the right hand of the Father and was seated there (signifying His earthly ministry was done - except through the apostles) He sent them forth to go to all ends of the earth to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Peter was the first one to preach on the day of Pentecost after the coming of the Holy Spirit and he was the first one to proclaim Christ to a Gentile. He was one of the boldest apostles of all. He willingly suffered persecution, imprisonment, beatings, and even rejoiced at the fact that he was worthy to suffer disgrace for the Lord's sake (Acts 5:41).

The Gospel of Mark or of Peter?

There is extremely reliable evidence through church tradition and early church historians that the Gospel of Mark is actually the gospel of Peter. Peter is said to have dictated his discipleship with Jesus to John Mark, who was a companion of his for many of the later years of his life. If you read the Gospel of Mark you can see the extremely fine details of what appears to be an eyewitness from the perspective of Peter. John Mark was not ever a disciple of Jesus and he was not an apostle. There is little doubt that the work of Mark and his gospel is actually the story of Peter who retold the story and then was written down by John Mark. This is testified by the fact that Mark was not present for Jesus' ministry and the extremely intimate details that are described in Mark. Some of the events where Peter, John, and James who were often alone with Jesus, like the Transfiguration, are like a first-person retelling of the story.

The next time you read the Gospel of Mark, think about Peter and see if you can not see more clearly the realization that this had to be Peter's eyewitness account - an account that only Peter could tell.

Peter's Glorious Ending

In the days leading up to Peter's death, almost all of the apostles had been martyred. Did Jesus actually predict Peter's death by crucifixion when He said that "when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and take you where you do not want to go" (John 21:18-19)? The church historian Tertullian, Origen, and Eusebius state that Peter's was stretched out by his hands, he was dressed in prison garb, he was taken where no one wanted to go (a crucifixion), and was crucified. He was said to be crucified upside down because he felt unworthy to be crucified in the way that the Lord Jesus Christ had been.

From an arrogant, cocky, man of thunder, he became a humble, willing, obedient servant of the Lord even to death. He rejoiced in that day of his death, knowing that he would be reunited with his beloved Savior. This was a lifetime of 65 years - of which his last thirty-three would be devoted to

proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, no one could even be a priest until they were thirty years of age. The lowly fisherman became a mighty fisher of men - and one that changed and shaped the world forever and is still proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ through his gospel (written by Mark), the book of Acts, and through the epistles of I and II Peter.

ANDREW

The name “Andrew” means “manly, manhood” or “valor” and since God often ascribes meaning to names, this man must have been a manly man.

That is, he was likely a strong man both in will and physical stature. Andrew, like his brother Peter, was a fisherman by trade, meaning that he was an outdoorsman and must have been very physically fit. He was exposed to the conditions and had learned a trade that was also physically demanding.

We read of Andrew and Peter’s calling in Matthew 4:18-22 “While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and

Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.”

The Apostle Andrew Biography

Forsaking All

Both Andrew and Peter left everything behind to follow Jesus to become “fishers of men.” This is astounding if you think about it because they left their lifelong job security, the only thing they had ever known, everything that was familiar to them, and obviously they had to leave their family behind too, all walking away at Jesus’ invitation. The words “Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him” reveal to us the true nature of this “all” that they left to follow Him. They forsook both their living and their father and family. What their father must have felt about this is not stated but one wonders if Andrew and Peter’s father tried to talk them both out of it and when he couldn’t, must have been dumbfounded.

The Disciple of John the Baptist

Andrew was apparently a disciple of John the Baptist before he was a disciple of Jesus. We read of an encounter between Andrew, John and Jesus in John 1:40-42 “Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.” What I like about Andrew’s nature was that he was always bringing people to Christ. Perhaps he had been doing the same thing for John the Baptist. It wouldn’t be surprising if he did given the fact that he was bringing others to Jesus. Maybe that’s because Andrew immediately recognized Jesus as the fulfillment of the long-prophesied Messiah (John 1:41). Andrew and Philip once even brought some Greeks to meet Jesus (John 12:22) so the thing that impresses me most about Andrew is that he forsook everything and everyone to follow Jesus and then was determined to bring others to Christ. How much am I like that or how far do I fall short of that willingness to forsake all and bring others to Christ?

The Apostle Andrew’s Death

From what we know from church history and tradition, Andrew kept bringing people to Christ, even after Jesus’ death. He never seemed to care

about putting his own life at risk. It is believed that he was martyred by crucifixion in the city of Patras which was on the northern coast of Peloponnese which was in Greece. Given the fact that he was likely crucified there, he must have, like many of the other apostles, went well beyond Judea to bring the gospel into all the world as Christ had commanded (Matt 28:19-20). Church historian Eusebius wrote that he may have brought the gospel to as far away as Kiev which is now part of Ukraine. It's interesting that he was crucified like Christ but in the pattern or shape of an "X" which was often a Christian symbol and is now known as St. Andrew's cross because it was said that Andrew, like his brother Peter, considered himself unworthy of being crucified in the same manner as Christ was. He was crucified close to 70 AD.

JAMES the son of Zebedee

The Apostle James was one of the so-called "Sons of Thunder" and specifically named "James, son of Zebedee" and is sometimes called "James the Greater" because there were at least three other

James' in the early church. One of the James' was called "James, son of Alphaeus" and another James called "James the Just" who became the patron saint of Spain and Portugal, although that is extra-biblical (or outside of biblical evidence). The Apostle James was the brother of the Apostle John and James was the first apostle martyred, probably around 44 AD. James was in the so-called circle of honor among the apostles with Peter and John and they were privileged to be eyewitnesses of the Transfiguration (Matt 17:1-9). They were also among the privileged few apostles that witnessed Jairus' daughter being raised from the dead (Mark 5:37) and were with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26:36-37) on the night that Jesus was betrayed and arrested.

The Apostle James Biography Life and Death

The Fishermen

When Jesus called Peter, He also later called the Apostle John and James, and all three were fishermen. Jesus' intention was to make them "fishers of men." The disciples that Jesus called were likely not very popular in society, especially among the religious leaders, yet their occupation provided a critical need for the society as fish were staples among the residents in Judea. Even so, they

were looked down upon by the Jewish leaders, the Roman authorities and even among the population in general. These were not refined, polished men with great speaking skills but were probably looked down upon as country bumpkins or ruffians since their hometown was Capernaum. They would have been on the low rung of society in that day, however God has a history of calling and using men and women who the world has little regard for and thinks very little of.

The Sons of Thunder

The Apostle John and his brother James were, in the beginning, hotheads. When Jesus went to a Samaritan city they were spurned by the local residents and this angered James and John. What was their reaction to the people rejecting Christ and essentially rejecting them? They asked Jesus “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven and consume them” (Luke 9:54)? Jesus rebuked them for their attitude (Luke 9:55) and said “the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them” (Luke 9:56). The interesting thing is, did they really have authority to call fire down from heaven like Elijah did when he took on the 850 prophets of Baal (1 King 18)? Was that a proper response at all? This was not likely the only time that they lost their tempers and shows that they could be rash and impulsive, which was a little like Peter at times.

James Arrested

James was not the first Christian martyr at all as that was ascribed to Stephen who was stoned to death in Acts 7:54-60. James' death was the result of being beheaded and we see this recorded in the Book of Acts (12:1-3): "About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread." So the Apostle James was the first Apostle to die from martyrdom. Only one apostle escaped dying for his faith and that was, ironically, his brother, the Apostle John.

The Author of the Book of James

Some people confuse the Apostle James as the author of the Book of James but that James was the half-brother of Jesus who only professed faith in Christ after Jesus rose from the dead. By the time that Book of James was written, and it appears to be the first book written in the New Testament around 45 AD, James the son of Zebedee had already lost his life. Only a few of the apostles wrote books in the New Testament and James the son of Zebedee was not one of them, however his brother, the

Apostle John, wrote five books; the Gospel of John, 1st, 2nd, 3rd John and of course the Book of Revelation although the actual author was Jesus Christ (Rev 1:1).

Conclusion

The Apostle James may have been the first apostle to die for his faith because he was one of the most outspoken and given the fact that King Herod killed James, it could have been James propensity to speak boldly for Christ and speak against the evil that King Herod was well known for. Either way, the Apostle James was completely changed...by the power of the Holy Spirit. He was impulsive, outspoken, easily provoked to anger, and highly impulsive and at one time had a so-called “hair trigger” but like John, who became known as “the apostle whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23), became a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17) and was forever changed and today is one of the 12 apostles that will be ruling or judging the 12 tribes in Israel in the coming kingdom of God (Matt 19:28). That’s who the Apostle James was. John his brother;

John the Apostle was one of the 12 disciples of Christ. This disciple was one of the sons of Zebedee

who followed our Lord. His story extends many years past the earthly ministry of Christ. John was known as an apostle, author, and the only apostle who was not killed by martyrdom, though not from lack of trying.

JOHN

We get the vast majority of our information about John from the pages of the four gospels. We know that John was the younger brother of James and the son of Zebedee (Mark 10:35; Luke 5:10). Though not directly stated, we know that John was called the beloved disciple, or “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 21:20-24). His occupation was as a fisherman before he and his brother became disciples of Christ.

John and James were cousins to Jesus as their mother Salome was the sister of Jesus’ mother Mary (Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40). The two brothers were some of the first disciples of Jesus. Based on the language in John chapter 1 it is believed that John was probably the unnamed disciple of John the Baptist. John never refers to himself directly in the book that bears his name.

The two brothers, James and John, were called the sons of thunder by Christ. They seem to have been even tempered men, but there is one story at the end of Luke 9 where they asked Jesus if He wanted them to call down fire from Heaven to consume the unbelieving Samaritans. They must not have been completely docile men for Christ to refer to them as the sons of thunder and to be willing to call down God's wrath (Mark 3:17; Luke 9:51-56).

Peter, James and John must have had a special relationship with the Lord because of the many times the Bible talks about those three to the exclusion of the other disciples. They were with Christ on the mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-13; Luke 9:27-36). They (along with Andrew) were with Him for the healing of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:37). They were also the inner circle of prayer warriors in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:37).

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The book of the Revelation was written about the vision that John saw while banished to the Greek island of Patmos on the Aegean sea.

John the Author

John wrote 5 books in the New Testament. He wrote The Gospel According to John, First, Second and Third John, and he was the penman of the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

All of his books were written later in life and after all the other books in the Bible were recorded. We don't know the exact time or order of the books having been written, but here are some possible dates:

The Gospel According to John: AD 80 to 98

First, Second and Third John: AD 90 to 95

The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ: AD 94 to 98

Of course we know God inspired the Bible and that it was written with His leading, but this may explain why the book of John seems so applicable to the readers of today. John had more time to think about what questions were raised in the 50 or more years after the resurrection of Christ. He knew what doubts had been raised and how to answer the questions before we knew to ask them.

The Epistles of John were written to various audiences. They were all written after John was an old man living in Ephesus. The first epistle was not addressed to anyone in particular, but was written more as a sermon. The second was written to an unnamed “elect lady.” The third to a man name Gaius. There are three men who bear that name to whom the letter could have been written. There was a Gaius in Macedonia (Acts 19: 29), Corinth (Rom. 16:23), and Derbe (Acts 20:4).

The book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ was written by John probably close to the same time he wrote the epistles which bear his name. The book of the Revelation was written about the vision that John saw while banished to the Greek island of Patmos on the Aegean sea. Tradition says that this was after John had been sentenced to death by martyrdom.

John the Martyr

We know little about John’s later life and death from the Bible. The most insightful bit of information comes from John 21 when the risen Christ was talking to Peter about Peter’s death. After Jesus told Peter that he would not live long Peter asked about John’s death. Jesus replied that if John lived until Christ’s return, that was not Peter’s

concern. This was not a promise that John would live until the Lord returned, but it does seem to indicate that the Lord knew John would live a long time (John 21:19-23).

Tradition holds that John was sentenced to death in a boiling vat of oil. Yet he emerged unharmed from the experience. Again tradition tells us that John lived into old age dying sometime after AD 98. He is thought to have died in Ephesus.

PHILIP

Philip, the apostle
(not to be confused with the evangelist Philip in Acts)

Like Peter and Andrew, Philip was from Bethsaida (John 1:44)

Philip (his name means 'lover of horses') is named in all three lists of Apostles (Matthew. 10:4; Mk. 3:16; Luke. 6:14-16) and in each he is the 5th Apostle listed. He is not mentioned again in Matthew, Mark, or Luke. Everything else we know of him comes from the Gospel of John.

In John, Philip told Nathanael that they had found the Messiah and that he was from Nazareth. When Nathanael replied “can anything good come from Nazareth?” Philip simply said “Come and see.”
(John 1:43-46)

Shortly after Nathanael became one of Jesus’ disciples.

Later, before the miraculous feeding of the multitude, Jesus tested Philip by asking, “Where will we buy bread for these people to eat?”

Philip failed the test by replying, "Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

(John. 6:5-7)

Later shortly before Jesus is arrested he tells his disciples that “If you really knew me you would know my Father as well. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

(John. 14:7)

But Philip's response again shows a lack of faith when he asks “Lord show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Jesus sternly rebukes him and says “Philip, don’t you know me, even after I have been with you for such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”

(Jn. 14:8-9)

Philip is not mentioned again in the New Testament except in the list of Apostles waiting in the upper room shortly after Christ's ascension (Acts 1:13).

Bartholomew

The apostle Philip brought Bartholomew, who is also called Nathanael in the Gospels, to Jesus, telling him that Jesus was the person the prophets spoke about, the promised one of God. The moment Jesus saw Nathanael, he praised him, saying that he could see that there was no dishonesty in his heart. Nathanael immediately began to believe in Jesus. Jesus told Bartholomew that he would see great things because of his faith.

Jesus' words certainly came true. Bartholomew did see and hear many great things as an apostle of Christ. He saw Jesus heal the sick and perform other signs to show people God's love. He heard Jesus talk about the Kingdom of God that was open to everyone who lived with love. He saw Jesus suffer and die on the cross to save all people from sin, and he saw the Risen Lord, who told his disciples that they, too, could live forever if they followed him and his teachings.

After receiving the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, Bartholomew traveled to foreign lands to share the Good News about Jesus with others. He founded Christian communities in parts of India and the countries we now call Armenia and Turkey. Although he always spoke the truth about Jesus, some people did not believe him, and he died as a martyr.

Thomas

1st century (birth year unknown - died in 72 AD), in Galilee when it was part of the ancient Roman Empire (now part of Israel), Syria, ancient Persia, and India

Thomas is most famous for how he interacted with Jesus Christ after the miracle of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. The Bible records in John chapter 20 that the resurrected Jesus had appeared to some of his disciples while they were together, but Thomas wasn't with the group at the time. Verse 25 describes Thomas' reaction when the disciples told him the news: "So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord!' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.'"

Shortly afterward, the resurrected Jesus appeared to Thomas and invited him to examine his crucifixion scars and in exactly the way Thomas had requested. John 20:26-27 records: "A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands.

Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

After getting the physical proof he'd wanted of the resurrection miracle, Thomas's doubt turned to strong belief: Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'" (John 20:28).

The next verse reveals that Jesus blesses people who are willing to have faith in something that they can't see right now: "Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'" (John 20:29).

Thomas' encounter with Jesus shows how the right response to doubt -- curiosity and searching -- can lead to deep belief.

Thomas witnessed the miraculous ascension into heaven of Saint Mary (the Virgin Mary) after her death.

God performed many miracles through Thomas to help the people with whom Thomas shared the Gospel message -- in Syria, Persia, and India -- believe, according to Christian tradition. Right before his death in 72 AD, Thomas stood up to an Indian king (whose wife had become a Christian) when he pressured Thomas to make religious sacrifices to an idol. Miraculously, the idol shattered into pieces when Thomas was forced to approach it. The king was so enraged that he ordered his high priest to kill Thomas, and he did: Thomas died from being pierced by a spear but was reunited with Jesus in heaven.

Biography:

Thomas, whose full name was Didymus Judas Thomas, lived in Galilee when it was part of the ancient Roman Empire and became one of Jesus Christ's disciples when Jesus called him to join his ministry work.

His inquisitive mind led him to naturally doubt God's work in the world, but also led him to pursue answers to his questions, which ultimately led him to great faith.

Thomas is known in popular culture as "Doubting Thomas" because of the famous Bible story in which he demands to see physical proof of Jesus' resurrection before believing it, and Jesus appears, inviting Thomas to touch the scars of his wounds from the crucifixion.

When Thomas believed, he could be quite courageous. The Bible records in John chapter 11 that when the disciples were worried about accompanying Jesus to Judea (because the Jews had previously tried to stone Jesus there), Thomas encouraged them to stick with Jesus, who wanted to return to the area to help his friend, Lazarus, even if that meant being attacked by Jewish leaders there. Thomas says in verse 16: "Let us also go, that we might die with him."

Thomas later asked Jesus a famous question when the disciples were eating the Last Supper with him.

John 14:1-4 of the Bible records Jesus telling his disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a

place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas' question comes next, revealing that he's thinking of physical directions rather than spiritual guidance: "Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Thanks to Thomas' question, Jesus clarified his point, uttering these famous words about his divinity in verse 6 and 7: "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

Beyond his words recorded in the Bible, Thomas is also credited as the author of the non-canonical texts, *The Infancy Gospel of Thomas* (which describes miracles that Thomas said Jesus performed as a boy and told him about), and the *Acts of Thomas*.

In his *Book of Thomas the Doubter: Uncovering the Hidden Teachings*, George Augustus Tyrrell comments: "It may be that Thomas' critical mind

compelled Jesus to explain the teachings more deeply to him than to the credulous disciples. For the prologue in the Gospel of Thomas states: "These are the secret teachings the living Jesus spoke and Judas Thomas wrote down."

After Jesus ascended into heaven, Thomas and the other disciples each traveled to various parts of the world to share the Gospel message with people. Thomas shared the Gospel with people in Syria, ancient Persia, and India. Thomas is still known today as the apostle to India for the many churches that he formed and helped build there.

Thomas died in India in 72 AD as a martyr for his faith when an Indian king, angry that he couldn't get Thomas to worship an idol, ordered his high priest to stab Thomas with a spear.

MATTHEW THE PUBLICAN

Matthew in the Bible was one of Jesus' disciples. Matthew's Gospel, along with the Gospels of Luke, John, and Mark, is an inspired—and thus accurate and true—history of the life of Christ. His Gospel is the longest of the four, and some scholars believe it was the first to be written.

Before Matthew became a disciple of Christ, he was a tax collector or “publican” in the town of Capernaum (Matthew 9:9; 10:3). Matthew is also called Levi, the son of Alphaeus, by Luke and Mark (Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27). Although Luke and Mark do not come out and say, “Levi and Matthew are the same person,” we can deduce the names refer to the same individual because of context. Matthew’s account of his call matches exactly the accounts of Levi’s call in Luke and Mark, both in terms of language and chronological placement. Also, it is not uncommon for a person to be given a different name after an encounter with God. Abram became Abraham, Jacob became Israel, Simon became Peter, and Saul became Paul. It is likely that Matthew (meaning “gift of God”) was the name Jesus gave to Levi after his conversion.

Tax collectors were absolutely despised by their own culture because they worked for the Roman government and enriched themselves by collecting taxes from their own people—often dishonestly collecting excessive amounts (see Luke 19:8). It is likely that Matthew was well-to-do, since Luke says that Levi hosted “a great banquet for Jesus” with “a large crowd” in attendance (Luke 5:29).

Tax collectors such as Matthew were seen by the religious elite as very sinful people, so sinful that even spending time with them could immediately tarnish a good person's reputation (Matthew 9:10–11). When Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, with many other tax collectors and sinners present, the Pharisees questioned the disciples about Jesus' choice of companions. Jesus' response is one of the clearest explanations of God's heart and His gospel to man: "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. . . . I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matthew 9:12–13). Jesus came to save not the "good," self-righteous people, but those who knew they were not good—the people who admitted freely that they needed salvation (cf. Matthew 5:3).

It is impossible to save a person who claims not to need saving. Many of Jesus' followers were from the poor, the rejected, the sick, the sinful, the weary (Matthew 11:28). He never condemned those people; He forgave them and encouraged them. Jesus' harshest condemnations were to the Pharisees, the teachers of the Law, and the scribes who thought themselves good, worthy, and better than the "tax collectors and sinners" around them (Matthew 9:10; 23:13–15).

Matthew was one of the tax collectors whom Jesus saved. When called by Jesus, Matthew immediately left his tax collection booth and followed the Lord (Matthew 9:9). He left behind the source of his riches; he left his position of security and comfort for traveling, hardship, and eventual martyrdom; he left his old life for a new life with Jesus.

James the son of Alphaeus,

The Apostle James, son of Alphaeus, was also known as James the Less, or James the Lesser. He's not to be confused with James the son of Zebedee, brother of the Apostle John.

A third James appears in the New Testament. He was the brother of the Lord, a leader in the Jerusalem church, and writer of the book of James.

James of Alphaeus is named in each listing of the 12 disciples, always appearing ninth in order.

The Apostle Matthew (called Levi, the tax collector before becoming a follower of Christ), is also identified in Mark 2:14 as the son of Alphaeus, yet scholars doubt he and James were brothers. Never in the Gospels are the two disciples connected.

James the Lesser

The title "James the Lesser" or "the Little," helps to distinguish him from the Apostle James, son of Zebedee, who was part of Jesus' inner circle of three and the first disciple to be martyred. James the Lesser may have been younger or smaller in stature than Zebedee's son, as the Greek word for "the less", mikros, conveys both meanings.

Although it's argued by scholars, some believe James the Lesser was the disciple who first witnessed the risen Christ in 1 Corinthians 15:7:

Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.
(ESV)

Beyond this, Scripture reveals nothing more about James the Lesser.

Accomplishments of James the Lesser

James was hand-picked by Jesus Christ to be a disciple.

He was present with the 11 apostles in the upper room of Jerusalem after Christ ascended to heaven. He may have been the first disciple to see the risen Savior.

Although his accomplishments remain unknown to us today, James may simply have been overshadowed by the more prominent apostles. Even still, being named among the twelve was no small achievement.

Weaknesses

Like the other disciples, James deserted the Lord during his trial and crucifixion.

Life Lessons

While James the Lesser is one of the least known of the 12, we can't overlook the fact that each of these men sacrificed everything to follow the Lord. In Luke 18:28, their spokesman Peter said, "We have left all we had to follow you!" (NIV)

They gave up family, friends, homes, jobs, and all things familiar to answer Christ's call.

These ordinary men who did extraordinary things for God, set the example for us. They formed the foundation of the Christian church, initiating a movement that steadily spread across the face of the earth. We are part of that movement today.

For all we know, "Little James" was an unsung hero of faith. Evidently, he did not seek recognition or fame, for he received no glory or credit for his service to Christ. Perhaps the nugget of truth we can take from the altogether obscure life of James is reflected in this Psalm:

Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory ...

(Psalm 115:1, ESV)

Thaddaeus;

Jude Thaddeus, Apostle

Unlike the apostles Peter and John, the Apostle Jude was one of Jesus' most mysterious and lesser-known disciples. He received only a handful of mentions in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), the gospel of John, and the book of Acts. The two Judes (or Judases) completed Jesus' circle of disciples, but they were distinguished from each

other by their surnames with one being Iscariot and the other Thaddeus. His identity became more confusing as some verses mentioned him as the brother of Jesus and James (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3), while another verse identified him as the son of James (Luke 6:16). According to tradition, he was also identified as the son of Clopas and Mary, the Virgin Mary's cousin.

It was only in the gospel of John that Jude got a “speaking part” when he asked Jesus why he chose to reveal himself to his disciples and not to the whole world. All his other deeds during Jesus' short ministry were not recorded in all four gospels. Jude was mentioned once again in the Book of Acts as one of the disciples who remained with the small group of new Christians after Jesus' death and ascension.

JUDE

Jude was credited with writing the brief epistle that bore his name and written between 65 to 80 AD. The epistle—addressed to unknown recipients—dealt with the danger of believing in false teachers and was ended with a call to remain steadfast in the Christian

faith. Apart from this epistle, all other information associated with Jude the apostle can be gleaned only from tradition. Such as his mission in the Levant, Mesopotamia, and Cyrenaica (Libya), as well as his return to Jerusalem in 62 AD to help in the election of his brother, St. Simeon, as Bishop of Jerusalem.

It was said that he died as a martyr in Syria along with another apostle, Simon the Zealot

SIMON THE CANAANITE

Simon the Zealot, one of Jesus Christ's 12 apostles, is a mystery character in the Bible. We have one tantalizing bit of information about him, which has led to ongoing debate among Bible scholars.

In some versions of the Bible (Amplified Bible), he is called Simon the Cananaean. In the King James Version and New King James Version, he is called Simon the Canaanite or Cananite. In the English Standard Version, New American Standard Bible, New International Version, and New Living Translation he is called Simon the Zealot.

To confuse things further, Bible scholars argue over whether Simon was a member of the radical Zealot party or whether the term simply referred to his religious zeal. Those who take the former view think Jesus may have chosen Simon, a member of the tax-hating, Roman-hating Zealots, to counterbalance Matthew, a former tax collector, and employee of the Roman empire. Those scholars say such a move by Jesus would have shown that his kingdom reaches out to people in all walks of life.

Accomplishments of Simon the Zealot

Scripture tells us almost nothing about Simon. In the Gospels, he is mentioned in three places, but only to list his name with the 12 disciples. In Acts 1:13 we learn that he was present with the 11 apostles in the upper room of Jerusalem after Christ had ascended to heaven.

Church tradition holds that he spread the gospel in Egypt as a missionary and was martyred in Persia.

Simon the Zealot's Strengths

Simon left everything in his previous life to follow Jesus.

He lived true to the Great Commission after Jesus' ascension.

Simon the Zealot's Weaknesses

Like most of the other apostles, Simon the Zealot deserted Jesus during his trial and crucifixion.

JUDAS

Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

Answer: Judas Iscariot is typically remembered for one thing: his betrayal of Jesus. He was one of the twelve disciples who lived with and followed Jesus for three years. He witnessed Jesus' ministry, His teaching, and His many miracles. He was the treasurer for the group and used this trusted position to steal from their resources (John 12:6).

Judas was a common name in that era, and there are several other Judases mentioned in the New Testament. One of the other disciples was named Judas (John 14:22), and so was one of Jesus' own half-brothers (Mark 6:3). To differentiate, John 6:71 and John 13:26 refer to Christ's betrayer as "Judas, son of Simon Iscariot."

Scholars have several ideas about the derivation of the surname. One is that Iscariot refers to Kerioth, a region or town in Judea. Another idea is that it refers to the Sicarii, a cadre of assassins among the Jewish rebels.

The possible association with the Sicarii allows for interesting speculation about Judas' motives for his betrayal, but the fact that he made a conscious choice to betray Jesus (Luke 22:48) remains the same. The surname Iscariot is useful, if for no other reason, in that it leaves no doubt about which Judas is being referred to.

Here are some of the facts we glean from key verses about Judas and his betrayal:

Money was important to Judas. As already mentioned, he was a thief, and, according to Matthew 26:13-15, the chief priests paid him “thirty silver coins” to betray the Lord.

Jesus knew from the very beginning what Judas Iscariot would do. Jesus told His disciples, “Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!” (John 6:70). And at the Last Supper, Jesus predicted His betrayal and identified the betrayer:

“Jesus answered, ‘It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.’ Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon” (John 13:26).

Jesus said that Judas Iscariot was not “clean”; i.e., he had not been born again and was not forgiven of his sins (John 13:10-11). In fact, Judas was empowered to do what he did by the devil himself: “As soon as Judas took the bread [that Jesus had given him], Satan entered into him” (John 13:27).

The other disciples had no clue that Judas Iscariot harbored treacherous thoughts. When Jesus mentioned a betrayer in their midst, the other disciples worried that it was they who would prove disloyal (John 13:22). No one suspected Judas. He was a trusted member of the Twelve. Even when Jesus told Judas, “What you are about to do, do quickly,” (John 13:27), and Judas left the Last Supper, the others at the table simply thought Judas had been sent to buy more food or to give something to charity (verses 28-29).

Judas Iscariot betrayed the Lord with a kiss, perfectly in keeping with his brazen duplicity (Luke

22:47-48). After committing his atrocious act, Judas “was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders” (Matthew 27:3). But we learn that remorse does not equal repentance—rather than make amends or seek forgiveness, “he went away and hanged himself” (Matthew 27:5).

Judas Iscariot fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 41:9, “Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me” (cf. John 13:18). Yet Judas was fully responsible for his actions. Jesus said, “The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born” (Matthew 26:24).

Matthew 27:6-8 reports that the chief priests took the “blood money” from Judas and bought a potter’s field as a place for burying foreigners (thus fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 11:12-13). Acts 1:18-19 continues the story of what happened after Judas’ death and gives some additional information. Luke reports, “With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out.

Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.” The additional detail we learn from Luke is that, after Judas hanged himself, his dead body fell into the very field purchased with his ill-gotten gains.

- **Judas Iscariot:** According to Matthew 27:3-6, the treacherous apostle quickly felt remorse over his betrayal of Jesus and went to the Temple to recant. When the high priests ignored his plea, he threw down the 30 pieces of silver that he had been paid, and went off and hanged himself. But Acts 1:15-20, gives a different and even grislier version of Judas’ demise. He says that Judas used the blood money to purchase a piece of land and then fell headlong from a high place there, so that “he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.” Jerusalem residents subsequently named the place Aceldama, which means “the field of blood.”

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE 12 DISCIPLES?

Jesus' death on the cross, as described in the New Testament, has become one of the most famous events. But what happened to the 12 disciples who were his closest followers? Not as much information has survived about their fates, but here is what's available from various sources, including the New Testament itself, apocryphal texts, early Christian historians, legends and lore.

- **Simon, AKA Peter:** Simon-Peter, who was appointed by Jesus the leader of the new sect, is viewed by Roman Catholics as the first pope, was eventually martyred in Rome during the reign of the emperor Nero. As the story goes, Peter asked to be crucified upside down, so that his death would not be the equal of Jesus and the Romans supposedly obliged.
- **Andrew:** According to 15th Century religious historian Dorman Newman, Andrew—the brother of Peter—went to Patras in western Greece in 69 AD, where the Roman proconsul Aegeates debated religion with him. Aegeates tried to convince Andrew to forsake Christianity, so that he would not have to torture and execute him. But when that

didn't work, apparently he decided to give Andrew the full treatment. Andrew was scourged, and then tied rather than nailed to a cross, so that he would suffer for a longer time before dying. Andrew lived for two days, during which he preached to passersby.

- **James (son of Zebedee, AKA James the Greater):** Acts 12:1-19 says that James was killed with a sword. The newly-appointed governor of Judea, Herod Agrippa, decided to ingratiate himself with the Romans by persecuting leaders of the new sect. After James was arrested and led to place of execution, his unnamed accuser was moved by his courage. He not only repented and converted on the spot, but asked to be executed alongside James. The Roman executioners obliged, and both men were beheaded simultaneously.
- **John:** John was the only one of the original disciples not to die a violent death. Instead, he passed away peacefully in Patmos in his old age, sometime around 100 AD.
- **Philip:** Philip, the first of Jesus' disciples, became a missionary in Asia. Eventually, he traveled to the Egyptian city of Heliopolis, where he was scourged, thrown into prison, and crucified in 54 AD.

- **Bartholomew:** Bartholomew supposedly preached in several countries, including India, where he translated the Gospel of Matthew for believers. In one account, “impatient idolaters” beat Bartholomew and then crucified him, while in another, he was skinned alive and then beheaded.
- **Thomas:** Apparently Thomas preached the gospel in Greece and India, where he angered local religious authorities, who martyred him by running him through with a spear.
- **Matthew:** According to legend, the former tax collector turned missionary was martyred in Ethiopia, where he was supposedly stabbed in the back by an swordsman sent by King Hertacus, after he criticized the king’s morals.
- **James (son of Alphaeus, AKA James the Less):** According to Foxe, James, who was elected by his fellow believers to head the churches of Jerusalem, was one of the longest-lived apostles, perhaps exceeded only by John. At the age of 94, he was beaten and stoned by persecutors, and then killed him by hitting him in the head with a club.

- Thaddaeus, AKA Lebbaeus, Judas or Jude: According to several stories, he was crucified at Edessa (the name of cities in both Turkey and Greece) in 72 AD.
- Simon the Canaanite AKA the Zealot: Simon preached in Mauritania on the west coast of Africa, and then went to England, where he was crucified in 74 AD.
- Judas Iscariot: According to Matthew 27:3-6, the treacherous apostle quickly felt remorse over his betrayal of Jesus and went to the Temple to recant. When the high priests ignored his plea, he threw down the 30 pieces of silver that he had been paid, and went off and hanged himself. But Acts 1:15-20, gives a different and even grislier version of Judas' demise. He says that Judas used the blood money to purchase a piece of land and then fell headlong from a high place there, so that "he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." Jerusalem residents subsequently named the place Acedama, which means "the field of blood."

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