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These are the Names of the Twelve Apostles

Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16

It is at this point of **His** public ministry that **Jesus** chose the apostolic group of **twelve** out of the many disciples who were following **Him**. In this commentary I will make a distinction between **apostles** and disciples. **The twelve** will be called **apostles** or **talmidim** (Hebrew), and the others would come to believe in **Him** will be called disciples. While it is true that all **the apostles** were also disciples it is not true that all disciples were **apostles**.



One of those days **Jesus** went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came **He** called **His** apostles or **talmidim** (plural) to **Him** and chose twelve of them that they might be with **Him** all the time. A **talmid** (singular) is merely a learner, committed to following a specific rabbi and learning from him. **He** designated them as **apostles**, or sent ones who have **the authority** of the sender, and sent **them out to preach, and to have authority to drive out demons**. **Jesus** did not put **His** supernatural power into the hands of **the Twelve** to be exercised by **them**. **He** delegated to **them the authority to drive out demons** in the sense that **the talmidim** would speak the word declaring the driving **out**, and then **God's** power would **drive them out**. Thus, **He** chose **twelve** special disciples to be **His** **apostles**; **He** chose twelve Jewish men to be sent out with **His** **authority** (Mark 3:13-15; Luke 6:12-13).

As John MacArthur details in his book *Twelve Ordinary Men*, one of the facts that stands out

in the lives of all **twelve apostles** is how ordinary and unrefined they were when **Jesus** met them. All twelve, with the exception of Judas Iscariot, were from Galilee. That whole region was predominantly rural, consisting of small towns and villages. Its people were not elite. They were not known for their education. They were commonest of the common. They were fishermen and farmers. Such were **the talmidim** as well. **Messiah** deliberately passed over those who were aristocratic and influential and chose men mostly from the dregs of society.⁴⁷⁹

It is important to note that **the apostles** never prayed to Mary, nor, so far as the biblical record goes, did they show **her** any special honor. **Peter**, Paul, **John** and **James** do not mention **her** name even once in the letters that they wrote to **the congregations of God**. **John** took care of **her** until **she** died (**John 19:25-27**), but, does not mention **her** in any of his three epistles or in the book of **Revelation**.⁴⁸⁰

For each of **the talmidim** we will look at three areas. First, there will be an **introduction**; second, we will look at the **death** of the **apostles**; and third we will look at the **legacy** of each **apostle**. **These are the twelve He appointed (Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:12-16):**

1. Introduction to Simon (whom He named Kefa), is listed first, and was the leader of **the apostles**. **Jesus** gave him an additional name to the one **he** already had (**John 1:42**). A fisherman by trade, **he** was called **Shim'on** in Hebrew, **Peter** in Greek and **Cephas** in Aramaic, meaning *the Rock*. **His** full name at birth was **Simon Bar-Jonah (Matthew 16:17)**, meaning **Simon, son of Jonah (John 21:15-17)**. We know nothing of **his** parents. **Simon** was a very common name with seven **Simons** listed in the Gospels alone. The name is descriptive of a rock-like man, dependable, immovable, equal to the emergencies and crises that confronted **him**. **He** would certainly live up to **his** name by being a **rock** in the early Messianic movement. **Simon Peter** had a wife. We know this because in **Luke 4:38** **Jesus** healed **his** mother-in-law, and Paul in **First Corinthians 9:5** said that **Peter** took her on **his** apostolic mission.

Death: We know that **Jesus** told **Simon** that **he** would die a martyr (**John 21:18-19**). But, Scripture doesn't record **his** death. All the records of the early Church indicate that **Peter** was crucified in Rome. Eusebius cites the testimony of Clement, who says that before **Peter** was crucified **he** was forced to watch the crucifixion of **his** own wife. As **he** watched her being led to her death, Clement says, **Peter** called to her by name, saying, "Remember **the Lord**." When it was **Peter's** turn to die, **he** pleaded to be crucified upside down because **he** wasn't worthy to die as **his Lord** had died. And thus **he** was nailed to the cross

with **his** head pointed down.

Legacy: Peter's life could be summed up in the final words of **his** second letter: **Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Second Peter 3:18)**. This is exactly what **Simon Peter** did, that is why **he** became **the Rock**, the great leader of the early **congregations of God**.⁴⁸¹

2. Introduction to Andrew the brother of Peter. Although **they** were brothers, **they** had totally different leadership styles. But, just as **Peter** was perfectly suited for **his** calling, **Andrew** was perfectly suited for **his**. **Andrew**, a name of Greek origin though in use among the Jews, comes from *aner* a Greek word for *man*. The first among **the twelve** to be called, but of the four in the inner circle **Andrew** was the least conspicuous. Scripture doesn't tell us a lot about **him**, but we do know **he** checked **his** ego at the door. **He** is the very picture of all those who use **their** spiritual gifts quietly behind the scenes, **not only while people are watching, as if you merely want to please them. But as bond-slaves of Christ, who have a deep desire to do what God wants them to do (Ephesians 6:6)**. **He** was one of those rare people who was willing to take second place and did not mind being hidden as long as the work was being done.

Death: Church history doesn't record what happened to **Andrew** after the Feast of Weeks in **Acts 2**. Tradition says **he** took the gospel north. Eusebius, the ancient Church historian, says **Andrew** went as far as Scythia (that's why **Andrew** is the patron saint of Russia). **He** was ultimately crucified in Achaia, which is in southern Greece, near Athens. One account says **he** led the wife of a provincial Roman governor to **Christ**, and that infuriated her husband. **He** demanded that his wife recant her devotion to **Jesus Christ** and she refused. So, the governor had **Andrew** crucified. **He** was bound to a cross instead of nailing **him**, in order to prolong **his** suffering (tradition says it was a saltire, or an X shaped cross). By most accounts **he** hung on the cross for two days and preached to **his** persecutors until **he** died.

Legacy: **Andrew** shows us that in the effective ministry it's often the little things that count - the individual people, the behind-the-scene gifts, and the inconspicuous service.

God delights to use such things, because **God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him (First Corinthians 1:27-29)**.⁴⁸²

3. Introduction to James (a very Anglicized version of Ya'akov) **son of Zebedee and his younger brother John**, to them **Jesus** gave the name **Boanerges**, in addition to the one

they already had. **Their** new name **Boanerges, which means “sons of thunder,”** was evidently justified by their zeal and impulsive nature (**Luke 9:54**). Sometimes known as **James** the greater, **he** is the least familiar to us of **Messiah’s** closest inner circle. The biblical account is practically devoid of any explicit details about **his** life. But, if there’s a keyword that describes **James** it is *passion*. From what little we know about **him**, it is obvious that **he** was a man of intense fervor.

Death: **James** is the only **apostle** whose **death** is recorded in Scripture. **It was around this time that King Herod began arresting and persecuting certain members of the Messianic community, and he had Ya’akov, Yochanan’s brother, put to death by the sword (Acts 12:1-2 CJB).** In other words, **he** was beheaded in Yerushalayim. History records that **James’** testimony bore fruit right up until the moment of **his** execution. Eusebius, the early church historian, passes on an account of **James’** death that came from Clement of Alexandria. Clement says that the one who led **Ya’akov** to the judgment seat, when he heard **him** witnessing, was moved, and confessed that he was himself a believer. **They** were both, therefore, led away together; and on the way he begged **James** to forgive him. And **Ya’akov**, after considering a little, said, “Peace be with you,” and kissed him. And thus **they** were both beheaded together.

Legacy: **James** is the prototype of the passionate, zealous, front-runner that is dynamic, strong and ambitious. Ultimately **his** passions were tempered by sensitivity and grace. Somewhere along the line **he** had learned to control **his** anger, harness **his** tongue, redirect **his** zeal, and eliminate **his** thirst for revenge. Consequently, **the Lord** used **him** to do wonderful work in **the Messianic community**. Such lessons are sometimes hard for a man of **James’** passion to learn. Such zeal must always be tempered with **love**. But, if it is surrendered to the control of **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** and blended with patience and longsuffering, such zeal can be a marvelous instrument in the hands of **God**. The legacy of **James** offers clear proof of that.⁴⁸³

4. Introduction to John, the younger brother of James, whose mother was Salome and **his** father **Zebedee**. **Yeshua** gave them the name **Boanerges, which means “sons of thunder,”** which was evidently justified by **their** zeal and impulsive nature (**Luke 9:54**). **John** played a major role in the early Church. **He** was a member of **Christ’s** most intimate inner circle, but **he** was by no means the dominant member of that group. **He** was the human author of the fourth Gospel, three other letters, as well as the book of **Revelation**. **Yochanan** is known as **the apostle of love**. But, it was a quality **he** learned from **Messiah**, not something that came naturally to **him**. In **his** younger years, **he** was just as rugged, zealous and explosive as **his** elder brother **James**. **John** is the only one of **the apostles** who

witnessed the crucifixion (**Yochanan 19:25-27**). Virtually all reliable sources in early church history attest to the fact that **Yochanan** became the pastor of the church that the apostle Paul founded at Ephesus.

Death: **John** was the only **apostle** who lived to an old age. When **John's brother James** became the church's first martyr, **John** bore the loss in a more personal way than the others. As each of the other **apostles** was martyred one by one, **he** suffered the grief and pain of additional loss. They were **his** friends and companions. Soon, **he** alone was left. In some ways, that may have been the most painful suffering of all. From Ephesus, during the great persecution under the Roman Emperor Domitian, **John** was banished to a prison community on Patmos, one of the small Dodecanese Islands in the Aegean Sea off the west coast of modern Turkey. **He** lived in a cave there and received and recorded the apocalyptic visions described in the book of **Revelation**. Eventually released, **John** died around 98 AD. The church father Jerome says in **his** commentary on **Galatians** that the aged **apostle** was so frail in **his** final days at Ephesus that **he** had to be carried into the church. One phrase was constantly on **his** lips: **My little children, love one another (First John 3:18)**. Asked why **he** always said this, **he** replied, "It is **the Lord's** command, and if this alone be done, it is enough."

Legacy: In fact, **John's** theology is best described as a theology of **love**. **He** taught that **God** is a **God of love**, that **God loved His one-and-only Son**, that **God loved the world**, that **Christ loves God**, that **Christ loved His apostles**, and that **Christ's talmidim loved Him**, that everyone should **love Christ**, that we should **love one another**, and that **love** fulfills the Torah. **Love** was a critical part of every element of **John's** teaching, and thus, **his** legacy.⁴⁸⁴

Thus, the fishermen of Galilee - **Peter**, Andrew, James and **John** - became fishers of men and women, boys and girls on a tremendous scale, gathering souls into **the kingdom of God**. In a sense, **they** are still casting **their** nets into the sea of the world by **their** testimony in the Scriptures. **They** are still bringing multitudes of people to **Messiah**. Although **they** were common men, **theirs** was an uncommon calling.⁴⁸⁵

5. Introduction to Philip, which is a Greek name, meaning *lover of horses*. Perhaps **Philip** came from a family of Hellenistic Jews (**Acts 6:1**). **He** must also have had a Jewish name, however, because all **twelve talmidim** were Jewish. But, if **he** did have a Jewish name it is never given, so we just know **him** as **Philip**. Like **Andrew and Peter**, **Philip was from the town of Bethsaida (John 1:44)**. The ease with which **Philip** responded when **Yeshua** said to **him: Follow Me (John 1:43)**, demonstrated that **he** knew the

TaNaKh. **He** was ready. **He** was expectant. **His** heart was prepared, and **he** received **the Meshiach** gladly. But, sometimes **his** logical thinking got in the way of **his** faith in other matters. At the feeding of the 5,000 when **Jesus said to Philip: Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat? Philip answered Him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for all of them to eat (Mark 6:37b; John 6:5-7)!** The limitless supernatural power of **Christ** had completely escaped **his** thinking. **Philip** needed to learn to set aside **his** materialistic, pragmatic, common-sense concerns and learn to lay hold of the supernatural potential of faith.⁴⁸⁶ In other words, **He** needed to think outside the spiritual box.

Death: Tradition tells us that **Philip** was greatly used in the spread of the early messianic movement and was among the first of **the apostles** to suffer martyrdom. **He** died after being hung upside-down with iron hooks through **his** ankles by the proconsul of Hierapolis, in Phrygia (Asia Minor), eight years after the martyrdom of **James**.⁴⁸⁷

Legacy: **Philip** obviously overcame the human tendencies that so often hampered **his** faith. Therefore, **he** stands with the other **apostles** and believers of all ages as proof that we don't have to be perfect to advance **the kingdom of God**. Sometimes our halo slips, as did **Philip's**. But, **he** changed and so can we! Before **his** death, multitudes came to know **Jesus** as their **Lord** and **Savior** under **his** preaching.

6. Introduction to Nathanael, who also went by the name **Bartholomew** in all four lists of **the Twelve** (including **Acts 1:13**). In the gospel of **John** he is always called **Nathanael**. **Bartholomew** is a Hebrew surname meaning **son of Tolmai**, or **Bar-Tolmai**, a Hebrew transliteration of the name Ptolemy given to several Egyptian kings after the Alexandrian conquests that brought Isra'el under Egyptian rule and influence for many decades. Thus, it should not be surprising that a Jew would have an Egyptian name. The synoptic gospels and the book of **Acts** contain no details about **Nathanael's** background, character or personality. **John's** gospel features **him** in only two passages, in **John 1**, where **his** call is recorded, and in **Yochanan 21:2**, where **he** is named as one of those who returned to Galilee and went fishing with **Peter** after **Jesus'** resurrection and before **His** ascension.

Although **he** held some early prejudice against those from **Nazareth (John 1:46)**; fortunately, **his** prejudice was not as powerful as **his** seeking heart. The most important aspect of **Nathanael's** character was expressed from the lips of **Yeshua** when **He** said: **Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit (John 1:47)**. This spoke volumes about **Nathanael's** character. **He** was pure-hearted from the beginning. Certainly, **he** was human. **He** had sinful faults. **His** mind was tainted with a degree of prejudice. But, **his** heart

was not poisoned by **deceit**. **He** was no hypocrite. **His** love for **God**, and **His** desire to see **the Messiah**, were genuine. **His** heart was sincere without guile.

Death: That's all we know about **Nathanael** from Scripture. Early church records suggest that **he** ministered in Persia and India and took the gospel as far as Armenia. **He** was flayed alive.⁴⁸⁸

Legacy: What we do know is that **Nathanael** was faithful to the end because **he** was faithful from the start. Everything **he** experienced with **Messiah** and whatever **he** experienced after the birth of **the Messianic community** in **Acts 2** ultimately only made **his** faith stronger. And **Nathanael**, like the other **talmidim**, stands as proof that **ADONAI** can take the most common people, from the most insignificant places, and use them for **His** glory.⁴⁸⁹

7. Introduction to Thomas, in the Hebrew and **Didymus** in the Greek, which means *the twin*. It seems **he** had a twin brother or sister, but this twin is never identified in the Bible. Like **Nathanael**, **Thomas** is mentioned only once in each of the three synoptic gospels. In each case, **he** is simply named with the other **talmidim**. No details about **him** are given in the Synoptics, so we learn everything we know about **his** character from the book of **John**. **Thomas** was a pessimist. Like Eeyore in *Winnie the Pooh*, **he** anticipated the worst all the time. When **Christ** was headed back to Jerusalem to heal Lazarus, **Thomas** could see nothing but disaster ahead. **He** was convinced **Jesus** was headed straight for a stoning at the hands of the Pharisees. But, if that's what **the Lord** was determined to do, **Thomas** was grimly determined to die with **Him** and said: **Let us also go, that we may die with Him (Yochanan 11:16)**. It seems that pessimism, rather than a lack of faith, was **his** only sin. **Thomas** obviously had a deep devotion to **Christ** that could not be dampened even by **his** own pessimism.

When **Thomas** was told that **the Lord** had risen after **His** crucifixion, **he** was pessimistic about it and wanted to see it for **himself**. Remember, the other **apostles** did not believe in the resurrection until they also saw **Jesus (Mark 16:10-11)**. When **Messiah** appeared and showed **the skeptic His** scars, **Thomas** made one of the greatest statements to ever come from the lips of **the talmidim: My Lord and my God (John 20:28)**! Suddenly, **Thomas'** melancholy, comfortless, negative, moody tendencies were forever washed away by the appearance of **Christ**. A short time later at the Feast of Weeks, he was filled with **the Holy Spirit** and empowered for ministry. **He**, like the other **apostles**, took the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Death: The strongest traditions say **he** was run through with a spear at Coromandel in the

East Indies – a fitting form of martyrdom for one whose faith came of age when **he** saw the spear mark in **his Master's** side and for **one** who longed to be reunited with **his Lord**.

Legacy: There is a considerable amount of ancient testimony that suggests **Thomas** carried the Gospel as far as India. There is to this day a small hill near the airport in Chennai (Madras), India, where **Thomas** is said to have been buried. There are churches in south India whose roots are traceable to the beginning of the Church Age, and tradition says they were founded under the ministry of **Thomas**.⁴⁹⁰

8. Introduction to Matthew, or his Hebrew name Levi is very paradoxical. **Levi** that means *the gift of God*, and because he was a hated **tax collector**, **he** must have had a difficult time convincing other Jews of that fact! In all likelihood, none of **the twelve** was more notorious than **Mattityahu**. What caused **him** to drop everything and follow **Yeshua**? Whatever **his** tortured soul may have experienced because of **his** profession, down deep inside **he** was a Jew who knew and loved the Scriptures. **He** was spiritually hungry and the draw of **Jesus** was irresistible. We know that **he** knew the TaNaKh very well because **he** quotes it ninety-nine times in **his** Gospel. That's more than **Mark, Luke** and **John** combined. After being saved, **he** became a man of quiet humility who loved the outcasts and opposed religious hypocrisy – a man of great faith and complete surrender to the lordship of **Christ**. **He** stands as a vivid reminder that **the Lord** often chooses the most despicable people of this world, redeems them, gives them new hearts, and uses them in remarkable ways.

Death: We know that **Mattityahu** wrote **his** gospel with a Jewish audience in mind. Traditions say he ministered to the Jews both in Isra'el and abroad for many years before suffering martyrdom by being slain with a sword at a distant country of Ethiopia.⁴⁹¹ Therefore, this man who walked away from a lucrative career without ever giving it a second thought remained willing to give **his** all for **Yeshua Messiah** to the very end.

Legacy: Forgiveness is the thread that runs through **Matthew 9** after the account of **his** conversion. Of course, even as a **tax collector**, **Mattityahu** knew **his** sin, **his** greed, and **his** betrayal of **his** own people. **He** knew **he** was guilty of graft, extortion, oppression, and abuse. But, when **Yeshua** said to **him**: **Follow Me**, **Matthew** knew there was inherent in that command a promise of forgiveness. And that is why **he** got up from **his tax collecting booth** without hesitation and devoted the rest of **his** life to serving **the Messiah**.⁴⁹²

9. Introduction to James son of Alphaeus, sometimes known as **James the younger**. Except for **Judas Iscariot**, the last four **apostles** are virtually silent in the Gospel narratives. Little is known about any of **them**, except the fact that **they** were chosen as

apostles. We don't see much of **their** heroism in the Gospel records, they are portrayed as ordinary men. When **they** do come to the foreground, **they** often exhibited doubt, disbelief or confusion. But, things changed after the resurrection. Suddenly we begin to see **them** acting differently. **They** are strong and courageous. **They** perform miracles. **They** preach with newfound boldness. But, even then, the biblical record is sparse. Primarily we hear about **Peter, John** and **Rabbi Sha'ul** who became known as **Paul** after **his** conversion on the Damascus road (**Acts 9:1-19**). The rest of **them** went on into obscurity. But, **they** were all chosen for a reason.

The only thing the Bible tells us about this man is **his** name. If **he** ever wrote anything, it is lost to history. If **he** ever asked **Jesus** any questions or did anything to stand out from the group, Scripture does not record it. **He** never attained any degree of fame or notoriety. **He** was not the kind of person who stood out. **He** was utterly obscure. There is, however, an interesting possibility about **his** lineage when we compare **Mark 15:40** with **John 19:25**. Both verses mention two other **Marys** who were standing by the cross of **Yeshua** with **Mary the Lord's** mother. **Mark 15:40** mentions **Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph. John 19:25** names **Jesus' mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas** standing near the cross. It is possible, perhaps even likely, that **Jesus' mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary the mother of James the younger** were the same person. **Clopas** may have been another name for **Alphaeus**, or **James' mother** might have remarried after **his** father died. That would have made **James the younger Jesus' cousin.**

Death: Some of the earliest legends about **him** confuse **him** with **James** the brother of **the Lord**. There is some evidence that **James the younger** took the gospel to Syria and Persia. Accounts of **his** death differ. Some say **he** was stoned; others say **he** was beaten to death; still others say **he** was crucified like **his Lord**. But, two things are certain. One, **he** was martyred, and two, **his** name will be inscribed on one of the gates of the heavenly City (see my commentary on **Revelation, to see link click [Fu](#) - The New Jerusalem had a Great, High Wall with Twelve Gates**).

Legacy: Most of **the talmidim** more or less disappear from the biblical scene within a few years after the Feast of Weeks. In no case does the Bible give us a full biography. That's because the Scripture always keeps the focus on **the Lord** and the power of **His** Word, not the men who were the instruments of that power. Those men were filled with **the Ruach** and they preached the Word. That is all we really need to know. The vessel is not the issue; **the Master** is. But, heaven will reveal the full truth of who **they** were and what **they** were like. In the meantime, it is enough for us to know that **they** were chosen by **the KING of**

kings, empowered by **the Spirit**, and used by **God** to carry the gospel to the world of **their day**.⁴⁹³

10. Introduction to Judas son of James. The name **Judas** in and of itself is a fine name. It means *the LORD leads*. But, because of the treachery of **Judas Iscariot**, the name, like Adolf Hitler, will forever bear a negative connotation. **John** calls **him Judas (not Iscariot)**. Martin Luther called **him** *der fromme Judas*, that is, *the good Judas*. **Judas son of James** actually had three names. The church father Jerome referred to **him** as *Trinomious*, or *the man with three names*. In **Matthew 10:3** he is called **Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus**. **Judas** was probably the name given to **him** at birth. **Lebbaeus** and **Thaddaeus** were essentially nicknames. **Thaddaeus** means *breast child* and **Lebbaeus** literally means *heart child*. Both names suggest a tender heart.

The B'rit Chadashah records only one incident involving **Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus**. It was in the Upper Room on the night in which **Messiah** was betrayed, and **He** said: **Whoever has My commands and keeps them is the one who loves Me. The one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I too will love them and show Myself to them.** Then **John** adds: **Then Judas (not Iscariot) said: But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world (John 14:21-22)?** Here we see **Judas'** tenderhearted humility. **He** didn't say anything brash, bold or overconfident. **He** didn't rebuke **the Lord** like **Peter** once did. **His** question was full of gentleness, meekness and without any sense of pride. **He** just couldn't believe **the Master** would show **Himself** to **the twelve** and **not to the whole world**. **The Chief Shepherd** gave **him** an answer as tender as the question. **Jesus replied: Anyone who loves Me will obey My teachings. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make Our home with them (John 14:23).** This was a pious, believing talmid.

Most of the early tradition regarding **Lebbaeus Thaddaeus** suggests that a few years after the Feast of Weeks (**Acts 2**), **he** took the Gospel north, to Edessa, a royal city in Mesopotamia, in what would be Turkey today. There are numerous accounts of how **he** healed the king of Edessa, a man named Abgar. In the fourth century, Eusebius the Church historian said the archives at Edessa, since destroyed, contained records full of **Thaddaeus'** visit and healing of Abgar.

Death: The traditional apostolic symbol of **Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus** is a club, because tradition tells us that **he** was clubbed to death for **his** faith.

Legacy: Thus the tenderhearted soul followed **his Lord** faithfully to the end. **His** testimony was as powerful and far-reaching as that of the better-known and more outspoken **apostles**.

He, like **them**, is proof of how **God** uses ordinary people in remarkable ways.⁴⁹⁴

11. Introduction to Simon who was called the Zealot (Luke 6:15). In **Matthew 10:4** and **Mark 3:18**, **he** is called **Simon the Cananaean**. This is not in reference to the land of Canaan or the village of Cana. It comes from the Hebrew root *qanna*, which means *to be zealous*. Apparently, **Simon** had been a member of Jewish nationalists known as the **Zealots**. The fact that **he** bore the title all **his** life many also suggest that **he** had a fiery, zealous temperament. But, that term in **Jesus'** day signified a well-known and widely feared outlaw political force. They were red-hot patriots, ready to die in an instant for their beliefs.

The **Zealots** were not a religious sect, but a group of Jewish nationalists, the Jewish Liberation Front of their day, who advocated the violent overthrow of the Roman occupiers. This gives us some insight into the messianic agenda of **Yeshua**, as **He** purposely chose one of **His apostles** who was violently opposed to Rome, as well as a Roman sympathizer (**Matthew**), who was employed by the occupying forces! **Simon** belonged to them (**Acts 1:13**). Barabbas is called **one of those among the rebels who had committed murder in the insurrection (Mark 15:7; Acts 3:14)**, **a notorious prisoner (Matthew 27:16)** and **a lestes, or a bandit (John 18:40)**. The two men crucified on either side of **Jesus** were called **bandits (Mark 15:27)**. Barabbas may have been **a zealot**. **Josephus portrays the revolutionaries as "brigands," endeavoring to marginalize them from the mainstream Jewish population.** These **brigands** were popular with the common people because they preyed upon the wealthy establishment of Isra'el and created havoc for the Roman government. **Although some Pharisees may have opposed their violence, Zealots, while distinct from the Pharisees, seem to have carried out the same ideology, albeit in a more militant manner.**

Death: **He** died as violently as **he** once lived by being sawn in half. This **man** who was once willing to kill or be killed for a political ideal within the confines of Judah found a more fruitful cause for which to give **his** life - proclaiming salvation for sinners **from every tribe and language and people and nation (Rev 5:9b).**⁴⁹⁵

Legacy: It is amazing that **Yeshua** would select a **man** like **Simon** to be **an apostle**. But, **he** was a man of fierce loyalties, amazing passion, courage and zeal. **He** believed in the truth and embraced **the Meshiach** as **Lord** and **Savior**. Several early sources say that after the destruction of Jerusalem, **Simon** took the Gospel north and preached in the British Isles.⁴⁹⁶

12. Introduction to Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him (Mark 3:19). **Judas** means *the LORD leads*, and indicates that when **he** was born **his** parents must have had great hopes

for **him** to be led by **God**. The irony of the name is that no person was ever more clearly led by Satan than was **Judas**. **Y'hudah from K'roit** means *a man of the town K'riot*. Reference is made to **his** native town that is given in **Joshua 15:24** as one of the outer most cities of Judah some twenty miles south of Yerushalayim. **Judas** was ordinary in every way, just like the other **talmidim**. Under **his** outer garment of white, **Judas** wore a leather apron with two huge pockets, and in these **he** maintained the treasury. **He** might have also carried a small box under **his** arm. It's significant that when **Christ** predicted one of **them** would betray **Him**, no one pointed the finger of suspicion at **Judas (Matthew 26:22-23)**. **He** was so expert in **his** hypocrisy that no one seemed to distrust **him**. But, **Jesus** knew **his** evil heart from the beginning (**John 6:64**).

Death: See [Lm](#) - **Judas Hanged Himself**.

Legacy: **Judas** is the most notorious and universally scorned of all the **apostles**. **He** will forever be known as **the traitor**. **His** name appears last in every biblical list of **the talmidim**, except in **Acts 1**, where it doesn't appear at all. Every time **Judas** is mentioned in Scripture, we also find a notation about **his** being **a traitor**. **He** is the most colossal failure in all of human history. **He** betrayed the perfect, sinless, holy **Son of God** for a few silver coins. **His** dark story is a painful example of the depths to which the human heart is capable of sinking. **He** spent three-and-a-half years with **Christ**, but for all that time **his** heart only grew hard and hateful.⁴⁹⁷