

INTRODUCTION TO THE TWELVE DISCIPLES

Their Identification (Mt 10:1-4; Mk 3:13-19; Lk 6:12-16; Acts 1:13)

<i>Group 1</i>	<i>Group 2</i>	<i>Group 3</i>
Simon (Peter)	Philip	James (son of Alphaeus)
Andrew	Bartholomew	(Judas) Thaddaeus
James	Thomas	Simon (the Zealot)
John	Matthew (or Levi)	Judas Iscariot

Their Choosing

1. NOT because of who they were but because of what Jesus wanted them to be
2. No consultation (or advice) from others
3. After prayer (Lk 6:12-13)
4. Limited to twelve
5. Chosen both to learn from Jesus (as disciples) and to be sent (as apostles)
6. Common and ordinary, not extraordinary, so that God would reveal His glory in them (1 Cor 1:26-31; 2 Cor 4:7)
7. Given by God the Father (Jn 17:6-12)

Their Calling

Two types of calling:

1. *phoneō*: “vocalize” or “sound out” – general calling for anyone who hears it
2. *kaleō*: “summon” or “invite” – specific calling for those specifically chosen

Their Training

1. Absolute commitment (Mt 8:19-22; Lk 9:57-62)
2. Direct instruction from Jesus
3. Teaching by example

Their Sending

1. First to a limited group – the Jews (Mt 10:5-42; Mk 6:7-13, 30-32; Lk 9:1-11)
2. Always connected to Jesus and His ministry (Jn 15:1-15)
3. Final commissioning to the entire world (Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15)

SIMON PETER

Part 1: What kind of person does God choose to be a leader?

The Raw Material

1. Inquisitiveness

- The meaning of a difficult saying (Mt 15:15; Lk 12:41)
- How often to forgive (Mt 18:21)
- The reward of those who follow Jesus (Mt 19:27)
- The meaning of a symbol: the fig tree (Mk 11:21)
- The approaching end (Mk 13:3)
- The risen Christ (Jn 21:20-22)

2. Initiative

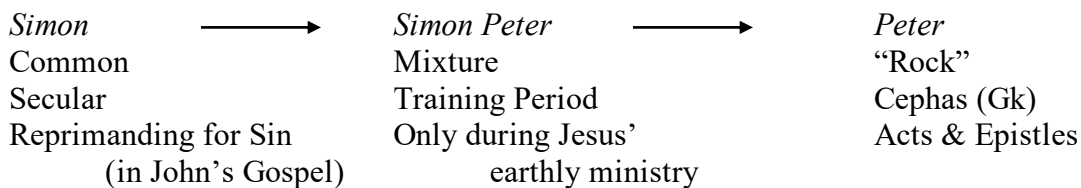
- The first to answer when Jesus asked who touched Him (Lk 8:45)
- The one to answer the question, "Who do you think I am?" (Mt 16:15-16)
- "Not knowing what he was saying, said..." (Mt 17:4; Mk 9:5-6; Lk 9:33)

3. Involvement

- Walking on the water (Mt 14:29)
- Followed Jesus to the house of the priest (Mk 14:53-54)
- Went to the tomb to see for himself (Jn 20:3-7)

The Purpose

The most significant point in the calling of Simon Peter was the name change:



It was not who Simon was but who Jesus wanted him to be that mattered.

Not a qualified leader by human standards

By divine standards, he was the perfect choice since God could make him into what He wanted him to be.

PETER
Part 2: How Does God Develop a Leader?

1. Specific Experiences

1) Revelation

“You are the Christ.” (Mt 16:15-17; Mk 8:29; Lk 9:20)
Jesus is “the Holy One of God.” (Jn 6:66-67)
Lesson: God can turn a weakness (outspokenness) into a strength (confession).

2) Regression

Peter used as an instrument of Satan (Mt 16:21-23; Mk 8:33)
Lesson: A potential for God is also a potential for Satan.

3) Rejection

The Denial (Mt 10:33; 26:31-35, 69-75)
The Danger (Mt 10:33)
Lesson: You will be at your weakest when you operate in your own strength.

4) Recommission

Jesus seeks Peter again. (Jn 21:15-17)
Lesson: Once set apart by God, He will never abandon you.

2. Specific Lessons

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Lesson Learned</u>
Submission	Matt. 17:24-27	1 Peter 2:13-18
Restraint	John 18:10-11	1 Peter 2:21-23
Love	John 13:6-9	1 Peter 4:8-10
Sacrifice	John 21:18-19	1 Peter 4:12-19
Humility	Matt. 26:33-35; Jn 13:6-9	1 Peter 5:5-7
The Threat of Satan	Matt. 16:21-23; Lk 22:31	1 Peter 5:8-9

Only when Peter recognized his own weaknesses and dependence upon the Lord did he become the leader God intended him to be. The “strength through weakness” lesson did not originate with Paul, although he says it best (2 Cor. 12:9-10). God cannot use anyone until this lesson is learned. If we do not learn it voluntarily, God will use whatever means is necessary to teach us.

ANDREW The Behind-the-Scenes Evangelist

1. His Characteristics

- 1) Part of the inner circle of four (Peter, Andrew, James, John)
- 2) Not one of the closest (the Intimate Three)
- 3) Always working behind the scenes
- 4) Upstaged by Peter (known as Peter's brother)

2. His Appearances

- 1) Leading Peter to Jesus – John 1:35-41
- 2) Leading the boy with the fish and bread to Jesus – John 6:8-9
- 3) Leading the Greeks to Jesus – John 12:20-22

3. His Role

- 1) Without Andrew, Peter most likely would not have known Jesus.
- 2) Long before Peter's confession, Andrew made his own. (John 1:41)
- 3) He was the first of the disciples to include Gentiles. (John 12:20-22)
- 4) His faith was the strongest among the disciples. (John 6:8-9)
- 5) Andrew teaches us that in ministry humility is greater than position.

“Gathering together the traces of character found in Scripture (about Andrew), we have neither the writer of an Epistle, nor the founder of a Church, nor a leading figure in the Apostolic Age, but simply...an intimate disciple of Jesus Christ, ever anxious that others should know the spring of spiritual joy and share the blessing he so highly prized. A man of very moderate endowment, who scarcely redeemed his early dramatic power or heroic spirit, yet with that clinging confidence in Christ that brought him into that inner circle of the Twelve; a man of deep religious feeling with little power of expression, magnetic more than electric, better suited for the quiet walks of life than the stirring thoroughfares. Andrew is the apostle of private life—the disciple of the hearth.”

Daniel McLean

JAMES AND JOHN Ambition and Intolerance Changed into Sacrifice and Love

1. Their role together

- 1) Sons of Zebedee (the employer of Peter and Andrew)
- 2) Wealthy enough to have hired help (Mark 1:20)
- 3) Sons of Thunder – *Boanerges* (Mark 3:17)

2. James – Ambition Turned to Sacrifice

- 1) The eldest and leader of the brothers.
- 2) The most dynamic and passionate of the brothers.
- 3) Zeal without sensitivity (Luke 9:51-56)
- 4) Ambition without any understanding of sacrifice (Matthew 20:20-24)
- 5) The biggest threat in early Christianity, therefore the first disciple to be martyred (Acts 12:1-4)

3. John – Intolerance Turned to Love

- 1) Second only to James in his sense of ambition and zeal
- 2) Intolerant of what did not fit his understanding of the truth (Mark 9:38-41)
- 3) Rivalry with Peter (John 20:4)
- 4) Learned the importance of love and relationships
 - a. God's love for His Son (John 10:17; 17:23-26), Jesus' disciples (John 15:19; 16:27; 17:23), and all people (John 3:16)
 - b. Christ's love for God (John 14:31)
 - c. Christ's love for individuals (John 11:5, 36; 13:23)
 - d. Love one another (John 13:34-35; 15:12-13)
 - e. Love as the fulfillment of the Law (John 15:10; 1 John 3:23-24)
- 5) Emphasized the importance of truth (John 5:32-39; 8:14; 15:26-27)
- 6) Learned how love and truth work together (2 John 1-3; 3 John 1), a lesson later taught by Paul (1 Cor. 13: 6; Eph. 4:15)
- 7) "The disciple whom Jesus loved" – reminding himself of God's love for him in order to enable him to love others

James and John teach us that God is not so much interested in ambition as much as He is in humble service ("the first will be last" Matt. 19:30). God is concerned with the truth but not without love. Love does not exist apart from truth, and truth cannot abide without love.

PHILIP AND BARTHOLOMEW (OR NATHANAEL)
Skepticism Changed Into Devotion

Philip

- 1) Not Philip the deacon in Acts 6
- 2) The leader of the second group of disciples (always mentioned first)
- 3) From Bethsaida (same as Peter and Andrew)
- 4) Greek name – Hebrew name unknown
- 5) His appearances in the Gospel of John:
 - a. Jesus found Philip; Philip immediately tells Nathanael – John 1:43-46
 - b. “Where will we get the bread?” – John 6:5-7
 - c. Greeks come to Philip – John 12:20-22
 - d. “Show us the Father” – John 14:8-11
- 6) His characteristics: skeptical, insecure, but ready to tell others about the truth

Bartholomew (Nathanael)

- 1) Bartholomew : “son of Tolmai”; Nathanael: “gift of God”
- 2) Only one passage – John 1:45-51
 - a. Studious in the scriptures (45)
 - b. Prejudiced (46)
 - c. A true Jew – no hypocrisy (47)
 - d. “How do you know me?” (48)
 - e. Nathanael’s confession (49)
 - f. Recognition and reward (50-51)
- 3) His characteristics: prejudiced and skeptical, but without hypocrisy, ready to accept the truth

Philip and Bartholomew together were what might today be called “seekers.” Although it is true that “no one seeks after God” (Rom. 3:11), there are those whom God’s Spirit, through their own study and curiosity, has made them ready to hear the truth. Even though they might seem skeptical and prejudiced against the truth, they are perhaps the most prepared to receive it.

MATTHEW AND THOMAS The Unleashing of Concealed Devotion

Matthew

- 1) Levi – common name (Hebrew priestly tribe); Matthew – “gift of Jehovah”
- 2) Tax collectors:
 - General tax collectors (at booths outside the city)
 - Chief tax collectors (Zaccheus)
- 3) Only one incident but three accounts
 - Mark 2:14-17 – most detached and basic account
 - Luke 5:27-32 – objective yet more informative
 - Matthew 9:9-13 – from Matthew’s own perspective
- 4) Matthew is humble and silent through the rest of the Gospels, but his devotion to Jesus was clear from the moment of leaving his past.
- 5) Most people would have perceived Matthew as a traitor to his nation. However, what Jesus saw in him was a devoted disciple.
- 6) God would choose Matthew to write the Gospel to the Jewish nation (or for Jewish evangelism).

Thomas

- 1) Also known as Didymus meaning “twin; Thomas could be a derivation of a Hebrew word *teom* meaning “twin”
- 2) Known best as the doubting disciple. However, references to him in John indicate that he was a disciple who had a strong attachment to Jesus.
- 3) Three accounts:
 - Willing to die with Jesus – John 11:14-16
 - “Where are you going (so we can follow)?” – John 14:1-5
 - “Unless I see...” – John 20:24-29
- 4) Although known for his doubt, Thomas is the only disciple who makes a clear statement of Jesus’ deity (“my Lord and my God”).

Matthew’s call and ministry teaches us that past reputation is not a hindrance to God’s work in an individual who is willing to leave it all behind and to devote himself completely to following the Lord. Thomas teaches us that what is often perceived as a lack of belief might actually conceal an underlying devotion that is both powerful and undying.

JAMES (Son of Alphaeus), JUDAS THADDAEUS, AND SIMON (the Zealot)
The Other James, Judas, and Simon

James, the son of Alphaeus

- 1) James the Less (*mikros*, “little”) – a reference to physical stature, position in relation to the other James, or perhaps even his young age.
- 2) Matthew (Levi) is also designated as the son of Alphaeus (Mk 2:14). Although Alphaeus was a common name, there is a possibility that Matthew and James were brothers.
- 4) The sister-in-law of Jesus’ mother was also named Mary and was the wife of Clopas (John 19:25), another form of the name Alphaeus. Could James have been Joseph’s nephew and Jesus’ cousin?

Judas Thaddaeus, also known as Lebbaeus

- 1) Thaddaeus comes from a Hebrew word meaning “female breast” and was often used to indicate a cherished child, sometimes referring to the youngest in a family.
- 2) Lebbaeus comes from the Hebrew word “heart” and most often designates courage.
- 3) His only words in the Gospels were in the form of a question: “Why will you show yourself to us and not to the world?” (John 14:22)
- 4) The Lesson: Jesus’ manifestation is inward, not outward, and limited to those who receive Him in faith (John 14:23-24).

Simon the Zealot

- 1) Zealot is derived from the word “zeal” and refers to a Jewish revolutionary movement.
- 2) The Zealots developed during the revolt in the Maccabean period under Judas Maccabaeus (mid-second century B.C.) Their activities led to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. They detested Gentile rulers and Jews who had compromised their country and religion. 1 Maccabees 2:50 says, “Be zealous for the Law and give your lives for the Covenant.”
- 3) A Zealot, such as Simon, would have particularly despised tax collectors who were Jewish but working for the Roman government (such as Matthew).
- 4) The Lesson: Jesus breaks down all walls and all barriers, even the most hostile (Eph. 2:14-18).

These three lesser known disciples teach us that obscurity of reputation and fame does not minimize one’s importance. All three of these disciples were included among the Twelve and as such were part of the foundation of the New Testament Church.

JUDAS ISCARIOT Chosen for God's Purpose

1. His Background

- 1) Judas: Greek form of Judah ("Yahweh leads") – the tribe from which Jesus came
- 2) Iscariot: "from the town Kerioth" in Judea – the only disciple identified by geography and the only disciple from Judea
- 3) Being from Judea, he was the disciple with the highest status in sociological and cultural terms. Judeans were wealthier, often more devout (closer to Jerusalem), and better educated.

2. His Position

- 1) Chosen to be the treasurer of the disciples – responsible for their well-being
- 2) He remained long after other disciples left Jesus over the issue of commitment (John 6:66).

3. His Demise

- 1) Stage One: Materialism (John 12:3-6)
- 2) Stage Two: Disappointment with God's Plan (John 12:12-26)
- 3) Stage Three: Satan's Instrument (John 13:26-27)
- 4) Stage Four: Selling Out (Mt 26:14-16; Mk 14:10-11; Lk 22:3-6) and Betraying God (Mt 26:49-50; Mk 14:43-46; Lk 22:47-48; John 18:2-5)
- 5) Stage Five: Without Hope (Mt 27:1-10; Acts 1:18)

4. From the Divine Perspective: Chosen by God

- 1) Jesus' betrayal was prophesied (Ps 41:9; 55:12-14, 20-21; Zch 11:12-13).
- 2) Jesus knew he was part of this plan (Mt 26:21-23; Mk 14:18; John 13:21-26; 17:12).

5. From the Human Perspective: More Questions than Answers

- 1) Did he ever have good motives? If so, how did he fall away from "the faith"?
- 2) Was he always corrupt? If so, how can and does God use evil in His plan?
- 3) How can God include among His elect those who are destined for dishonor?
- 4) How can people be held responsible when God's plan includes their sin?
- 5) Are there some "among us who are not of us" (1 John 2:19)?

Judas Iscariot teaches us that opportunities do not guarantee the realization of those opportunities. Just because someone is "among" believers, it does not mean that that person is a believer.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TWELVE DISCIPLES?

The following statements are drawn primarily from church tradition, since, apart from James (son of Zebedee) and Judas Iscariot, the scriptures do not include details about the later lives and deaths of the disciples.

Simon Peter: The Roman Catholic Church claims that he was the first pope of Rome. Other traditions question this, although every tradition recognizes his significant leadership role in the early development of the church. Tradition is unanimous, however, in its account of his death. In A.D. 66, he was forced to watch the crucifixion of his own wife. He stood at the foot of her cross and encouraged her with the words, “Remember the Lord...remember the Lord...” After she died, he was crucified upside down by his own request, because he was not worthy to die the same death as his Lord.

Andrew: His ministry was mostly in Greece, especially Achaia. In A.D. 69, he was tied, not nailed, to an X-shaped cross. The point was that his suffering would be prolonged. It took two days for him to die of exposure. During that time, he was preaching the Gospel to those who passed by.

James, son of Zebedee: The first of the disciples to be martyred, he was executed by Herod Agrippa I in A.D. 42 shortly before Passover (Acts 12:1-4). Tradition says that he was beheaded with a sword. The officer overseeing him was so impressed with James that on the way to James’ beheading, he fell down at James’ feet, asking forgiveness for the part he had played in his coming death.

John: Most of his ministry was in Ephesus. During the Roman persecutions following the destruction in Jerusalem in A.D. 70, John was captured and boiled in oil. Presumably, this was meant to kill him, however, he was miraculously delivered from death. After this, he was banished to the island of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. In A.D. 96, he was released from exile and returned to Ephesus to live out his remaining years. Other than Judas Iscariot, John is the only one of the Twelve not to have died a martyr’s death.

Philip: Philip was put to death in Heirapole, Phrygia in A.D. 52 because he would not deny Christ. He was stripped naked, his feet were bound, and he was hung upside down. He was pierced in his ankles and thighs so that he would slowly bleed to death. His only request was that his body not be wrapped in linen as it was with Jesus, because he was not worthy to be buried as his Lord.

Bartholomew: His ministry concentrated in the area south of the Caspian Sea known as Armenia. In A.D. 60, he apparently joined Judas Thaddaeus, who had been ministering there for some time. In A.D. 68, he was flayed alive and then beheaded.

Matthew: Most of his ministry concentrated in northern Africa, most especially in Ethiopia. There are many conflicting traditions concerning his death. The most common tradition places his death in A.D. 60 either in Ethiopia or Egypt. He was killed by the sword.

Thomas: His most significant ministry was in India, where he founded many churches over a period of many years. To this day, there are a number of Indian names that have derived from the name Thomas. In A.D. 52, he was killed by Brahman priests in Carmandal. While he was praying, he was shot with arrows and then run through with a lance.

James, son of Alphaeus: His ministry centered in Jerusalem where he focused on the Jewish community. The most common tradition of his death is that he was preaching on the pinnacle of the Temple when he was thrown down. Since that did not kill him, he was stoned to death. As with Jesus, his final words were asking for the forgiveness of those who were killing him. This event occurred in A.D. 62.

Judas Thaddaeus: He was probably the first disciple to leave Jerusalem for foreign missions. He ministered in Armenia beginning in A.D. 48. He was later joined by Bartholomew and still later by Simon (the Zealot). In A.D. 66, he and Simon went to Iran. They converted many to Christianity from the religion of Zoroastrianism. In A.D. 79, a crowd led by magi of the Zoroastrian religion overtook him, stoned him, and then killed him with a spear.

Simon (the Zealot): In A.D. 60, Simon arrived in Britain and began spreading the Gospel and planting churches. He later joined Judas Thaddaeus in Armenia and then followed him to Iran. He was killed at the same time as Judas Thaddaeus in A.D. 79, however, his death was much more gruesome. He was cut into pieces until he died.

Judas Iscariot: He was the first of the disciples to die. He was the only disciple to take his own life. He is known only for his act of betrayal.