

Summary of *The Search for the Twelve Apostles*

Peter

- It has been said that the apostle Peter was a slender person. He was of a middle size, inclining to tallness, and that his complexion was pale (almost white.) It has, also, been said that he had a short, thick, curled beard, thin eyebrows (or no eyebrows at all.)
- Another description of the apostle Peter is that his eyes were black, but flecked with red due to frequent weeping.
- Peter was born in Betsaida (in Galilee, Israel.) By profession, he was a fisherman. His father (also a fisherman) was named Jona; his brother, the apostle Andrew. He and his brother (Andrew), along with their partners (the apostles James and John) were fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. Zebedee (the father of James and John) was also a partner.
- So firm was Peter's faith that Jesus gave him the name of Cephas, meaning, in the Syriac language, a rock (Peter is the Greek translation of Cephas.)
- The house in which Peter lived, in Capernaum, is still standing; in the 5th century AD, however, a Christian church was constructed over it.
- It was Peter who preached to the masses in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (following Jesus' ascension to heaven.) His message is recorded in the New Testament of the Bible, the book of Acts, chapter 2.
- Peter is, also, the one who prompted the disciples to choose a replacement to take over the apostolic ministry of Judas Iscariot (after Judas' betrayal of Christ Jesus.)
- It was, also, Peter who healed a man, who was over 40 years of age, who had been crippled from birth, with but the words, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."
- Peter was called by the apostle Paul a "pillar" of the Church. It was, also, believed by the crowds that the mere casting of his shadow upon the sick was capable of bringing about miraculous healing.
- Peter is the one who defended the inclusion of the Gentiles (non-Jews) into the Christian Church at the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem. His ministry was primarily to the Jews, as the apostle Paul's was to the Gentiles.
- After being imprisoned several times in Jerusalem (because of his faith), Peter left with his wife and possibly others. It is believed that he ministered (in Babylon) to the Jewish colonists there. It is, also, believed to be his location when he wrote his first epistle (1 Peter.)
- Peter eventually went to Rome. While there, it is believed that John Mark (the writer of the Gospel of Mark) served as his translator (as he preached.) There is a Church tradition which says that "Mark the disciple and interpreter of the apostle Peter wrote a short gospel at the request of the brethren at Rome, embodying what he had heard Peter tell." Thus Peter was the source of the Gospel of Mark.

- According to Church tradition, the Roman Emperor Nero, publicly announcing himself the chief enemy of God, was led in his fury to slaughter the Apostles. Because of this persecution, Peter was crucified upside down while in Rome.
- Concerning the last hours of his life, it is said that Peter, when seeing his own wife led out to die, rejoiced because of her summons and her return home. He called to her very encouragingly and comfortingly, addressing her by name, and saying, "O thou, remember the Lord."
- Of the final days of the apostle Peter in Rome, Italy, Jowett wrote that Peter was cast into a horrible prison called the Mamertine. For nine months, in absolute darkness, he endured monstrous torture manacled to a post. In spite of all the suffering Peter was subjected to, however, he converted his jailers, Processus, Martinianus, and forty-seven others.
- Peter met his death at the hand of the Romans in Nero's circus, 67AD.

John

- John was the brother of the apostle James; he was also the son of Zebedee (a fisherman of Galilee.) His mother's name was Salome who is believed to be a sister of Jesus' mother Mary.
- John, his brother James and the apostles Peter and Andrew were all partners in a fishing business prior to their calls by Jesus to follow Him (Zebedee was also a partner.)
- It is said that John owned a home in Jerusalem and that it is possible that the interview Nicodemus had with Jesus was held there.
- The apostle John rose to a position of influence within world-wide Christianity and shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD, he moved to Ephesus (in modern day, Turkey.) He became the pastor of the church in Ephesus and had a special relationship with other churches in the area (as we know from the letters to the Seven Churches in Asia, in the book of Revelation.)
- John's brother, James, was the first of the apostles to die; on the other hand, John was the last. All of the apostles met a violent death, however, John died peacefully in Ephesus (at an advanced age, around the year 100 AD.)
- There is a church tradition, which says, that while John was living in Ephesus, John had with him Mary, the mother of Jesus, for a few years.
- While in Ephesus, by order of the Roman emperor Domitian, John was exiled to an island called Patmos. In what is known as the cave of the Apocalypse (located on this island), the sacred text of the book of Revelation was given to the apostle John by Jesus (it is here that John recorded what is written in the New Testament book of Revelation.)
- Other New Testament books accredited to John are the Gospel of John, along with 1st, 2nd and 3rd John.
- When he was released from exile, he returned to Ephesus and lived till the time of the Roman emperor Trajan.

- It is said that John, "Founded and built churches throughout all Asia, and worn out by old age, died in the sixty-eight year after our Lord's passion and was buried near the same city (Ephesus)."
- There is a church tradition, which says, that when John was evidently an old man in Ephesus, he had to be carried to the church in the arms of his disciples. At these meetings, he was accustomed to say no more than, "Little children, love one another!" After a time, the disciples wearied at always hearing the same words, asked, "Master, why do you always say this?" "It is the Lord's command," was his reply. "And if this alone be done, it is enough!"
- There is, also, a Church tradition which says that John was in Rome for a time.

James

- Of the three apostles who comprised the inner circle of Jesus' disciples (Peter, James and John), we know the least about the apostle James. We do know, however, that the apostle James was the eldest brother of the apostle John and that their father's name was Zebedee (their mother's name was Salome.)
- James, his brother John, Peter and Andrew were all partners in a fishing business prior to being called by Christ Jesus to follow Him. Zebedee was, also, a partner in the business.
- There is some evidence that James was the first cousin of Jesus the Messiah and had been acquainted with Him from infancy. It is believed that his mother Salome was the sister of Jesus' mother Mary.
- Not much is known of his ministry after Jesus' resurrection. It is believed, however, that he lived another 14 years before his martyrdom. In fact, the apostle James was the first apostle to suffer martyrdom. By order of Herod Agrippa I, James was beheaded in Jerusalem about the feast of Easter, 44 AD.
- It is believed that within this 14 year period, James visited the Jewish colonist and slaves in Spain to preach the Gospel.
- It has been said that when the apostle James was led out to die, a man who had brought false accusations against him walked with him to the place of execution. He had doubtless expected to see James looking pale and frightened but he saw him, instead, bright and joyous, like a conqueror who had won a great battle. The false witness greatly wondered at this and became convinced that the Savior in whom the prisoner by his side believed must be the true God or He could not impart such cheerfulness and courage to a man about to die. The man himself, therefore, became a convert to Christianity and was condemned to die with James the apostle (both were consequently beheaded on the same day and with the same sword.)
- About the same period, Timon and Parmenas (two of the seven original deacons) suffered martyrdom (the former at Corinth and the latter at Philippi in Macedonia.)

Andrew

- It has been said that the apostle Andrew's father's name was Jona and his mother's name, Joanna.
- Like their father, Andrew and Peter were also fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. In fact, the apostles Andrew, Peter, James and John were all partners in a fishing business prior to being called by Jesus to follow Him.
- Andrew was the first of the Apostles to follow Jesus and just as John the Baptist introduced Jesus to the nation of Israel, so Andrew is noted for having introduced Jesus to individuals. The apostle Peter became the fisher of men in masse where Andrew was a fisher for individuals.
- In his latter ministry, it is believed that Andrew went to the foothills of the Caucasus mountains (present day Georgia in Eastern Europe.) While there, he preached to the Scythians as far as the Caspian Sea.
- He also went to Byzantium which is present day Istanbul in Turkey and from there, to Greece. In fact, he traveled to Thrace and Macedonia, down through the Corinthian Gulf to Patros; it was in Patros that Andrew was martyred.
- In the church of St. Andrew in Patros, Greece, there is a book written in Greek which sheds light on his martyrdom. The following is written: "Aigeatis who was the governor of Patros became enraged at Andrew for his preaching and ordered him to stand before the tribunal in his attempt to do away with the Christian Faith. When Andrew resisted the tribunal, the governor ordered him crucified. Andrew remained tied to the cross with thick tight ropes for three days and his last words were: "Accept me, O Christ Jesus, whom I saw, whom I love, and in whom I am; accept my spirit in peace in your eternal realm."
- An ancient writer also speaks of the apostle's martyrdom as such: "Andrew hung upon the cross three whole days, suffering dreadful pain but continuing constantly to tell the people around him of the love of Jesus Christ. The people, as they listened to him, began to believe his words and asked the governor to let him be taken down from the cross. Not liking to refuse them, he at last ordered the ropes to be cut but when the last rope was severed, the body of the apostle fell to the ground quite dead."
- It is believed that Andrew died on the last day of November, 69 AD.

Philip

- How did a Jew get a name such as the Greek, "Philip?" It's possible that he was named in honor of Philip the Tetrarch who had, some ten years before his birth, done much to raise the status of the region of his birth (Bethsaida in Galilee, Israel.) Philip was said to be of the Jewish tribe of Zebulon.
- It is believed that after the ascension of Christ Jesus, Philip traveled into Scythia (south Russia) and remained there for twenty years preaching the Gospel.
- Eventually, in the company of the apostle Bartholomew, the apostle Philip went to Asia Minor and labored in Hierapolis, near Laodicea and Colosse, in what is modern day Turkey.

- While in Hierapolis, it is said that the wife of the Roman proconsul was healed by the apostles Philip and Bartholomew, that she became a Christian and that her husband ordered Philip and Bartholomew to be put to death by crucifixion. Philip was crucified, however, Bartholomew escaped martyrdom, when for some special reason, the magistrates caused him to be taken down from the cross and dismissed. Philip's tomb is still to be found in the Turkish city of Hierapolis.
- There is a belief that the apostle Philip, also, ministered to the Gaul's in France; this cannot be confirmed, however. He is the only Apostle whom Church tradition associates with France, however.
- The body of Philip was acquired from Hierapolis by Pope John the Third (560-572 AD) and interred in a church in Rome (the Church of the Holy Apostles Philip and James the Less.) Philip was around 87 years of age when martyred in Hierapolis.

Thomas

- The apostle Thomas was also known as Didymus (the twin.) As to who his twin was, it's not known. By trade, he was a fisherman and a native of Galilee in Israel.
- After the resurrection of the Lord Christ Jesus, Thomas went to Babylon; it is believed that he established the first Christian church there.
- Thomas is also known to have gone to Persia and from there he went to India and preached the Gospel making many converts. It is believed that Thomas arrived in India no later than 49 AD.
- It is also believed that the apostle Thomas evangelized as far as China, and while in India, he suffered martyrdom (he was killed with a lance and buried in Mylapore, India, which is now a suburb of Madras.) It is believed that he died on the 21st of December.
- The apostle Thomas is said to have been a fearless evangelist and a great builder of churches.

Bartholomew

- The latter ministry of the apostle Bartholomew belongs more to the eastern churches than it does to the western churches.
- Bartholomew is said to have had black curly hair, white skin, large eyes, a straight nose, hair that covered his ears and a long grizzled middle height beard. He is ,also, said to have worn a white robe with a purple stripe and a white cloak with four purple gems at the corners. For twenty-six years he wore these and it is said that they never grew old. In fact, It was also reported, that his shoes lasted the same as his clothing.
- Of Bartholomew, it is said that he prayed a hundred times a day and a hundred times a night. It is also said that his voice was like a trumpet, angels waited upon him, and that he was always cheerful and knew all languages.

- In the company of the apostle Philip, the apostle Bartholomew went to Asia Minor and labored in Hierapolis, near Laodicea and Colosse, in what is modern day Turkey.
- While in Hierapolis, it is said that the wife of the Roman proconsul was healed by the apostles Philip and Bartholomew, that she became a Christian and that her husband ordered Philip and Bartholomew to be put to death by crucifixion. Philip was crucified, however, Bartholomew escaped martyrdom, when for some special reason, the magistrates caused him to be taken down from the cross and dismissed. From there, Bartholomew went eastward to India and then to greater Armenia. He labored in the area around the south end of the Caspian Sea.
- A popular tradition among the Armenians is that the apostle Jude (Thaddaeus) was the first to evangelize their region throughout the years of 43 to 66 AD and that the apostle Bartholomew joined him in 60 AD.
- It is also said that Bartholomew carried with him a copy of the apostle Matthew's Gospel. This copy was reported to have been found at a later time and a converted stoic philosopher by the name of Pantaenus is said to have brought it to Alexandria.
- The modern name of the district where Bartholomew died is Azerbaijan and the place of his death, called in New Testament times Albanopolis, is now Derbend which is on the west coast of the Caspian Sea.
- The apostle Bartholomew is said to have been martyred in the year 68 AD.

Matthew

- The apostle Matthew, also called Levi, was the son of Alphaeus and the brother of the apostle James the Less, or, James, son of Alphaeus.
- By profession, Matthew was a tax collector before being called by Jesus to follow Him.
- Matthew probably remained in the Holy Land, as tradition says, for 15 years and after this, encouraged by the reports of the success of other Christian leaders among the Jews (the Diaspora) and also among the Gentiles, he went forth on several missionary journeys. It is certain that he went to Persia and the mysterious area in Persia known as "Ethiopia." It is also possible that he traveled to the Ethiopia in Africa as the Roman Catholic tradition indicates and there is also a belief that Matthew was martyred in Egypt upon his return from Ethiopia in Africa but this is not certain. There is a tradition which says that Matthew was martyred in Parthia.
- Matthew was a gifted writer, an ardent disciple, and was perhaps the best educated of any of the Twelve Apostles. He was the writer of The Gospel of Matthew.

James Son of Alphaeus

- The apostle James (the son of Alphaeus), who is also called "Less" or "Younger," was a brother of the apostle Matthew and the son of Mary. Which Mary is not altogether certain

though she seems to be the wife of one Cleopas (Cleophas), which may have been another or second name for Alphaeus.

- James was a native of Capernaum (located on the northwestern shores of the Sea of Galilee in Israel.) It is believed that he was from the Jewish tribe of Levi, however, this is not certain.
- Not much is known about the latter ministry of of this apostle, however, Aziz S. Atiya, in his "History of Eastern Christianity" says, " The seeds of Syrian Christianity had been sown in Jerusalem during the Apostolic age and the contention has been made that the first bishop of the Syrian church was none other than St. James of the Twelve Apostles, identified as 'St. James the Less'."
- It has also been said that James (son of Alphaeus) was stoned in Jerusalem for preaching Christ and buried by the Sanctuary.

Simon the Zealot

- The apostle Simon (the Zealot) was believed to have left Jerusalem and traveled first to Egypt and then through North Africa to Carthage. From there he went to Spain and then north to Britain.
- There is also a Church tradition which says that he, along with the apostle Jude, were thought to have preached together in Syria and Mesopotamia traveling as far as Persia. They are also believed to have been martyred there (Simon being sawn into and Jude being martyred with a halberd.)
- Another strong Church tradition says that Simon was crucified by the Romans in Caistor, Lincolnshire, Britain and subsequently buried there on May 10, circa 61 AD.

Judas Son of James

- Jude the Apostle. ... Jude, also known as Judas Thaddaeus, was one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus. He is generally identified with Thaddeus, and is also variously called Jude of James, Jude Thaddaeus, Judas Thaddaeus or Lebbaeus.
- The apostle Jude was believed to be from the Jewish tribe of Judah. And after the ascension of Jesus, Jude was one of the first apostles to leave Jerusalem for a foreign country. In fact, it is believed that Jude was one of the first apostles to witness directly to a foreign king, a Gentile.
- Jude is believed to have evangelized the area of Armenia associated with the city of Edessa, in company perhaps of the apostle Bartholomew, and for a brief time, with the apostle Thomas. One can, also, believe that Jude spent his years of evangelization in Syria and northern Persia. It is likely that he was martyred there and buried in Kara Kalisa near the Caspian Sea, about 40 miles from Tabriz, in modern day Iran.

Judas Iscariot

- Judas Iscariot should be stated "Judas of Kerioth." Kerioth was a small town a few miles south of Hebron. He was the only one of the Twelve Apostles who was not a Galilean, but a Judean. His father's name was Simon.
- Perhaps the most significant thing that can be said of Judas Iscariot, was, that, in feeling sorrow for his crime of betrayal, he did not seek to atone for his sin to the One (Jesus) whom he had wronged, but, rather, went to his accomplices in crime (the priests) and there sought to set himself aright. Because those whom he had served in his selfishness failed him at the end (the priests), he went out and hanged himself.
- The apostle Matthias assumed Judas' apostolic position after Judas' suicide.

Matthias

- Matthias was chosen as an apostle to take the place of Judas of Kerioth after his betrayal. It is believed that Matthias was one of the "Seventy" disciples sent out by Jesus (Luke 10:1), however, this cannot be proven.
- He, along with the apostles Jude (Thaddaeus), Bartholomew, Simon the Zealot and Andrew are credited by Armenian tradition as the apostles who evangelized Armenia (great peril befell him in the cities of Colchis, Sebastopol and elsewhere.)

The information above is compiled from the book *The Search for the Twelve Apostles* by William Steuart McBirnie Ph.D, Copyright 1973