12 APOSTOLIC MEN

This document contains the teacher notes for four Sunday school lessons on the topic of the twelve apostles. There is a complementary document containing student handouts to be distributed to listeners to aid in retention while teaching this material (also found at OurSundaySchool.com).

I claim no infallibility relative to the material presented here. It is, as many have said before, one beggar showing other beggars where to find bread.

These teachings are provided free in the spirit of Matthew 10:8b.

As errors are found, please let me know so I can correct. The theology expressed here should not be construed as representing the theology of Stuart Heights Baptist Church (especially when I am wrong or when I am being an idiot).

The formatting is as follows:

- **bold green text are quotes from commentators** (several dozen different commentaries are used throughout)
- **bold red text is the Scripture** (NKJV is used unless otherwise noted. Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.)
- **bold blue text are Bible references**
- **bold purple text are questions to consider asking while teaching this material**
- **highlighted, bold, and underlined text in the teacher notes are answers to blanks in the student handouts**
- plain black text are the teachers’ comments

The audio recordings of all four of the teachings themselves are available via our class podcast (Our Sunday School). Many thanks to David Barber for his faithfulness in this area.

I hope these resources assist in a better understanding of the twelve apostles, their callings, their characters, and their commission.

Grace and peace,

Jim Fleming
Hixson, Tennessee
August 2014
12 APOSTOLIC MEN
The Apostles’ Callings

SCHEDULE

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KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES
Knowledge objectives help me as the teacher to go in to a study with clearly defined set of objectives.

1. To be able to list the 12 apostles
2. To understand how they were chosen
3. To see the types of people God chooses
4. To better understand their personalities
5. To see how time with Jesus changed them
6. To recognize their symbols in everyday life

WHO ARE THEY?
Can anyone name all 12 apostles? There are four apostolic lists in Scripture (and concentric circles).

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HOW DID THEY GET THERE?
Now that we know who it is we are talking about, let us talk about the disciples’ backstories. This next section is largely from Rob Bell’s Nooma video, Dust. Jesus is a Jewish rabbi with Jewish disciples living in a Jewish first century world. To understand Him is to understand the context.

The Jewish educational system
We live in a day and age where we love questions. We love to ask questions and have quick answers. Things were very similar in Jesus’ day because of the rabbis. In Jesus’ day, the rabbis were the most revered men in the community. They educated the young of Israel. Their textbook was the Old Testament. The way in which they trained new rabbis was special. It was an honor to be asked to follow a rabbi. Religious parents prayed for their boys to be rabbis and for their girls to marry rabbis.

In New Testament times, there were three levels of Jewish education:

1. BET SAFAR (HOUSE OF THE BOOK)
   Age: 5/6-10/12
   Memorize: Law (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)
   Learn: Read, write, recite, and love God’s Word and a working knowledge of the Torah
   At the end of this educational level, most kids went to learn a trade—fishing, carpentry, etc.

2. BET TALMUD (HOUSE OF STUDY)
   Age: 10/12-14/15
   Memorize: Prophets and Writings (Joshua—Malachi)
   Learn: The art of questions and answers
   John Crosby: The rabbi would ask, “What is 2 plus 2?” Today we would spout off the answer of four, but back then, a student might answer with, “Rabbi, rabbi, what is the square root of 16?” . . . You would not just give the answer. You would lead him into another question because questions are what keep the dialog going, what would make the argument worthwhile. How you really learn is when you talk back and forth. That is what Bet Talmud is all about. Jesus learned this so well. Of the 41 questions asked of Jesus in the New Testament, 35 times Jesus answers the question with another question because Jews were taught that it was in the going back and forth that God gives all of the truth.
3. BET MIDRASH (HOUSE OF LEARNING)
Age: 14/15-30

Learn: Rabbi’s yoke, application of oral & written law (being like the rabbi—a disciple)

A rabbi would not accept everyone that came to him asking to be a disciple. There was an interview process. For instance, the rabbi might ask, “Give me the four references to Deuteronomy in Habakkuk in order.” In addition, as if that were not enough, the rabbi would form his question based around a piece of scripture, so he would quote, for instance, the first three verses of the passage. However, the actual question the rabbi was asking was about the fourth verse. Now, because the boy had memorized the Old Testament, his mind continued through the next verses and was able to understand that the rabbi was really referring to verse four with his question. The boy would then form his answer around another piece of scripture and quote a few verses, stopping just shy of the one he was referring to, or starting shortly after it. The rabbi would then have to figure out what the boy was referring to and judge how well he had answered his question.

If you were not good enough, the rabbi would say, “Obviously, you know Torah, but you don’t have what it takes to be just like me. Go, make babies, pray that they become rabbis and ply your trade.”

If you were good enough (thinking that the rabbi could be a rabbi), the rabbi would say, “Come, take my yoke upon you and become my disciple” (and at that time, the boy would leave everything, and devote his entire life to being just like the rabbi).

Because you followed your rabbi everywhere, a saying developed: “May you be covered in the dust of your rabbi.”

How did each respond to the call?

1. PETER, ANDREW, JAMES, AND JOHN
Matthew 4:18-22

18 And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. [What were they? Fishermen. Why were they fishermen? They were not the best] 19 Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” [Jesus goes to the ‘not good enough’ and the ‘not educated enough’ and decides to use them—and He is still doing it today.] 20 They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

21 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. He called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. [Was Zebedee mad? No, he was thrilled]
2. PHILIP AND BARTHOLOMEW
John 1:43-51

43 The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, “Follow Me.” [Philip’s calling is simple—he just responds. I think the simplicity of the calling is the significant thing about it.] 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael [Bartholomew] and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

46 And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” [Talk about your hometown having a bad reputation! Nazareth was lacking in culture, they were typically rude people and they interacted with Gentiles—three things that were not going to win them over to other Jews. Bartholomew was a ‘speak my mind’ type of person.] Philip said to him, “Come and see.” [Notice there is no debate, argument or anger—just an invitation to come and see.]

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit [fraud or hypocrisy]!”

48 Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.* ['Under the fig tree’ was a phrase that Rabbis would use to describe meditation on the Scriptures because they provided great shade. An interesting thought is that Jesus is watching your devotions.]

49 Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi [Teacher], You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” [You can almost hear him thinking aloud as he puts the pieces of this puzzle together. Philip mistakenly called Him the son of Joseph, but Bartholomew gets it right and calls Him the Son of God.]

50 Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the [‘the’ not ‘a’] fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” 51 And He said to him, “Most assuredly, [literally, ‘Amen, amen’] I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.” [Perhaps this was the passage (Genesis 28:12) that Bartholomew was meditating on under the fig tree]

3. MATTHEW
Matthew 9:9 details the calling of Matthew

9 As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew [the author of the Matthew, also known as Levi in the Mark & Luke accounts] sitting at the tax office [the toll booth—the place where the Roman taxes on the Jews were collected. The Jews considered Jewish tax collectors to be traitors and extortionists. They were so hated that Jewish tax collectors were no longer able to serve
as a judge or a witness in court and were excommunicated from the synagogue. There is archaeological evidence to support the idea that fish taken from the Sea of Galilee were taxed, so this could have made for some difficult beginning relationships to Andrew, Peter, James and John. And He [Jesus] said to him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed Him.

4. Thomas, James, Simon, Judas, and Judas Iscariot
Not detailed in the Scriptures

**APPLY (SO WHAT IS THE POINT?)**
1. Order matters
2. The rabbi chooses (He comes to the ‘not-good-enoughs,’ the B-team, and the excommunicated)
3. Discipleship is doing (not just knowing)

**PERSONALIZE (NOW WHAT DO I DO?)**
1. Understand my place
2. Say, “Yes”
3. Get dusty

**RESOURCES**
The Gospels

12 Angry Men

*The Twelve Apostles* (to the tune of “Jesus loves me”)

Jesus called them one by one,
Peter, Andrew, James and John,
Next, came Philip, Thomas too,
Matthew and Bartholomew.

Yes, Jesus called them,
Yes, Jesus called them,
Yes, Jesus called them,
He called them one by one.

James the one they called the less,
Simon, also Thaddaeus,
Twelfth apostle Judas made,
Jesus was by him betrayed.

Yes, Jesus called them,
Yes, Jesus called them,
Yes, Jesus called them,
He called them one by one.
12 APOSTOLIC MEN

The Apostles’ Characters

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HOMEWORK CHECK

Can you name all 12 apostles?

Matthew 10:2-4  
Mark 3:16-19  
Luke 6:14-16  
Acts 1:13

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WHAT WERE THEY LIKE?
WHAT WERE THEY KNOWN FOR?
WHAT THEOLOGY DO WE LEARN FROM THEM?

There was great diversity amongst the apostles—in their personalities, their backgrounds, and in their questions—and through their questions, we learn a great deal about Jesus and theology.

First Third (Inner Circle)

**PETER (SIMON, SIMON PETER, PETER)**
Brother of Andrew and a fisherman: Matthew 4:18: And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.

Married: Matthew 8:14: Now when Jesus had come into Peter’s house, He saw his wife’s mother lying sick with a fever.

Given the keys of the kingdom of heaven: Matthew 16:13-19: 13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”

14 So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

17 Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Impulsive: John 18:10: Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus.

**Theology**
Matthew 16:16: Jesus is the Christ.
JAMES (SON OF ZEBEDEE) & JOHN (SON OF ZEBEDEE)

Brothers and fishermen: Matthew 4:21: Going on from there, He [Jesus] saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them,

Rebuked: Luke 9:51-56: 51 Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, 52 and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. 53 But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. 54 And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?

55 But He turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not now what manner of spirit you are of. 56 For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.” And they went to another village.

Named the “Sons of Thunder” by Jesus: Mark 3:17: James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, “Sons of Thunder”

Note: the apostle John is not John the Baptist, but he did write the Gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Revelation (nor is he John Mark (Barnabas’ nephew)—the man who wrote the Gospel of Mark, nor is he John the father of Peter and Andrew, nor is he the John mentioned in Acts 4:3)

Note: the apostle James is not the author of James (who was Jesus’ half-brother)

Theology

Luke 9:51-56: Jesus came to save

Mark 10:35-45: The greatest is the servant

35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, “Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.”

36 And He said to them, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

37 They said to Him, “Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.”

38 But Jesus said to them, “You do not now what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

39 They said to Him, “We are able.”
So Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized: 40 but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared.”

41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. 42 But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. 44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

**ANDREW**

Brother of Peter and a fisherman: Matthew 4:18: And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.

A disciple of John the Baptist: John 1:35-40: 35 Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. 36 And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!”

37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, “What do you seek?”

They said to Him, “Rabbi” (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), “where are You staying?”

39 He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.

**Theology**

John 1:40-42a: 40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus.

John 6:1-9: 1 After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. 2 Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. 3 And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

4 Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. 5 Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” 6 But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.
7 Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.”

8 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, 9 “There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?” [Andrew paid attention to people—perhaps because he was a little brother too]

John 12:20-22: 20 Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. 21 Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”

22 Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

Bring people to Jesus

Second Third (next week)
Philip
Thomas, Didymus, Judas Thomas
Bartholomew, Nathanael
Matthew, Levi

Third Third (next week)
James (son of Alphaeus)
Simon, Simon the Zealot
Thaddaeus, Judas, Lebbaeus
Judas Iscariot

APPLY (SO WHAT IS THE POINT?)
1. God’s followers are different
2. Questions get answered
3. Everyone has a role

PERSONALIZE (NOW WHAT DO I DO?)
1. Appreciate the diversity
2. Ask away
3. Be content
12 APOSTOLIC MEN
The Apostles’ Characters

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KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

Knowledge objectives help me as the teacher to go in to a study with clearly defined set of objectives

1. To be able to list the 12 apostles
2. To understand how they were chosen
3. To see the types of people God chooses
4. To **better** understand their personalities
5. To see how time with Jesus changed them
6. To recognize their symbols in everyday life

WHAT WERE THEY LIKE?
WHAT WERE THEY KNOWN FOR?
WHAT THEOLOGY DO WE LEARN FROM THEM?

There was great diversity amongst the apostles—in their personalities, their backgrounds, and in their questions—and through their questions, we learn a great deal about Jesus and theology.

First Third (Inner Circle) (Peter, James, John, Andrew)

Second Third

PHILIP
From Bethsaida (the same city as Andrew and Peter): John 1:44-46: 44 **Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael [Bartholomew] and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”**

46 And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”
Practical/Analytical: John 6:1-7: 1 After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. 2 Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. 3 And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

4 Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. 5 Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” 6 But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

7 Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.” [Philip was practical. So often, the practical approach keeps us from doing what we should. We calculate too much and do too little. Also, Philip did not answer Jesus’ question. Jesus asked where and Philip answered how much. Jesus was pointing Philip to Jesus.]

Theology
John 12:20-26: 20 Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. 21 Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”

22 Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

23 But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. 24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. 25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

The Father honors those that serve Jesus

John 14:1-11: 1 “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know.”

5 Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”

6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

7 “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.”

8 Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” [#facepalm]
9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Jesus

**THOMAS, DIDYMUS, JUDAS THOMAS**

**Loyal.** John 11: 1-16: 1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. 3 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

4 When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. 7 Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

8 The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?"

9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10 But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." 11 These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."

12 Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well." 13 However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

14 Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

16 Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." [Thomas thought that it was time for his rabbi to die, so it must have been time for him to die—Thomas was loyal. Church tradition says he is called the Twin due to his resemblance to Jesus.]

**Theology**

**John 14:5-6:** Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life

Next week we will look at the events after the crucifixion, so we will get to 'doubting Thomas' then.
BARTHOLOMEW, NATHANAEAL

Bartholomew is his Greek name while Nathanael is the Hebrew version. Some writers and versions prefer Hebrew names and some Greek.

John 1:43-51: 43 The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, “Follow Me.” 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael [Bartholomew] and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

46 And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” [Nazareth was lacking in culture, they were typically rude people and they interacted with Gentiles—three things that were not going to win them over to other Jews. Bartholomew was a ‘speak my mind’ type of person.] Philip said to him, “Come and see.”

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit [fraud or hypocrisy—Bartholomew was a, ‘what you see is what you get,’ kind of guy. There are Bartholomews in almost every church. You can count on them to give you honest feedback.]”

48 Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” ['Under the fig tree’ was a phrase that rabbis would use to describe meditation on the Scriptures because they provided great shade]

49 Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi [Teacher], You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

50 Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” 51 And He said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

Theology

None

MATTHEW, LEVI

A tax collector: Matthew 9:9: 9 As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew [the author of the Matthew, also known as Levi in Mark and Luke] sitting at the tax office. And He [Jesus] said to him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed Him.

Review: The Jews considered Jewish tax collectors to be traitors and extortionists. Jewish tax collectors were excommunicated from the synagogue. There is archaeological evidence to support the idea that fish taken from the Sea of Galilee were taxed, so this could have made for some difficult beginning relationships to Andrew, Peter, James and John.
Rich: Luke 5:27-32: 27 After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." 28 So he left all, rose up, and followed Him.

29 Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. 30 And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

31 Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

**Theology**

**Luke 5:32**: Jesus came for sinners

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**Third Third**

**JAMES (SON OF ALPHAEUS)**

While there are multiple James’ in the Bible, it appears that this James is only present in the lists of the apostles. Have you ever sat on the bench and watched someone else play or get the limelight?

**Theology**

None

**SIMON, SIMON THE ZEALOT, SIMON THE CANANITE**

It appears that this Simon is only present in the lists of the apostles.

**Was a Zealot**: Luke 6:15: Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot. [Zealots were extreme Pharisees who rejected paying taxes to the Romans (How would Simon and Matthew have gotten along?). Zealots practiced terrorism against the Romans. Their philosophy was that the end justifies the means. They used violence, robbery and even assassination to accomplish their goal of setting their nation free. God does not want us to follow this philosophy.]

**Theology**

None

**THADDAEUS, JUDAS, LEBBAEUS**

There is only one instance where Judas is mentioned (other than the lists): John 14:19-24: 19 “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. 20 At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. 21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”
23 Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. 24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.

**Theology**
*John 14:23-24*: Jesus lovers are obedient

**JUDAS ISCARIOT**
Betrayed Jesus: *Matthew 10:4*: Simon the Cananite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

Entered by Satan: *Luke 22:3*: Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve.

**Tightwad**: *John 12:1-8*: 1 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. 2 There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. 3 Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

4 But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, who would betray Him, said, 5 "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" 6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

7 But Jesus said, “Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. 8 For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always.”

**Treasurer**: *John 13:29*: For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, “Buy those things we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor.

**Theology**
*John 12:8*: The poor will always be with us (and so will apostates)

**APPLY** (SO WHAT IS THE POINT?)
1. Jesus was intentional about the diversity
2. Questions are critical
3. Roles are not fair

**PERSONALIZE** (NOW WHAT DO I DO?)
1. Appreciate the diversity
2. Ask away
3. Be content
12 APOSTOLIC MEN

The Apostles' Commission

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5. To see how time with Jesus changed them
6. To recognize their symbols in everyday life

WHERE DID THEY GO NEXT?

Other than John, they all scattered at Jesus’ crucifixion. But all (except Iscariot) recovered (we think).

HOW ARE THEY REMEMBERED?

The Bible does not record what happened to all of the apostles; however, there are other references to their activities. Some are rather fanciful, while some are more trustworthy.

Apostles’ General Importance

1. Their ministry as witnesses for the resurrection: Jesus commissioned them to testify concerning Him in Acts 1:8: But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses [specific word for legal witness] to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

2. Their ministry as teachers: Matthew 28:18-20: 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.
Peter


The first part of Acts is pretty much about Peter.

Acts 1: the one who determines that Judas must be replaced among the Twelve

Acts 2: becomes the first spokesperson of the church on Pentecost

Acts 3: with John heals the lame man and preaches another sermon

Acts 4: defies the Sanhedrin

Acts 5: deals with the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira.

Acts 8: handles Simon the magician (Simon wanted to purchase the Holy Spirit)

Acts 9: heals Aeneas and raises Dorcas from the dead.

Acts 10-11: the first one to preach the gospel to the Gentiles

Acts 12: he is imprisoned

Thereafter the only mention of Peter in Acts is at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15:7-11.

Peter went on to write 1 Peter and 2 Peter to encourage believers to face persecution with hope and to face falsehood with truth.

According to the traditions of the early church, he was crucified upside down by Nero about 65 AD. He supposedly objected to being crucified in the same manner in which Jesus had been crucified. The Romans obliged.

Peter's symbol is keys since in Matthew 16:19 Jesus told him, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven [idea is not that Peter will admit people to heaven, but that Peter opened the door of the kingdom to both the Jews (Acts 2:38-39) and the Gentiles (Acts 10:34-44)], and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." [The power for binding and loosing is something that the Jewish rabbis of that day used. They bound or loosed an individual in the application of a particular point of the law.]
A SIDE NOTE ON APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

Matthew 16:18: And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter [σὺ εἶ Πέτρος—a masculine word meaning a piece of rock], and upon this rock [ἐπὶ ταύτης τής πέτρας—a feminine word meaning rock] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The pronoun ταύτης and the noun πέτρα are both feminine. It is impossible for ταύτης and πέτρα to refer to a masculine noun, πέτρος. Therefore, Jesus was not referring to Peter as the foundation of the church—He was referring to Himself.

If Christ made Peter supreme, there would have been no argument about who was the greatest apostle as happened in Luke 22:24-25. Jesus could have ended the dispute by saying, “Now all of you should know by now that I have already decided that. Stop arguing among yourselves! Don’t you remember what I declared that Peter is the greatest?” Therefore, if apostolic succession is true and if Peter is not the greatest, and if a successor to Peter is necessary, successors to all the other apostles are necessary. However, when the Apostle James was executed (Acts 12:2), the early Christians did not meet to select someone else to take James' place.

(Many thanks to Richard Goble for helping me work through the apostolic succession)

James (son of Zebedee)

The account of his death is in Acts 12:1-2: Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

Remember from last week that James was one-half of the ‘Sons of Thunder.’ In-your-face James had spoken out once too often, once too loudly and Herod wanted him shut up for good. On a side note, Herod was killed by an angel in Acts 12:23 (he died from intestinal worms—Josephus says it took Herod 5 days to die).

James was the first of the twelve to be martyred and the only one of the Apostles whose death after Jesus’ ascension is mentioned in the New Testament.

In religious art, he is always a young man, since he died early.

James’ symbol are shells—symbolic of pilgrimage (pilgrims wore the shells to the shrine at Santiago da Compostella in Spain)
John

In Galatians 2:9, Paul describes Peter, James and John as those who “seemed [had the reputation] to be pillars.” They were famous in the early church and were pillars.

John died sometime at the end of the first century and as far as we know, John was the only apostle not martyred.

History confirms John’s disciples were Polycarp, Papias, and Ignatius. Because they were prolific, we have much more accurate information on the latter years of John than for the other apostles. These men tell us that long after he was unable to preach a full sermon, he would be carried to his pulpit to say, “Little children, love one another.”

Even though John was not a martyr, he did suffer persecution for His Savior:

- He was arrested in Acts 4 and again in Acts 5 (and beaten this time)
- John was exiled to the island of Patmos and wrote Revelation there

Interestingly enough, John was the last apostle to die while his older brother James was the first to die. This should remind us that God has a different plan for each believer.

In art, John is the apostle leaning on Jesus and usually appears to be the youngest in a group setting. When depicted alone, he is often the oldest since he outlived all of the other apostles.

Lastly, his symbol is typically a cup with a snake. StJamesBR.org: John went to live at Ephesus where he was persecuted by the Emperor Domitian. The Emperor was jealous of John’s appeal and twice tried to kill him. On one occasion, he ordered John to drink a cup of poisoned wine. When John took up the cup, the poison left the cup in the form of a snake. Sometimes an eagle is used as well.

Andrew

Tradition tells us that Andrew traveled and preached in Greece. Andrew was martyred, being crucified on an X-shaped cross. This cross is known as “St. Andrew’s Cross” and is his symbol (also the flag of Scotland). It is said that he preached from that cross for the entire two days that it took him to die.

Also, in art, Andrew typically has rather wild hair—as a throwback that he once was John the Baptist’s disciple.
Philip

Outside of Scripture, there is some confusion about Philip. This is the result of there being two Philip’s in the Bible—the other being mentioned in Acts. The second-century traditions seem to mix the two men up. He reportedly suffered crucifixion at Heliopolis, in Phrygia after being flogged and imprisoned.

Philip’s symbol is a basket and/or bread (to remind us of his reply to Jesus’ question in John 6:7 just prior to Jesus feeding the 5,000—“Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that each one may have a little”).

Thomas

John 20:24-29: 24 Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord."

So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"

27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

A few weeks/months/years later, Thomas walked more than 3,000 miles and took the gospel to India. One tradition says that death came via a spear or lance that was stabbed through his body while he was kneeling in prayer. Thomas legends are numerous in India. Thomas’ symbol shows a spear and a carpenter’s square. The carpenter’s square refers to Thomas building a church in India with his own hands, as well as appealing to the logical/rational mind.
Bartholomew

There is an early account of church history that Origen’s teacher visited India in the second century and found a copy of Matthew’s gospel. He was told that Bartholomew had been to India before him and had left it.

Bartholomew died in Armenia. Some say Bartholomew was beheaded and others say he was skinned alive.

In Michelangelo’s “Last Judgment” he is pictured as flayed and holding his own skin. Due to this account of his death, the symbol for Bartholomew is a skinning knife or a series of them.

Matthew

Consensus is that Matthew died a martyr’s death in Ethiopia after preaching there. He was killed with a halberd (a long spear with an ax head on the end).

The symbol for Matthew is three moneybags to remind us that he had been a tax collector. Sometimes the symbol for Matthew is an ax or a book (his Gospel).

Generally, when a Gospel author is shown, he is holding a book. Apostles typically held scrolls.

James (son of Alphaeus)

An item about James that has been passed down through tradition is the report that James may have traveled to Spain to preach to the Jews in bondage there. It is said that James traveled back to Jerusalem where he was tossed off the top of the temple by Pharisees, hit on the head with a pole, stoned to death, and then cut up with a saw (his symbol) for preaching to the Jews.
**Simon**

Simon the Zealot was a missionary who preached in Mesopotamia. He is believed to have been crucified in what is today Britain.

Simon’s symbol is a fish resting on top of a Bible (meant to remind us of him being a fisher of men).

**Judas**

The Church in Armenia claims that both Judas and Bartholomew preached to their country. Armenia became the first country to claim Christianity as its national religion in 301 AD. However, their government was at first opposed to Christianity and killed them both.

Judas’ symbol is a ship (representing his many missionary journeys) and a sometimes a club (legends say he was martyred from being beaten with a heavy club).

**Judas Iscariot**

Killed himself (Matthew 27:3-10). In art, he never has a halo.

**APPLY (SO WHAT IS THE POINT?)**

1. It’s not about how you start, it’s about how you end
2. Sometimes we are remembered for the small things

**PERSONALIZE (NOW WHAT DO I DO?)**

1. Finish well
2. Pay attention to the small things

Jesus trained, prepared, equipped, authorized, and empowered the apostles—and then the rest was up to them—and now the rest is up to us.

**RESOURCES**