

The Apostles of Jesus Christ



Bible Class Series
BY RAY REYNOLDS

The Apostles of Jesus Christ

Simon/Peter (son of Jonah)
Andrew (son of Jonah)
James (son of Zebedee)
John (son of Zebedee)
Philip
Nathanael/Bartholomew
Levi/Matthew
Thomas (the twin)
James (the less, son of Alphaeus)
Simon (the Zealot)
Thaddaeus/Judas (son of James)
Judas Iscariot
Matthias
Saul/Paul

**These men of God were the first men sent to preach the good news.
They were given the special title of "Apostle" in the Holy Scriptures.
It would be wise for us to study their stories.**

THE APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST

The Original Twelve

Text : **Luke 6:12-16**

Introduction :

1. I have always wanted to do a study on the apostles of Jesus Christ.
 - a. Only those who were officially designated as apostles will be studied over the course of the next few weeks.
 - b. Their names are given in **Matthew 10:2-4** (Christ's charge to them in the rest of the chapter), **Mark 3:13-19**, and **Luke 12:16**.
2. For our own benefit I have chosen one text in which we will consider these apostles, in the order they appear (**Luke 6:12-16**).
3. We will be studying about their life, ministry, and death.
4. In this lesson we will consider the original twelve apostles. . . .

Discussion :

An apostle is a special messenger of Jesus Christ; a person to whom Jesus delegated authority for certain tasks. The word "apostle" is used of those twelve disciples whom Jesus sent out, two by two, during His ministry in Galilee to expand His own ministry of preaching and healing. It was on that occasion, evidently, that they were first called "apostles" (**Mark 3:14; 6:30**). These same disciples, with the exception of Judas Iscariot, were recommissioned by Jesus after His resurrection to be His witnesses throughout the world (**Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8**). After Jesus' ASCENSION, the apostles brought their number to twelve by choosing Matthias (**Acts 1:23-26**).

The word "apostle" is sometimes used in the New Testament in a general sense of "messenger." For instance, when delegates of Christian communities were charged with conveying those churches' contributions to a charitable fund, Paul described them as "*messengers [apostles] of the churches*" (**II Corinthians 8:23**). Jesus also used the word this way when He quoted the proverb, "*A servant is not greater than his master, nor he who is sent [literally, "an apostle"] greater than he who sent him*" (**John 13:16**). Jesus Himself is called "*the Apostle . . . of our confession*" (**Hebrews 3:1**), a reference to His function as God's special Messenger to the world. The word "apostle" has a wider meaning in the letters of the apostle Paul. It includes people who, like himself, were not included in the Twelve, but who saw the risen Christ and were specially commissioned by Him. Paul's claim to be an apostle was questioned by others. He based his apostleship, however on the direct call of the exalted Lord who appeared to him on the Damascus Road and on the Lord's blessing of his ministry in winning converts and establishing churches (**I Corinthians 15:10**).

Apparently, Paul also counted James, the Lord's brother, as an apostle (**Galatians 1:19**). This James was not one of the Twelve; in fact, he was not a believer in Jesus before the Crucifixion (**John 7:5**). It was the resurrected Lord who "*appeared to James*" (**I Corinthians 15:7**) and presumably commissioned him for his ministry. When Paul says Jesus was seen not only by James but also by

“*all the apostles*” (**I Corinthians 15:7**), he seems to be describing a wider group than “*the Twelve*” to whom Jesus appeared earlier (**I Corinthians 15:5**).

In **I Corinthians 12:28** and **Ephesians 4:11**, apostles are listed along with prophets and other saints as part of the foundation of the household of God. In this strictly New Testament sense, apostles are confined to the first generation of Christians. At an early stage in the church’s history it was agreed that apostles to the Jews and Gentiles should be divided into separate camps. Paul and Barnabas were to concentrate on the evangelization of Gentiles; Peter, John, and James (the Lord’s brother) were to continue evangelizing Jews (**Galatians 2:7-9**).

As pioneers in the work of making converts and planting churches, apostles were exposed to special dangers. When persecution erupted, they were the primary targets for attack (**I Corinthians 4:9-13**). Paul, in particular, welcomed the suffering he endured as an apostle because it was his way of participating in the suffering of Christ (**Romans 8:17; II Corinthians 1:5-7**). The authority committed to the apostles by Christ was unique. It could not be transmitted to others. The apostles could install elders or other leaders and teachers in the churches, and they could authorize them to assume special responsibilities; but apostolic authority could not be transferred. Their authority has not come to us through their successors; it has come through their writings, which are contained in the New Testament.

Their office: (1) The original qualification of an apostle, as stated by St. Peter on the occasion of electing a successor to the traitor Judas (**Acts 1:21-22**), was that he should have been personally acquainted with the whole ministerial course of our Lord, from his baptism by John till the day when he was taken up into heaven. (2) They were chosen by Christ himself. (3) They had the power of working miracles. (4) They were inspired. (**John 16:13**). (5) Their work seems to have been preeminently that of founding the churches and upholding them by supernatural power specially bestowed for that purpose. (6) The office ceased, as a matter of course, with its first holders; all continuation of it, from the very conditions of its existence (**I Corinthians 9:1**), being impossible.

Early history and training: The apostles were from the lower ranks of life, simple and uneducated; some of them were related to Jesus according to the flesh; some had previously been disciples of John the Baptist. Our Lord chose them early in his public career. They seem to have been all on an equality, both during and after the ministry of Christ on earth. Early in our Lord’s ministry he sent them out two and two to preach repentance and to perform miracles in his name. (**Matthew 10; Luke 9**). They accompanied him in his journeys, saw his wonderful works, heard his discourses addressed to the people, and made inquiries of him on religious matters. They recognized him as the Christ of God (**Matthew 16:16; Luke 9:20**), and ascribed to him supernatural power (**Luke 9:54**); but in the recognition of the spiritual teaching and mission of Christ they made very slow progress, held back as they were by weakness of apprehension and by national prejudices. Even at the removal of our Lord from the earth they were yet weak in their knowledge (**Luke 24:21; John 16:12**), though he had for so long been carefully preparing and instructing them. On the feast of Pentecost, ten days after our Lord’s ascension, the Holy Spirit came down on the assembled church (**Acts 2**); and from that time the apostles became altogether different men, giving witness

with power of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus, as he had declared they should (**Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8, 22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 13:31**).

Later labors and history: First of all the mother-church at Jerusalem grew up under their hands (**Acts 3-7**), and their superior dignity and power were universally acknowledged by the rulers and the people (**Acts 5:12ff**). Their first mission out of Jerusalem was to Samaria (**Acts 8:5-25**), where the Lord himself had, during his ministry, sown the seed of the gospel. Here ends the first period of the apostles' agency, during which its center is Jerusalem and the prominent figure is that of St. Peter. The center of the second period of the apostolic agency is Antioch, where a church soon was built up, consisting of Jews and Gentiles; and the central figure of this and of the subsequent period is St. Paul. The third apostolic period is marked by the almost entire disappearance of the twelve from the sacred narrative, and the exclusive agency of St. Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles. Of the missionary work of the rest of the twelve we know absolutely nothing from the sacred narrative.

Before we close this lesson, let's get acquainted with the original twelve apostles and how they were appointed. *"Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles: Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor."* (**Luke 6:12-16**).

As we go through this series lessons we will study about these original twelve apostles. We will also study about Matthias, who was chosen to succeed Judas, and Paul, who was chosen by the Lord in a special calling. Then, as we close this lesson we will consider a few other Christian martyrs that were a blessing to the early church.

Conclusion :

1. I hope you will enjoy this series of lessons and I pray that it will spark your interest so that you will pursue a study of other great Bible characters.
2. We can learn a lot about the life, work, and responsibilities of an apostle.
3. In our next lesson we will study about the apostle Simon Peter.

THE APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST

Simon Peter

Text : **Luke 6:12-16**

Introduction :

1. The word “apostle” means one sent forth.
 - a. In the New Testament it was originally the official name of those twelve disciples whom Jesus chose to send forth first to preach the gospel and to be with him during the course of his ministry on earth.
 - b. The word also appears to have been used in a nonofficial sense to designate a much wider circle of Christian messengers and teachers (**II Corinthians 8:23, Philippians 2:25**).
 - c. Only those who were officially designated as apostles will be studied over the course of the next few weeks.
 - d. Their names are given in **Matthew 10:2-4** (Christ’s charge to them in the rest of the chapter), **Mark 3:13-19**, and **Luke 12:16**.
2. For our own benefit I have chosen one text in which we will consider these apostles, in the order they appear (**Luke 6:12-16**).
3. We will be studying about their life, ministry, and death (Read text)
4. In this lesson will be studying about the apostle Simon Peter. . . .

Discussion :

Peter was originally called Simon (Simeon, which means “hearing”), and it was a very common Jewish name in the New Testament. He was the son of Jonah (**Matthew 16:17**). His mother is nowhere named in Scripture. He had a younger brother called Andrew, who first brought him to Jesus (**John 1:40-42**).

His native town was Bethsaida, on the western coast of the Sea of Galilee, to which also Philip belonged. Here he was brought up by the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and was trained to the occupation of a fisher. His father had probably died while he was still young, and he and his brother were brought up under the care of Zebedee and his wife Salome (**Matthew 27:56, Mark 15:40, 16:1**). There the four youths, Simon, Andrew, James, and John, that spent their boyhood and early manhood in constant fellowship. Simon and his brother doubtless enjoyed all the advantages of a religious training, and were early instructed in an acquaintance with the Scriptures and with the great prophecies regarding the coming of the Messiah. They did not probably enjoy, however, any special training in the study of the law under any of the rabbis. When Peter appeared before the Sanhedrin, he looked like an “unlearned man” (**Acts 4:13**).

Simon Peter was a Galilean, and he was that out and out. The Galileans had a marked character of their own. They had a reputation for an independence and energy which often ran out into turbulence. They were at the same time of a franker and more transparent disposition than their

brethren in the south. In all these respects, in bluntness, impetuosity, heartiness, and simplicity, Simon was a genuine Galilean.

Simon Peter spoke a peculiar dialect. Like other Galileans he had difficulty with the guttural sounds and some others, and their pronunciation was reckoned harsh in Judea. The Galilean accent stuck to Simon all through his career. It betrayed him as a follower of Christ when he stood within the judgment-hall (**Mark 14:70**). It betrayed his own nationality and that of those conjoined with him on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:7**).

It would seem that Simon was married before he became an apostle. His wife's mother is referred to (**Matthew 8:14, Mark 1:30, Luke 4:38**). He was, in all probability accompanied by his wife on his missionary journeys (**I Corinthians 9:5, I Peter 5:13**). He appears to have been settled at Capernaum when Christ entered on his public ministry, and may have reached beyond the age of thirty. His house was large enough to give a home to his brother Andrew, his wife's mother, and also to Christ, who seems to have lived with him (**Mark 1:29, 36, 2:1**), as well as to his own family. It was apparently two stories high (**Mark 2:4**).

At Bethabara (**John 1:28**, "Bethany"), beyond Jordan, John the Baptist had borne testimony concerning Jesus as the "Lamb of God" (**John 1:29-36**). Andrew and John hearing it, followed Jesus, and abode with him where he was. They were convinced, by his gracious words and by the authority with which he spoke, that he was the Messiah (**Luke 4:22, Matthew 7:29**) and Andrew went forth and found Simon and brought him to Jesus (**John 1:41**). Jesus at once recognized Simon, and declared that hereafter he would be called Cephas, an Aramaic name corresponding to the Greek "Petros," which means "a mass of rock detached from the living rock." The Aramaic name does not occur again, but the name Peter gradually displaces the old name Simon, though our Lord himself always uses the name Simon when addressing him (**Matthew 17:25, Mark 14:37, Luke 21:15-17, 22:31**).

We are not told what impression the first interview with Jesus produced on the mind of Simon. When we next meet him it is by the Sea of Galilee (**Matthew 4:18-22**). There the four (Simon and Andrew, James and John) had had an unsuccessful night's fishing. Jesus appeared suddenly, and entering into Simon's boat, bade him launch forth and let down the nets. He did so, and enclosed a great multitude of fishes. This was plainly a miracle wrought before Simon's eyes. The awe-stricken disciple cast himself at the feet of Jesus, crying, "*Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord*" (**Luke 5:8**). Jesus addressed him with the assuring words, "*Fear not,*" and announced to him his life's work. Simon responded at once to the call to become a disciple, and after this we find him in constant attendance on our Lord.

He is next called into the rank of the apostleship, and becomes a "*fisher of men*" (**Matthew 4:19**) in the stormy seas of the world of human life (**Matthew 10:24, Mark 3:13-19, Luke 6:13-16**) and takes a more and more prominent part in all the leading events of our Lord's life. It is he who utters that notable profession of faith at Capernaum (**John 6:66-69**) and again at Caesarea Philippi (**Matthew 16:13-20, Mark 8:27-30, Luke 9:18-20**). This profession at Caesarea was one of supreme importance, and our Lord in response used these memorable words: "*Thou art Peter, and*

upon this rock I will build my church.” “*From that time forth*” Jesus began to speak of his sufferings. For this Peter rebuked him. But our Lord in return rebuked Peter, speaking to him in sterner words than he ever used to any other of his disciples (**Matthew 16:21-23, Mark 8:31-33**).

At the close of his brief sojourn at Caesarea our Lord took Peter and James and John with him into “*an high mountain apart,*” and was transfigured before them. Peter on that occasion, under the impression the scene produced on his mind, exclaimed, “*Lord, it is good for us to be here: let us make three tabernacles*” (**Matthew 17:1-9**). On his return to Capernaum the collectors of the temple tax (a didrachma, half a sacred shekel), which every Israelite of twenty years old and upwards had to pay (**Exodus 30:15**) came to Peter and reminded him that Jesus had not paid it (**Matthew 17:24-27**). Our Lord instructed Peter to go and catch a fish in the lake and take from its mouth the exact amount needed for the tax, a stater, or two half-shekels. “*That take,*” said our Lord, “*and give unto them for me and thee.*”

As the end was drawing nigh, our Lord sent Peter and John (**Luke 22:7-13**) into the city to prepare a place where he should keep the feast with his disciples. There he was forewarned of the fearful sin into which he afterwards fell (**Luke 22:31-34**). He accompanied our Lord from the guest-chamber to the garden of Gethsemane (**Luke 22:39-46**) which he and the other two who had been witnesses of the transfiguration were permitted to enter with our Lord, while the rest were left without. Here he passed through a strange experience. Under a sudden impulse he cut off the ear of Malchus (**Luke 22:47-51**) one of the band that had come forth to take Jesus. Then follow the scenes of the judgment-hall (**Luke 22:54-61**) and his bitter grief (**Luke 22:62**).

He is found in John's company early on the morning of the resurrection. He boldly entered into the empty grave (**John 20:1-10**) and saw the “*linen clothes laid by themselves*” (**Luke 24:9-12**). To him, the first of the apostles, our risen Lord revealed himself, thus conferring on him a signal honor, and showing how fully he was restored to his favor (**Luke 24:34, I Corinthians 15:5**).

We next read of our Lord's singular interview with Peter on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, where he thrice asked him, “*Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?*” (**John 21:1-19**). After this scene at the lake we hear nothing of Peter till he again appears with the others at the ascension (**Acts 1:15-26**). It was he who proposed that the vacancy caused by the apostasy of Judas should be filled up.

He is prominent on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:14-40**). The events of that day completed the change in Peter himself which the painful discipline of his fall and all the lengthened process of previous training had been slowly making. He is now no more the unreliable, changeful, self-confident man, ever swaying between rash courage and weak timidity, but the steady, trusted guide and director of the fellowship of believers, the intrepid preacher of Christ in Jerusalem and abroad. And now that he is become Cephas indeed, we hear almost nothing of the name Simon (**Acts 10:5, 32 15:14**) and he is known to us finally as Peter.

After the miracle at the temple gate (**Acts 3:1**) persecution arose against the Christians, and Peter was cast into prison. He boldly defended himself and his companions at the bar of the council (**Acts 4:19-20**). A fresh outburst of violence against the Christians (**Acts 5:17-21**) led to the whole

body of the apostles being cast into prison; but during the night they were wonderfully delivered, and were found in the morning teaching in the temple. A second time Peter defended them before the council (**Acts 5:29-32**) who, “*when they had called the apostles and beaten them, let them go.*”

The time had come for Peter to leave Jerusalem. After laboring for some time in Samaria, he returned to Jerusalem, and reported to the church there the results of his work (**Acts 8:14-25**). Here he remained for a period, during which he met Paul for the first time since his conversion (**Acts 9:26-30, Galatians 1:18**). Leaving Jerusalem again, he went forth on a missionary journey to Lydda and Joppa (**Acts 9:32-43**).

He is next called on to open the door of the Christian church to the Gentiles by the admission of Cornelius of Caesarea (**Acts 10**). After remaining for some time at Caesarea, he returned to Jerusalem (**Acts 11:1-18**) where he defended his conduct with reference to the Gentiles. Next we hear of his being cast into prison by Herod Agrippa (**Acts 12:1-19**) but in the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison gates, and he went forth and found refuge in the house of Mary.

He took part in the deliberations of the council in Jerusalem (**Acts 15:1-31, Galatians 2:1-10**) regarding the relation of the Gentiles to the church. This subject had awakened new interest at Antioch, and for its settlement was referred to the council of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. Here Paul and Peter met again. We have no further mention of Peter in the Acts of the Apostles. He seems to have gone down to Antioch after the council at Jerusalem, and there to have been guilty of dissembling, for which he was severely reprimanded by Paul (**Galatians 2:11-16**) who “*rebuked him to his face.*” After this he appears to have carried the gospel to the east, and to have labored for a while at Babylon, on the Euphrates (**I Peter 5:13**). Some say that there is no satisfactory evidence that he was ever in Rome, and as for where or when he died it is not certain. Most believe that he probably died between 64-67 AD. Catholics hold to the tradition that he died in Rome on the same spot where the Vatican now sits.

“Among many other saints, the blessed apostle Peter was condemned to death, and crucified, as some do write, at Rome; albeit some others, and not without cause, do doubt thereof Hegesippus saith that Nero sought matter against Peter to put him to death; which, I when the people perceived, they entreated Peter with much ado that he would fly the city. Peter, through their importunity at length persuaded, prepared himself to avoid. But, coming to the gate, he saw the Lord Christ come to meet him, to whom he, worshipping, said, ‘Lord, whither dost Thou go?’ To whom He answered and said, ‘I am come again to be crucified.’ By this, Peter, perceiving his suffering to be understood, returned into the city. Jerome saith that he was crucified, his head being down and his feet upward, himself so requiring, because he was (he said) unworthy to be crucified after the same form and manner as the Lord was.” – Fox’s Book of Martyrs

Conclusion :

1. I hope you enjoy this series and desire to study other great Bible characters.
2. We can learn a lot about the life, work, and responsibilities of an apostle.
3. In our next lesson we will study about the apostle Andrew.

THE APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST

Andrew

Text : **Luke 6:12-16**

Introduction :

1. The word “apostle” means one sent forth.
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 - b. The word also appears to have been used in a nonofficial sense to designate a much wider circle of Christian messengers and teachers (**II Corinthians 8:23, Philippians 2:25**).
 - c. Only those who were officially designated as apostles will be studied over the course of the next few weeks.
 - d. Their names are given in **Matthew 10:2-4** (Christ’s charge to them in the rest of the chapter), **Mark 3:13-19**, and **Luke 12:16**.
2. For our own benefit I have chosen one text in which we will consider these apostles, in the order they appear (**Luke 6:12-16**).
3. We will be studying about their life, ministry, and death.
4. In this lesson will be studying about the apostle Andrew. . . .

Discussion :

Andrew is the brother of Simon Peter and one of Jesus’ first disciples. His name means “manly.” Both Andrew and Peter were fishermen (**Matthew 4:18, Mark 1:16-18**) from Bethsaida (**John 1:44**), on the northwest coast of the Sea of Galilee. They also had a house at Capernaum in this vicinity (**Mark 1:29**).

According to the Gospel of John, Andrew and an unnamed friend were among the followers of John the Baptist (**John 1:35-40**). When John the Baptist identified Jesus as the Lamb of God, both he and Andrew followed Jesus (**John 1:41**). Andrew then brought his brother Simon to meet the Messiah (**John 1:43-51**). This is an action that continues to be a model for all who bring others to Christ.

At the feeding of the 5,000, Andrew called Jesus’ attention to the boy with five barley loaves and two fish (**John 6:5-9**). Later Philip and Andrew decided to bring to Jesus the request of certain Greeks for an audience with Him (**John 12:20-22**). Andrew is mentioned a final time in the gospels, when he asked Jesus a question concerning last things in the company of Peter, James, and John (**Mark 13:3-4**).

All lists of the disciples name Andrew among the first four (**Matthew 10:2-4, Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:14-16, Acts 1:13**). According to tradition, Andrew was martyred at Patrae in Achaia by crucifixion on an X-shaped cross. According to Eusebius, Andrew's field of labor was Scythia, the region north of the Black Sea. For this reason he became the patron saint of Russia. He is also considered the patron saint of Scotland.

“Andrew was the brother of Peter. He preached the gospel to many Asiatic nations; but on his arrival at Edessa he was taken and crucified on a cross, the two ends of which were fixed transversely in the ground. Hence the derivation of the term, St. Andrew's Cross.”- Fox's Book of Martyrs

Conclusion :

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2. We can learn a lot about the life, work, and responsibilities of an apostle.
3. In our next lesson we will study about the apostle James.

THE APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST

James

Text : **Luke 6:12-16**

Introduction :

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2. For our own benefit I have chosen one text in which we will consider these apostles, in the order they appear (**Luke 6:12-16**).
3. We will be studying about their life, ministry, and death.
4. In this lesson will be studying about the apostle James. . . .

Discussion :

There are five men that are referred to by James in the New Testament. James, the son of Zebedee, was one of Jesus’ twelve apostles. James’ father was a fisherman; his mother, Salome, often cared for Jesus’ daily needs (**Matthew 27:56, Mark 15:40–41**). In lists of the twelve apostles, James and his brother John always form a group of four with two other brothers, Peter and Andrew. The four were fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. Their call to follow Jesus is the first recorded event after the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry (**Matthew 4:18–22, Mark 1:16–20**).

His brother John was also called at the same time and they were among the first four apostles of Jesus (Peter, Andrew, James, John).

James and John must have contributed a spirited and headstrong element to Jesus’ band of followers, because Jesus nicknamed them “*Sons of Thunder*” (**Mark 3:17**). On one occasion (**Luke 9:51–56**), when a Samaritan village refused to accept Jesus, the two asked Jesus to call down fire in revenge, as Elijah had done (**II Kings 1:10, 12**). On another occasion, they earned the anger of their fellow disciples by asking if they could sit on Jesus’ right and left hands in glory (**Matthew 20:20–28, Mark 10:35–45**).

James was one of three disciples (Peter, James, and John) whom Jesus took along privately on three special occasions. The three accompanied Him when He healed the daughter of Jairus (**Mark 5:37, Luke 8:51**), they witnessed His transfiguration (**Matthew 17:1, Mark 9:2, Luke 9:28**); and they were also with Him in His agony in Gethsemane (**Matthew 26:37, Mark 14:33**).

James is never mentioned apart from his brother John in the New Testament, even at his death (**Acts 12:2**). When the brothers are mentioned, James is always mentioned first, probably because he was the older. After the Resurrection, however, John became the more prominent, probably because of his association with Peter (**Acts 3:1, 8:14**). James was killed by Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great, sometime between 42–44 AD. He was the first of the twelve apostles to be put to death and the only one whose martyrdom is mentioned in the New Testament (**Acts 12:2**).

“The next martyr we meet with, according to St. Luke, in the History of the Apostles’ Acts, was James the son of Zebedee, the elder brother of John, and a relative of our Lord, for his mother Salome was cousin-german to the Virgin Mary. It was not until ten years after the death .of Stephen that the second martyrdom took place; for no sooner had Herod been appointed 'governor of Judea, than, with a view to ingratiate himself with them, he raised a sharp persecution against the Christians, and determined to make an effectual blow, by striking at their, leaders. The account given us by an eminent primitive writer, Clemens Alexandrinus, ought not to be overlooked; that, as James was led to the place of martyrdom, his accuser was brought to 'repent of his conduct by the apostle's extraordinary courage and undauntedness, and fell down at his feet to request his pardon, professing himself a Christian, and resolving that James should not receive the crown of martyrdom alone. Hence they were both beheaded at the same time. Thus did the first apostolic martyr cheerfully and resolutely receive that cup, which he had told our Savior he was ready to drink. Timon and Parmenas suffered martyrdom about the same time; the one at Philippi, and the other in Macedonia. These events took place A.D. 54.” – Fox’s Book of Martyrs

Conclusion :

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3. In our next lesson we will study about the apostle John.

THE APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST

John

Text : **Luke 6:12-16**

Introduction :

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 - b. The word also appears to have been used in a nonofficial sense to designate a much wider circle of Christian messengers and teachers (**II Corinthians 8:23, Philippians 2:25**).
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4. In this lesson will be studying about the apostle John.

Discussion :

John was one of Jesus’ disciples, the son of Zebedee, and the brother of James. Before his call by Jesus, John was a fisherman, along with his father and brother (**Matthew 4:18–22, Mark 1:16–20**). His mother was probably Salome (**Matthew 27:56, Mark 15:40**), who may have been a sister of Mary (**John 19:25**), the mother of Jesus. Although it is not certain that Salome and Mary were sisters, if it were so it would make James and John cousins of Jesus. This would help explain Salome’s forward request of Jesus on behalf of her sons (**Matthew 20:20–28**). The Zebedee family apparently lived in Capernaum on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee (**Mark 1:21**). The family must have been prosperous, because the father owned a boat and hired servants (**Mark 1:19–20**). Salome the mother provided for Jesus out of her substance (**Mark 15:40–41, Luke 8:3**). John must have been the younger of the two brothers, for he is always mentioned second to James in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Jesus called the brothers, James and John – the sons of Zebedee, after His baptism by John the Baptist (**Mark 1:19–20**). This happened immediately after the call of two other brothers, Simon Peter and Andrew (**Mark 1:16–18**), with whom they may have been in partnership (**Luke 5:10**). Three of the four (Peter, James, and John) eventually became Jesus’ most intimate disciples. They were present when Jesus healed the daughter of Jairus (**Mark 5:37, Luke 8:51**). They witnessed His transfiguration (**Matthew 17:1–2, Mark 9:2, Luke 9:28–29**), as well as His agony in Gethsemane (**Matthew 26:37, Mark 14:33**). Along with Peter, Jesus also entrusted John with preparations for the Passover supper (**Luke 22:8**).

James and John must have contributed a headstrong element to Jesus' band of followers, because Jesus nicknamed them "*Sons of Thunder*" (**Mark 3:17**). On one occasion (**Luke 9:51–56**), when a Samaritan village refused to accept Jesus, the two offered to call down fire in revenge, as the prophet Elijah had once done (**II Kings 1:10, 12**). On another occasion, they earned the anger of their fellow disciples by asking if they could sit on Jesus' right and left hands in glory (**Mark 10:35–45**).

Following the ascension of Jesus, John continued in a prominent position of leadership among the disciples (**Acts 1:13**). He was present when Peter healed the lame man in the Temple. Together with Peter he bore witness before the Sanhedrin to his faith in Jesus Christ. The boldness of their testimony brought the hostility of the Sanhedrin (**Acts 3–4**). When the apostles in Jerusalem received word of the evangelization of Samaria, they sent Peter and John to investigate whether the conversions were genuine (**Acts 8:14–25**). This was a curious thing to do. The Samaritans had long been suspect in the eyes of the Jews (**John 4:9**). John himself had once favored the destruction of a Samaritan village (**Luke 9:51–56**). That he was present on this mission suggests he had experienced a remarkable change.

In these episodes Peter appears as the leader and spokesman for the pair, but John's presence on such errands indicates his esteem by the growing circle of disciples. After the execution of his brother James by Herod Agrippa I, between 42–44 AD (**Acts 12:1–2**), John is not heard of again in Acts. Paul's testimony to John as one of the "*pillars*," along with Peter and James (the Lord's brother, **Galatians 2:9**), however, reveals that John continued to hold a position of respect and leadership in the early church.

As might be expected of one of Jesus' three closest disciples, John became the subject of an active and varied church tradition. Tertullian (about 160–220 AD) said that John ended up in Rome, where he was "plunged, unhurt, into boiling oil." A much later tradition believed that both James and John were martyred. The dominant tradition, however, was that the apostle John moved to Ephesus in Asia Minor, and that from there he was banished to the Island of Patmos (during Domitian's reign, 81–96 AD). Tradition also held that he returned later to Ephesus, where he died some time after Trajan became emperor in 98 AD.

Stories that John reclaimed a juvenile delinquent, raised a dead man, and opposed the Gnostic heretic Cerinthus survive from this era in his life. It was also the general opinion of the time that from Ephesus John composed the five writings that bear his name in the New Testament (Gospel of John; I, II, and III John; and Revelation). Only the Revelation identifies its author as John (**Revelation 1:1, 9**). The second and third epistles of John identify the author as "*the elder*" (**II John 1, III John 1**). Although I John and the Gospel of John do not name their author, he can be none other than "*the elder*," because style and content in these writings are unmistakably related. It may be, as tradition asserts, that the apostle John wrote all five documents. It appears more likely, however, that four of the five writings were actually penned not by John the apostle but by John the elder, a disciple and friend of John's who relied directly on the apostle's testimony as he wrote the documents. This would explain those passages in the gospel that speak about the beloved

disciple (who presumably is John the apostle; **John 19:35, 21:24**), as well as the reference to “*the elder*” in II and III John. The Revelation, however, was probably written directly by the apostle John himself.

“The ‘beloved disciple,’ was brother to James the Great. The churches of Smyrna, Pergamos, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and Thyatira, were founded by him. From Ephesus he was ordered to be sent to Rome, where it is affirmed he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil. He escaped by miracle, without injury. Domitian afterwards banished him to the Isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. Nerva, the successor of Domitian, recalled him. He was the only apostle who escaped a violent death.” – Fox’s Book of Martyrs

Conclusion :

1. I hope you enjoy this series and desire to study other great Bible characters.
2. We can learn a lot about the life, work, and responsibilities of an apostle.
3. In our next lesson we will study about the apostle Philip.

THE APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST

Philip

Text : **Luke 6:12-16**

Introduction :

1. The word “apostle” means one sent forth.
 - a. In the New Testament it was originally the official name of those twelve disciples whom Jesus chose to send forth first to preach the gospel and to be with him during the course of his ministry on earth.
 - b. The word also appears to have been used in a nonofficial sense to designate a much wider circle of Christian messengers and teachers (**II Corinthians 8:23, Philippians 2:25**).
 - c. Only those who were officially designated as apostles will be studied over the course of the next few weeks.
 - d. Their names are given in **Matthew 10:2-4** (Christ’s charge to them in the rest of the chapter), **Mark 3:13-19**, and **Luke 12:16**.
2. For our own benefit I have chosen one text in which we will consider these apostles, in the order they appear (**Luke 6:12-16**).
3. We will be studying about their life, ministry, and death.
4. In this lesson will be studying about the apostle Philip.

Discussion :

There were four men that were called Philip in the New Testament. One of them was Philip numbered with the twelve apostles of Christ (**Matthew 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:14**) and a native of Bethsaida in Galilee (**John 1:44, 12:21**). According to the Gospel of John, Philip met Jesus beyond the Jordan River during John the Baptist’s ministry. Jesus called Philip to become His disciple. Philip responded and brought to Jesus another disciple, named Nathanael (**John 1:43–51**) or Bartholomew (**Mark 3:18**). Philip is usually mentioned with Nathanael.

Before Jesus fed the five thousand, He tested Philip by asking him how so many people could possibly be fed. Instead of responding in faith, Philip began to calculate the amount of food it would take to feed them and the cost (**John 6:5–7**).

When certain Greeks, who had come to Jerusalem to worship at the Feast of Passover, said to Philip, “*Sir, we wish to see Jesus*” (**John 12:21**), Philip seemed unsure of what he should do. He first told Andrew, and then they told Jesus of the request. Philip was one of the apostles who was present in the Upper Room following the resurrection of Jesus (**Acts 1:13**). He should not be confused with the evangelist Philip, who was one of the seven appointed in **Acts 6**.

“Was born at Bethsaida, in Galilee and was first called by the name of "disciple." He labored diligently in Upper Asia, and suffered martyrdom at Heliopolis, in Phrygia. He was scourged, thrown into prison, and afterwards crucified, A.D. 54.” – Fox’s Book of Martyrs

Conclusion :

1. I hope you enjoy this series and desire to study other great Bible characters.
2. We can learn a lot about the life, work, and responsibilities of an apostle.
3. In our next lesson we will study about the apostle Bartholomew.

THE APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST

Bartholomew

Text : **Luke 6:12-16**

Introduction :

1. The word “apostle” means one sent forth.
 - a. In the New Testament it was originally the official name of those twelve disciples whom Jesus chose to send forth first to preach the gospel and to be with him during the course of his ministry on earth.
 - b. The word also appears to have been used in a nonofficial sense to designate a much wider circle of Christian messengers and teachers (**II Corinthians 8:23, Philippians 2:25**).
 - c. Only those who were officially designated as apostles will be studied over the course of the next few weeks.
 - d. Their names are given in **Matthew 10:2-4** (Christ’s charge to them in the rest of the chapter), **Mark 3:13-19**, and **Luke 12:16**.
2. For our own benefit I have chosen one text in which we will consider these apostles, in the order they appear (**Luke 6:12-16**).
3. We will be studying about their life, ministry, and death.
4. In this lesson will be studying about the apostle Bartholomew.

Discussion :

Bartholomew (the son of Tolmai) was one of the twelve apostles of Jesus, according to the four lists given in the New Testament (**Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13**). Many scholars equate Bartholomew with Nathanael (**John 1:45-49**), but no proof of this identification exists, except by inference. According to church tradition, Bartholomew was a missionary to various countries, such as Armenia and India. He is reported to have preached the gospel along with Philip and Thomas. According to another tradition, he was crucified upside down after being flayed alive.

“Preached in several countries, and having translated the Gospel of Matthew into the language of India, he propagated it in that country. He was at length cruelly beaten and then crucified by the impatient idolaters.” – Fox’s Book of Martyrs

Conclusion :

1. I hope you enjoy this series and desire to study other great Bible characters.
2. We can learn a lot about the life, work, and responsibilities of an apostle.
3. In our next lesson we will study about the apostle Matthew.

THE APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST

Matthew

Text : **Luke 6:12-16**

Introduction :

1. The word “apostle” means one sent forth.
 - a. In the New Testament it was originally the official name of those twelve disciples whom Jesus chose to send forth first to preach the gospel and to be with him during the course of his ministry on earth.
 - b. The word also appears to have been used in a nonofficial sense to designate a much wider circle of Christian messengers and teachers (**II Corinthians 8:23, Philippians 2:25**).
 - c. Only those who were officially designated as apostles will be studied over the course of the next few weeks.
 - d. Their names are given in **Matthew 10:2-4** (Christ’s charge to them in the rest of the chapter), **Mark 3:13-19**, and **Luke 12:16**.
2. For our own benefit I have chosen one text in which we will consider these apostles, in the order they appear (**Luke 6:12-16**).
3. We will be studying about their life, ministry, and death.
4. In this lesson will be studying about the apostle Matthew. . . .

Discussion :

The name Matthew means gift of the Lord. Matthew was a tax collector who became one of the twelve apostles of Jesus (**Matthew 9:9**). Matthew’s name appears seventh in two lists of apostles (**Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15**), and eighth in two others (**Matthew 10:3; Acts 1:13**).

In Hebrew, Matthew’s name means “gift of the Lord,” but we know from his trade that he delighted in the gifts of others as well. He was a tax collector (**Matthew 9:9-11**) who worked in or around Capernaum under the authority of Herod Antipas. In Jesus’ day, land and poll taxes were collected directly by Roman officials, but taxes on transported goods were contracted out to local collectors. Matthew was such a person, or else he was in the service of one. These middlemen paid an agreed-upon sum in advance to the Roman officials for the right to collect taxes in an area. Their profit came from the excess they could squeeze from the people.

The Jewish people hated these tax collectors not only for their corruption, but also because they worked for and with the despised Romans. Tax collectors were ranked with murderers and robbers, and a Jew was permitted to lie to them if necessary. The attitude found in the gospels is similar. Tax collectors are lumped together with harlots (**Matthew 21:31**), Gentiles (**Matthew 18:17**), and, most often, sinners (**Matthew 9:10**). They were as offensive to Jews for their economic and social practices as lepers were for their uncleanness; both were excluded from the people of God.

It is probable that the Matthew mentioned in **Matthew 9:9-13** is identical with the Levi of **Mark 2:13-17** and **Luke 5:27-32**; the stories obviously refer to the same person and event. The only problem in the identification is that Mark mentions Matthew rather than Levi in his list of apostles (**Mark 3:18**), thus leading one to assume two different persons. It is possible, however, that the same person was known by two names (compare “Simon” and “Peter”), or, less likely, that Levi and James the son of Alphaeus are the same person, since Mark calls Alphaeus the father of both (**Mark 2:14; 3:18**). Or it could be possible that Matthew and James the son of Alphaeus could have been brothers. Following his call by Jesus, Matthew is not mentioned again in the New Testament.

“Whose occupation was that of a toll-gatherer, was born at Nazareth. He wrote his gospel in Hebrew, which was afterwards translated into Greek by James the Less. The scene of his labors was Parthia, and Ethiopia, in which latter country he suffered martyrdom, being slain with a halberd (*combination of a spear and a battle axe – long handle with an axe on the end – not always used for a beheading*) in the city of Nadabah, A.D. 60.” – Fox’s Book of Martyrs

Conclusion :

1. I hope you enjoy this series and desire to study other great Bible characters.
2. We can learn a lot about the life, work, and responsibilities of an apostle.
3. In our next lesson we will study about the apostle Thomas.

THE APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST

Thomas

Text : **Luke 6:12-16**

Introduction :

1. The word “apostle” means one sent forth.
 - a. In the New Testament it was originally the official name of those twelve disciples whom Jesus chose to send forth first to preach the gospel and to be with him during the course of his ministry on earth.
 - b. The word also appears to have been used in a nonofficial sense to designate a much wider circle of Christian messengers and teachers (**II Corinthians 8:23, Philippians 2:25**).
 - c. Only those who were officially designated as apostles will be studied over the course of the next few weeks.
 - d. Their names are given in **Matthew 10:2-4** (Christ’s charge to them in the rest of the chapter), **Mark 3:13-19**, and **Luke 12:16**.
2. For our own benefit I have chosen one text in which we will consider these apostles, in the order they appear (**Luke 6:12-16**).
3. We will be studying about their life, ministry, and death.
4. In this lesson will be studying about the apostle Thomas. . . .

Discussion :

The name Thomas means the twin. Thomas was one of the twelve apostles of Jesus; also called Didymus, the Greek word for “twin” (**Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15**). Thomas is probably best known for his inability to believe that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead. For that inability to believe, he forever earned the name “doubting Thomas.”

Thomas was not present when Jesus first appeared to His disciples after His resurrection. Upon hearing of the appearance, Thomas said, “*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*” (**John 20:25**). Eight days later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples, including Thomas. When Jesus invited him to touch the nail prints and put his hand into His side, Thomas’ response was, “*My Lord and my God!*” (**John 20:28**). Of that incident the great church father Augustine remarked, “He doubted so that we might believe.”

Thomas appears three other times in the Gospel of John. (Except for the listing of the disciples, Thomas does not appear in the other three gospels.) When Jesus made known his intention to go into Judea, Thomas urged his fellow disciples, “*Let us also go, that we may die with Him*” (**John 11:16**). Knowing that His earthly life would soon end, Jesus said He was going to prepare a place for His followers and that they knew the way. Thomas asked, “*Lord, we do not know where You are going and how can we know the way?*” (**John 14:5**). To that Jesus gave his well-known answer: “*I am the way, the truth, and the life*” (**John 14:6**).

After the resurrection, Thomas was on the Sea of Galilee with six other disciples when Jesus signaled to them from the shore and told them where to cast their net (**John 21:2**). Thomas was also with the other disciples in the Jerusalem upper room after the Ascension of Jesus. According to tradition, Thomas is said to have spread the gospel in Parthia and Persia, where he died. Later tradition places Thomas in India, where he was martyred. The Mar Thoma church in India traces its origins to Thomas.

“Called Didymus, preached the Gospel in Parthia and India, where exciting the rage of the pagan priests, he was martyred by being thrust through with a spear.” – Fox’s Book of Martyrs

Conclusion :

1. I hope you enjoy this series and desire to study other great Bible characters.
2. We can learn a lot about the life, work, and responsibilities of an apostle.
3. In our next lesson we will study about the apostle James, the Son of Alphaeus.

THE APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST

James, the Son of Alphaeus

Text : **Luke 6:12-16**

Introduction :

1. The word “apostle” means one sent forth.
 - a. In the New Testament it was originally the official name of those twelve disciples whom Jesus chose to send forth first to preach the gospel and to be with him during the course of his ministry on earth.
 - b. The word also appears to have been used in a nonofficial sense to designate a much wider circle of Christian messengers and teachers (**II Corinthians 8:23, Philippians 2:25**).
 - c. Only those who were officially designated as apostles will be studied over the course of the next few weeks.
 - d. Their names are given in **Matthew 10:2-4** (Christ’s charge to them in the rest of the chapter), **Mark 3:13-19**, and **Luke 12:16**.
2. For our own benefit I have chosen one text in which we will consider these apostles, in the order they appear (**Luke 6:12-16**).
3. We will be studying about their life, ministry, and death.
4. In this lesson will be studying about the apostle James, the son of Alphaeus. . . .

Discussion :

James, the son of Alphaeus was one of the twelve apostles. He is one of five, believed to be different, men mentioned in the New Testament by this name. In each list of the apostles James is mentioned in ninth position (**Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13**).

James the son of Alphaeus, one of the twelve apostles is first mentioned in **Matthew 10:3**. Whether or not this James is to be identified with James the Less, the son of Alphaeus, the brother of our Lord, is one of the most difficult questions in the gospel history. By comparing **Matthew 27:56** and **Mark 15:40** with **John 19:25**, we find that the Virgin Mary had a sister named, like herself, Mary, who was the wife of Clopas or Alphaeus (varieties of the same name), and who had two sons, James the Less and Joses. By referring to **Matthew 13:55** and **Mark 6:3** we find that a James and a Joses, with two other brethren called Jude and Simon, and at least three sisters, were living with the Virgin Mary at Nazareth. By referring to **Luke 6:16** and **Acts 1:13** we find that there were two brethren named James and Jude among the apostles. It would certainly be natural to think that we had here but one family of four brothers and three or more sisters, the children of Clopas and Mary, nephews and nieces of the Virgin Mary. There are difficulties, however, in the way of this conclusion into which we cannot here enter; but in reply to the objection that the four brethren in **Matthew 13:55** are described as the brothers of Jesus, not as his cousins, it must be recollected that the word translated here “brethren,” may also signify cousins.

James was called the Less because he was either younger or smaller in stature than James the son of Zebedee. He was the son of Alphaeus or Clopas and brother of our Lord; was called to the apostolate, together with his younger brother Jude, in the spring of the year 28. At some time in the forty days that intervened between the resurrection and the ascension the Lord appeared to him (**I Corinthians 15:7**). Ten years after we find James on a level with Peter, and with him deciding on the admission of Paul into fellowship with the Church at Jerusalem; and from henceforth we always find him equal, or in his own department superior, to the very chiefest apostles, Peter, John, and Paul (**Acts 9:27; Galatians 1:18-19**). This pre-eminence is evident throughout the after history of the apostles, whether we read it in the Acts, in the epistles, or in ecclesiastical writers (**Acts 12:17; 15:13, 19; 21:18; Galatians 2:9**). According to tradition, James was thrown down from the temple by the scribes and Pharisees; he was then stoned, and his brains dashed out with a fuller's club.

“He was elected to the oversight of the churches of Jerusalem; and was the author of the Epistle ascribed to James in the sacred canon. At the age of ninety-four he was beat and stoned by the Jews; and finally had his brains dashed out with a fuller's club.” – Fox's Book of Martyrs

Conclusion :

1. I hope you enjoy this series and desire to study other great Bible characters.
2. We can learn a lot about the life, work, and responsibilities of an apostle.
3. In our next lesson we will study about the apostle Simon, the Zealot.

THE APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST

Simon, the Zealot

Text : **Luke 6:12-16**

Introduction :

1. The word “apostle” means one sent forth.
 - a. In the New Testament it was originally the official name of those twelve disciples whom Jesus chose to send forth first to preach the gospel and to be with him during the course of his ministry on earth.
 - b. The word also appears to have been used in a nonofficial sense to designate a much wider circle of Christian messengers and teachers (**II Corinthians 8:23, Philippians 2:25**).
 - c. Only those who were officially designated as apostles will be studied over the course of the next few weeks.
 - d. Their names are given in **Matthew 10:2-4** (Christ’s charge to them in the rest of the chapter), **Mark 3:13-19**, and **Luke 12:16**.
2. For our own benefit I have chosen one text in which we will consider these apostles, in the order they appear (**Luke 6:12-16**).
3. We will be studying about their life, ministry, and death.
4. In this lesson will be studying about the apostle Simon, the Zealot

Discussion :

The name Simon means God hears and is the abbreviated form of Simeon. This is the name of nine men in the New Testament. He is called the Simon the Zealot (or Canaanite) to distinguish him from Simon Peter. He was also called Simon the Canaanite, which is peculiar to Luke. It is the Greek equivalent for the Chaldee term (Canaanite) preserved by Matthew and Mark.

The name Simon the Zealot may also indicate he was a member of a fanatical Jewish sect, the Zealots (**Matthew 10:4; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13**). Members of this group were fanatical opponents of Roman rule in Palestine and were conspicuous for their fierce advocacy of the Mosaic ritual. As a Zealot, Simon would have hated any foreign domination or interference. Besides what is written in the texts already mentioned there is no record regarding him.

“Surnamed Zelotes, preached the Gospel in Mauritania, Africa, and even in Britain, in I which latter country he was crucified, A.D. 74.” – Fox’s Book of Martyrs

Conclusion :

1. I hope you enjoy this series and desire to study other great Bible characters.
2. We can learn a lot about the life, work, and responsibilities of an apostle.
3. In our next lesson we will study about the apostle Thaddaeus.

THE APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST

Thaddaeus

Text : **Luke 6:12-16**

Introduction :

1. The word “apostle” means one sent forth.
 - a. In the New Testament it was originally the official name of those twelve disciples whom Jesus chose to send forth first to preach the gospel and to be with him during the course of his ministry on earth.
 - b. The word also appears to have been used in a nonofficial sense to designate a much wider circle of Christian messengers and teachers (**II Corinthians 8:23, Philippians 2:25**).
 - c. Only those who were officially designated as apostles will be studied over the course of the next few weeks.
 - d. Their names are given in **Matthew 10:2-4** (Christ’s charge to them in the rest of the chapter), **Mark 3:13-19**, and **Luke 12:16**.
2. For our own benefit I have chosen one text in which we will consider these apostles, in the order they appear (**Luke 6:12-16**).
3. We will be studying about their life, ministry, and death.
4. In this lesson will be studying about the apostle Thaddaeus. . . .

Discussion :

Thaddaeus is one of the twelve apostles of Jesus. The name Thaddaeus means breast. He has many names in the New Testament Thaddeus (**Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18**), also called Lebbaeus (**Matthew 10:3**) and Judas the son of James (**Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13**), and in other translations of the latter two verses he is called Judas the brother of James, and he is also called Jude. He is carefully distinguished from Judas Iscariot (**John 14:22**). These different names all designate the same person.

Jude or Judas, is also the author of the epistle bearing his name. Nothing else is known about this most obscure of the apostles, but some scholars attribute the Epistle of Jude to him.

Called: Jude “The brother of James, was commonly called Thaddeus. He was crucified at Edessa, A.D. 72.” – Fox’s Book of Martyrs

Conclusion :

1. I hope you enjoy this series and desire to study other great Bible characters.
2. We can learn a lot about the life, work, and responsibilities of an apostle.
3. In our next lesson we will study about the apostle Judas.

THE APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST

Judas Iscariot

Text : **Luke 6:12-16**

Introduction :

1. The word “apostle” means one sent forth.
 - a. In the New Testament it was originally the official name of those twelve disciples whom Jesus chose to send forth first to preach the gospel and to be with him during the course of his ministry on earth.
 - b. The word also appears to have been used in a nonofficial sense to designate a much wider circle of Christian messengers and teachers (**II Corinthians 8:23, Philippians 2:25**).
 - c. Only those who were officially designated as apostles will be studied over the course of the next few weeks.
 - d. Their names are given in **Matthew 10:2-4** (Christ’s charge to them in the rest of the chapter), **Mark 3:13-19**, and **Luke 12:16**.
2. For our own benefit I have chosen one text in which we will consider these apostles, in the order they appear (**Luke 6:12-16**).
3. We will be studying about their life, ministry, and death.
4. In this lesson will be studying about the apostle Judas

Discussion :

Judas was the disciple who betrayed Jesus. Judas was the son of Simon (**John 6:71**), or of Simon Iscariot (NRSV). The term Iscariot, which is used to distinguish Judas from the other disciple named Judas (**Luke 6:16; John 14:22; Acts 1:13**), refers to his hometown of Kerioth, in southern Judah (**Joshua 15:25**). Thus, Judas was a Judean, the only one of the Twelve who was not from Galilee. The details of Judas’ life are sketchy. Because of his betrayal of Jesus, Judas, however, is even more of a mystery. It must be assumed that Jesus saw promise in Judas, or He would not have called him to be a disciple.

Judas’ name appears in three of the lists of the disciples (**Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16**), although it always appears last. His name is missing from the list of the 11 disciples in Acts 1:13; by that time Judas had already committed suicide. Judas must have been an important disciple, because he served as their treasurer (**John 12:6; 13:29**).

During the week of the Passover festival, Judas went to the chief priests and offered to betray Jesus for a reward (**Matthew 26:14-16; Mark 14:10-11**). At the Passover supper, Jesus announced that He would be betrayed and that He knew who His betrayer was—one who dipped his hand with him in the dish (**Mark 14:20**), the one to whom He would give the piece of bread used in eating (**John 13:26-27**). Jesus was saying that a friend, one who dipped out of the same dish as He, was His betrayer. These verses in John indicate that Judas probably was reclining beside Jesus, evidence that Judas was an important disciple.

Jesus said to Judas, “*What you do, do quickly*” (**John 13:27**). Judas left immediately after he ate (**John 13:30**). But it is believed that Judas was acting upon Jesus’ response. The first observance of the Lord’s Supper was probably celebrated afterward, without Judas (**Matthew 26:26-29**).

Judas carried out his betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane. By a prearranged sign, Judas singled out Jesus for the soldiers by kissing him. The gospels do not tell us why Judas was needed to point out Jesus, who had become a well-known figure. It is possible that Judas disclosed where Jesus would be that night, so that He could be arrested secretly without the knowledge of His many supporters (**Matthew 26:47-50**).

Matthew reports that, realizing what he had done, Judas attempted to return the money to the priests. When the priests refused to take it, Judas threw the money on the Temple floor, went out, and hanged himself. Unwilling to use “blood money” for the Temple, the priests bought a potter’s field, which became known as the “*Field of Blood*” (**Matthew 27:3-10**). This field is traditionally located where the Kidron, Tyropoeon, and Hinnom valleys come together.

It is difficult to understand why Judas betrayed Jesus. Since he had access to the disciples’ treasury, it seems unlikely that he did it for the money only. In fact, thirty pieces of silver is a relatively small amount. Some have suggested that Judas thought that his betrayal would force Jesus into asserting His true power and overthrowing the Romans. Others have suggested that Judas might have become convinced that Jesus was a false messiah, and that the true Messiah was yet to come, or that he was upset over Jesus’ apparent indifference to the law and His association with sinners and his violation of the Sabbath. Whatever the reason, Judas’ motive remains shrouded in mystery.

In **Acts 1:20** the apostles quoted **Psalm 109:8** as the basis for electing another person to fill the place vacated by Judas: “*Let another take his office.*” When the eleven remaining apostles cast lots for Judas’ replacement, “*the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles*” (**Acts 1:26**). We will study more about him next week.

Conclusion :

1. I hope you enjoy this series and desire to study other great Bible characters.
2. We can learn a lot about the life, work, and responsibilities of an apostle.
3. In our next lesson we will study about the apostle Matthias.

THE APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST

Matthias

Text : **Acts 1:15-26**

Introduction :

1. The word “apostle” means one sent forth.
 - a. In the New Testament it was originally the official name of those twelve disciples whom Jesus chose to send forth first to preach the gospel and to be with him during the course of his ministry on earth.
 - b. The word also appears to have been used in a nonofficial sense to designate a much wider circle of Christian messengers and teachers (**II Corinthians 8:23, Philippians 2:25**).
 - c. Only those who were officially designated as apostles will be studied over the course of the next few weeks.
 - d. Their names are given in **Matthew 10:2-4** (Christ’s charge to them in the rest of the chapter), **Mark 3:13-19**, and **Luke 12:16**.
2. For our own benefit I have chosen one text in which we will consider these apostles, in the order they appear (**Luke 6:12-16**).
3. We will be studying about their life, ministry, and death.
4. In this lesson will be studying about the apostle Matthias. . . .

Discussion :

The name Matthias means gift of the Lord. He was the disciple chosen to succeed Judas Iscariot as an apostle (**Acts 1:23, 26**). Matthias had been a follower of Jesus from the beginning of His ministry until the day of His ascension and had been a witness of His resurrection. In this way he fulfilled the requirements of apostleship (**Acts 1:21-22**). Probably he was one of the “seventy” (**Luke 10:1, 17**). The New Testament makes no further mention of him after his election. One tradition says that Matthias preached in Judea and was stoned to death by the Jews. Another tradition holds that he worked in Ethiopia and was martyred by crucifixion.

“Of whom less is known than of most of the other disciples, was elected to fill the vacant place of Judas. He was stoned at Jerusalem and then beheaded.” – Fox’s Book of Martyrs

Conclusion :

1. I hope you enjoy this series and desire to study other great Bible characters.
2. We can learn a lot about the life, work, and responsibilities of an apostle.
3. In our next lesson we will study about the apostle Paul.

THE APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST

Paul

Text : **Acts 9:1-22**

Introduction :

1. The word “apostle” means one sent forth.
 - a. In the New Testament it was originally the official name of those twelve disciples whom Jesus chose to send forth first to preach the gospel and to be with him during the course of his ministry on earth.
 - b. The word also appears to have been used in a nonofficial sense to designate a much wider circle of Christian messengers and teachers (**II Corinthians 8:23, Philippians 2:25**).
 - c. Only those who were officially designated as apostles will be studied over the course of the next few weeks.
 - d. Their names are given in **Matthew 10:2-4** (Christ’s charge to them in the rest of the chapter), **Mark 3:13-19**, and **Luke 12:16**.
2. For our own benefit I have chosen one text in which we will consider these apostles, in the order they appear (**Luke 6:12-16**).
3. We will be studying about their life, ministry, and death.
4. In this lesson will be studying about the apostle Paul. . . .

Discussion :

The Life of Paul. Paul was born at Tarsus, the chief city of Cilicia (southeast Asia Minor). He was a citizen of Tarsus, “*no mean city*,” as he called it (**Acts 21:39**). He was also born a Roman citizen (**Acts 22:28**), a privilege that worked to his advantage on several occasions during his apostolic ministry. Since Paul was born a Roman citizen, his father must have been a Roman citizen before him. “Paul” was part of his Roman name. In addition to his Roman name, he was given a Jewish name, “Saul,” perhaps in memory of Israel’s first king, a member of the tribe of Benjamin, to which Paul’s family belonged.

His Jewish heritage meant much more to Paul than Roman citizenship. Unlike many Jews who had been scattered throughout the world, he and his family did not become assimilated to the Gentile way of life that surrounded them. This is suggested when Paul describes himself as “a Hebrew of the Hebrews” (**Philippians 3:5**), and confirmed by Paul’s statement in **Acts 22:3** that, while he was born in Tarsus, he was brought up in Jerusalem “*at the feet of Gamaliel*,” the most illustrious rabbi of his day (**Acts 5:34**). Paul’s parents wanted their son to be well-grounded in the best traditions of Jewish orthodoxy.

Paul proved an apt pupil. He outstripped many of his fellow students in his enthusiasm for ancestral traditions and in his zeal for the Jewish law. This zeal found a ready outlet in his assault on the infant church of Jerusalem. The church presented a threat to all that Paul held most dear. Its worst offense was its proclamation of one who had suffered a death cursed by the Jewish law as

Lord and Messiah (**Deuteronomy 21:22–23**). The survival of Israel demanded that the followers of Jesus be wiped out.

The first martyr of the Christian church was Stephen, one of the most outspoken leaders of the new movement. Luke told how Paul publicly associated himself with Stephen's executioners and then embarked on a campaign designed to suppress the church. Paul himself related how he "*persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it*" (**Galatians 1:13**).

Paul's Conversion & Commission. At the height of Paul's campaign of repression, he was confronted on the road to Damascus by the risen Christ. In an instant his life was reoriented. The Jewish law was replaced as the central theme of Paul's life by Jesus Christ. He became the leading champion of the cause he had tried to overthrow.

The realization that Jesus, whom he had been persecuting, was alive and exalted as the Son of God exposed the weakness of the Jewish law. Paul's zeal for the law had made him an ardent persecutor. He now saw that his persecuting activity had been sinful; yet the law, instead of showing him the sinfulness of such a course, had really led him into sin.

The law had lost its validity. Paul learned that it was no longer by keeping the law that a person was justified in God's sight, but by faith in Christ. And if faith in Christ provided acceptance with God, then Gentiles might enjoy that acceptance as readily as Jews. This was one of the implications of the revelation of Jesus Christ that gripped Paul's mind. He was assured that he himself had received that revelation in order that he might proclaim Christ and His salvation to the Gentile world.

Paul began to carry out this commission not only in Damascus but also in the kingdom of the Nabatean Arabs, to the east and south. No details are given of his activity in "Arabia" (**Galatians 1:17**), but he did enough to attract the hostile attention of the authorities there, as the representative of the Nabatean king in Damascus tried to arrest him (**II Corinthians 11:32–33**).

After leaving Damascus, Paul paid a short visit to Jerusalem to make the acquaintance of Peter. During his two weeks' stay there, he also met James, the Lord's brother (**Galatians 1:18–19**). Paul could not stay in Jerusalem because the animosity of his former associates was too strong. He had to be taken down to Caesarea on the Mediterranean coast and put on a ship for Tarsus.

Paul spent the next ten years in and around Tarsus, actively engaged in the evangelizing of Gentiles. Very few details of those years have been preserved. At the end of that time Barnabas came to Tarsus from Antioch and invited Paul to join him in caring for a young church there. A spontaneous campaign of Gentile evangelization had recently occurred at Antioch, resulting in the formation of a vigorous church. Barnabas himself had been commissioned by the apostles in Jerusalem to lead the Gentile evangelization in the city of Antioch.

About a year after Paul joined Barnabas in Antioch, the two men visited Jerusalem and conferred with the three “pillars” of the church there—the apostles Peter and John, and James the Lord’s brother (**Galatians 2:1–10**). The result of this conference was an agreement that the Jerusalem leaders would concentrate on the evangelization of their fellow Jews, while Barnabas and Paul would continue to take the gospel to Gentiles.

The Jerusalem leaders reminded Barnabas and Paul, in conducting their Gentile mission, not to forget the material needs of the impoverished believers in Jerusalem. Barnabas and Paul (especially Paul) readily agreed to bear those needs in mind. This may have been the occasion when they carried a gift of money from the Christians in Antioch to Jerusalem for the relief of their fellow believers who were suffering hardship in a time of famine (**Acts 11:30**).

Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles. The way was now open for a wider Gentile mission. Barnabas and Paul were released by the church of Antioch to pursue a missionary campaign that took them to Barnabas’ native island of Cyprus and then into the highlands of central Asia Minor (modern Turkey), to the province of Galatia. There they preached the gospel and planted churches in the cities of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. The missionaries then returned to Antioch in Syria.

The great increase of Gentile converts caused alarm among many of the Jewish Christians in Judea. They feared that too many Gentiles would hurt the character of the church. Militant Jewish nationalists were already attacking them. A movement began that required Gentile converts to become circumcised and follow the Jewish law. The leaders of the Jerusalem church, with Paul and Barnabas in attendance, met in a.d. 48 to discuss the problem. It was finally decided that circumcision was not necessary, but that Gentile converts should conform to the Jewish code of laws in order to make fellowship between Jewish and Gentile Christians less strained (**Acts 15:1–29**).

After this meeting, Barnabas and Paul parted company. Paul chose Silas, a leading member of the Jerusalem church and a Roman citizen like himself, to be his new colleague. Together they visited the young churches of Galatia. At Lystra they were joined by Timothy, a young convert from Barnabas and Paul’s visit some two years before. Paul in particular recognized qualities in Timothy that would make him a valuable helper in his missionary service. From that time to the end of Paul’s life, Timothy was his most faithful attendant.

Paul and Silas probably planned to proceed west to Ephesus, but they felt the negative guidance of the Holy Spirit. They instead turned north and northwest, reaching the seaport of Troas. Here Paul was told in a vision to cross the north Aegean Sea and preach the gospel in Macedonia. This Paul and his companions did. By now their number had increased to four by the addition of Luke. The narrative reveals his presence at this point by using “we” instead of “they” (Acts 16:10).

Their first stop in Macedonia was the Roman colony of Philippi. Here, in spite of running into trouble with the magistrates and being imprisoned, Paul and his companions planted a strong church. They moved on to Thessalonica, the chief city of the province, and formed a church there, as well. But serious trouble broke out in Thessalonica. The missionaries were accused of rebelling against the Roman emperor by proclaiming Jesus as his rival. They were forced to leave the city quickly. Paul moved south to Berea, where he was favorably received by the local synagogue, but his opponents from Thessalonica followed him, making it necessary for him to move on once more. Although churches of Macedonia would later give Paul much joy and satisfaction, he felt dejected at this time from being forced to flee city after city.

Paul, alone now, moved south into the province of Achaia. After a short stay in Athens, he came “*in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling*” (**I Corinthians 2:3**) to Corinth, the seat of provincial administration. Corinth had a reputation as a wicked city in the Greco-Roman world and it did not seem likely that the gospel would make much headway there. Surprisingly, however, Paul stayed there for 18 months and made many converts. While he was there, a new Roman proconsul, Gallio, arrived to take up residence in Corinth. The beginning of his administration can be accurately dated as July 1, a.d. 51. Paul was prosecuted before Gallio on the charge of preaching an illegal religion, but Gallio dismissed the charge. This provided other Roman magistrates with a precedent that helped the progress of the gospel over the next ten years. The church of Corinth was large, lively, and talented but deficient in spiritual and moral stability. This deficiency caused Paul much anxiety over the next few years, as his letters to the Corinthians reveal.

After his stay in Corinth, Paul paid a brief visit to Jerusalem and Antioch and then traveled to Ephesus, where he settled for the next three years. Paul’s Ephesian ministry was perhaps the most active part of his apostolic career. A number of colleagues shared his activity and evangelized the city of Ephesus as well as the whole province of Asia (western Asia Minor).

Ten years earlier there had been no churches in the great provinces of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, or Achaia. Now Christianity had become so strong in them that Paul realized his work in that part of the world was finished. He began to think of a new area where he might repeat the same kind of missionary program. He wanted to evangelize territories where the gospel had never been heard before, having no desire to “*build on another man’s foundation*” (**Romans 15:20**). He decided to journey to Spain, and to set out as soon as he could. This journey would also give him a long-awaited opportunity to visit Rome on the way.

Before he could set out, however, an important task had to be completed. Paul had previously organized a relief fund among the Gentile churches to help poorer members of the Jerusalem church. Not only had he promised the leaders in Jerusalem to do such a thing, but he hoped it would strengthen the bond of fellowship among all the churches involved.

Before leaving, Paul arranged for a member of each of the contributing churches to carry that church's donation. Paul himself would go to Jerusalem with them, giving the Jerusalem Christians an opportunity to see some of their Gentile brethren face to face in addition to receiving their gifts. Some of Paul's hopes and misgivings about the trip are expressed in **Romans 15:25–32**. His misgivings were well-founded.

A few days after his arrival in Jerusalem, Paul was attacked by a mob in the area of the Temple. He was rescued by a detachment of Roman soldiers and kept in custody at the Roman governor's headquarters in Caesarea for the next two years. At the end of that period he exercised his privilege as a Roman citizen and appealed to Caesar in order to have his case transferred from the provincial governor's court in Judea to the emperor's tribunal in Rome. He was sent to Rome in the fall of a.d. 59. The great apostle spent a further two years in Rome under house arrest, waiting for his case to come up for hearing before the supreme tribunal.

Paul, the Prisoner of Jesus Christ. The restrictions under which Paul lived in Rome should have held back his efforts to proclaim the gospel, but just the opposite actually happened. These restrictions, by his own testimony, "*actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel*" (**Philippians 1:12**). Although he was confined to his lodgings, shackled to one of the soldiers who guarded him in four-hour shifts, he was free to receive visitors and talk to them about the gospel. The soldiers who guarded him and the officials in charge of presenting his case before the emperor were left in no doubt about the reason for his being in Rome. The gospel actually became a topic of discussion. This encouraged the Christians in Rome to bear more open witness to their faith, allowing the saving message to be proclaimed more fearlessly in Rome than ever before "*and in this,*" said Paul, "*I rejoice*" (**Philippians 1:18**).

From Rome, Paul was able to correspond with friends in other parts of the Roman Empire. Visitors from those parts came to see him, bringing news of their churches. These visitors included Epaphroditus from Philippi and Epaphras from Colossae. From Colossae, too, Paul received an unexpected visitor, Onesimus, the slave of his friend Philemon. He sent Onesimus back to his master with a letter commending him "*no longer as a slave but . . . as a beloved brother*" (**Philemon 16**).

The letters of Philippi and Colossae were sent in response to the news brought by Epaphroditus and Epaphras, respectively. At the same time as the letter to Colossae, Paul sent a letter to Laodicea and a more general letter that we now know as Ephesians. The Roman captivity became a very fruitful period for Paul and his ministry.

Paul, the Christian Martyr. We have very little information about the rest of Paul's career. We do not know the outcome of his trial before Caesar. He was probably discharged and enjoyed a further period of liberty. It is not known whether he ever preached the gospel in Spain. It is traditionally believed that Paul's condemnation and execution occurred during the persecution of Christians under the Roman Emperor Nero. The probable site of his execution may still be seen at Tre Fontane on the Ostian Road. There is no reason to doubt the place of his burial marked near

the Basilica of St. Paul in Rome. There, beneath the high altar, is a stone inscription going back to at least the fourth century: “To Paul, Apostle and Martyr.”

“Paul, the apostle, who before was called Saul, after his great travail and unspeakable labors in promoting the Gospel of Christ, suffered also in this first persecution under Nero. Abdias, declareth that under his execution Nero sent two of his esquires, Ferega and Parthemius, to bring him word of his death. They, coming to Paul instructing the people, desired him to pray for them, that they might believe, who told them that shortly after they should believe and be baptized at His sepulcher. This done, the soldiers came and led him out of the city to the place of execution, where he, after his prayers made, gave his neck to the sword.” – Fox’s Book of Martyrs

Conclusion :

1. I hope you enjoyed this series and desire to study other great Bible characters.
2. We can learn a lot about the life, work, and responsibilities of many great men and women of God.
3. We should continue to study the Holy Scriptures.
4. Every servant of God is significant and every life has a story.
5. What is your story?