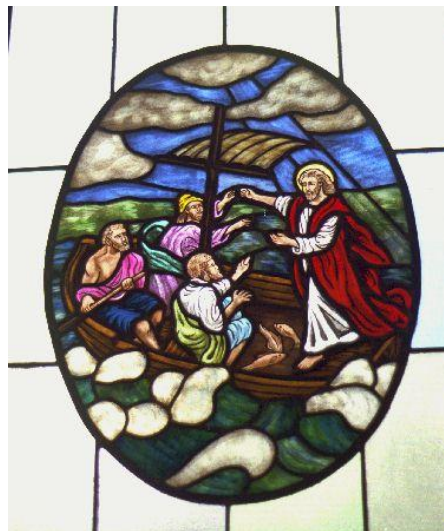


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# Meet the Apostles: Biblical and Legendary Accounts

## Part One – The Twelve

Written by Robert Jones  
Acworth, Georgia



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# Christian Theology and History Adult Sunday School Courses

Robert Jones

[www.sundayschoolcourses.com](http://www.sundayschoolcourses.com)

I've always been a strong believer in adult Sunday School classes and Bible studies in our churches. And many churches have quality, Biblically-based adult-focused programs. Unfortunately, just as many churches tend to downplay adult education, focusing on children's education (not a bad thing in itself), or focusing on the needs of the "unchurched", where topics such as church history and theology are often purposely ignored.

Yet there is a strong need for adult education focused on both the Bible and the basic tenets and history of the Faith. Among the reasons:

- Not all adults come from a strong childhood background in the church – adult Sunday School classes/Bible studies may be their first serious introduction to what Christianity is all about
- Christianity (and especially Evangelical Christianity) is under constant attack from the media and popular culture (movies, music, etc.). We need to give fellow Christians the tools to defend the Faith against attack (or to provide a "ready defense" as Peter says in 1 Peter 3:15)
- Even adult Christians that have a strong Biblical background often know little about the origins and history of their Faith

To better meet the needs of adult Christians (both those mature in their Faith, and those just starting out in the "School of Christ"), I've written a series of courses that focus on the history of the Christian Church (including the Jewish roots), as well as the development of doctrine in the Church. The topics represented in these courses are intended to both further the participant's walk in the Faith, as well as serve as a starting point for Christian apologetics.

While the primary purpose of these courses is for use in churches, they also may be useful for High School and College projects, especially the courses focused primarily on historical aspects.

One note: these courses are primarily written from an Evangelical Protestant viewpoint (I come from a Reformed Church background), but I hope I've given ample time to other points of view throughout the various courses.

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## Introduction

All Christians are familiar with the fact that there were twelve original apostles. The names Peter, John, James, “Doubting Thomas”, Judas Iscariot, etc. are household words. However, many Christians would be hard-pressed to name all twelve of the original apostles, impeded in part by the fact that at least two apostles have different names in different New Testament books.

Also, many Christians would be hard-pressed to separate Church tradition and legend concerning the apostles from what is actually contained in the New Testament. (Does the New Testament say that Peter was the first Pope? Does the New Testament actually even place Peter in Rome?)

This booklet will examine the original twelve apostles from three points of view (and descending levels of authority):

1. **The New Testament**
2. **Church Tradition** – Represented herein primarily from two sources. The first is the *Ecclesiastical History* written by Church Father Eusebius around the time of the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. Eusebius was the Bishop of Caesarea, and is best known for his list of “Accepted”, “Rejected/Disputed”, and “Impious/Absurd” New Testament-era books. A second source is the third century tract “On The Twelve Apostles - Where Each Of Them Preached, And Where He Met His End”, traditionally ascribed to the Church Father Hippolytus (170-236 A.D.)
3. **Apocryphal** – Much of the “Christian Apocrypha” is made up of dubious “Acts” of the various apostles. While these are considered to be of no authority, they do capture some legends about the apostles that are still known today – and they may capture at least some authentic second and third century traditions about the apostles, such as where they preached.

Interestingly enough, Eusebius in his Church History records some early traditions about the apostles that also show up in the apocryphal “Acts”. However, regarding the “Acts” themselves (and about apocryphal Gospels), Eusebius states:

“...we have felt compelled to give this catalogue in order that we might be able to know both these works [generally accepted works] and those that are cited by the heretics under the name of the apostles, including, for instance, such books as the Gospels of Peter, of Thomas, of Matthias, or of any others besides them, and the Acts of Andrew and John and the other apostles, which no one belonging to the succession of ecclesiastical writers has deemed worthy of mention in his writings. And further, the character of the style is at variance with apostolic usage, and both the thoughts and the purpose of the things that are related in them are so completely out of accord with true orthodoxy that they clearly show themselves to be the fictions of heretics. Wherefore they are not to be placed even among the rejected writings, but are all of them to be cast aside as absurd and impious.” (Eusebius, Book 3, Chapter 25)

Part two of this study (still to be written) will concentrate on apostles named in the New Testament outside of the Gospels, including Paul, James (the brother of Jesus), Barnabas, Matthias, Andronicus and Junias.

## Apostolic Quiz

1. The New Testament discusses the ministry of Peter in Rome T/F
2. While Peter took a leadership position in the Early Church, he was not the head of the church in Jerusalem T/F
3. Paul was the first apostle to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles T/F
4. The New Testament describes the final fate of at least three of the apostles T/F

5. All four Gospels give lists of the twelve apostles T/F
6. The "inner circle" of the apostles of Jesus was comprised of Peter, John, and James, son of Alphaeus T/F
7. According to the New Testament, none of the apostles were married T/F
8. Judas Iscariot was the treasurer of the apostles T/F
9. In the New Testament, only Jesus could raise people from the dead T/F
10. Tradition holds that the Gospel of Matthew was written by Levi the Tax Collector
11. The majority of the apostles were Galilean fishermen T/F
12. On at least two occasions, Peter preaches to the Sanhedrin T/F
13. Peter and Paul never met T/F

## New Testament Apostolic Lists

Matt 10:2	Mark 3:16	Luke 6:14	Acts 1:13
Andrew	Andrew	Andrew	Andrew
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew
James son of Alphaeus	James son of Alphaeus	James son of Alphaeus	James son of Alphaeus
James son of Zebedee	James son of Zebedee	James	James
John	John	John	John
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	
Matthew	Matthew	Matthew	Matthew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Simon (who is called Peter)	Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter)	Simon (whom he named Peter)	Peter
Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot	Simon who was called the Zealot	Simon the Zealot
Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Judas son of James	Judas son of James
Thomas	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas

## Andrew

Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was a Galilean fisherman. Originally from Bethsaida (John 1:44), at the time of the ministry of Jesus, he lived with his brother in a house near the Synagogue in Capernaum (Mark 1:29). Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist (John 1:35-40).

Matthew records that Jesus recruited Andrew and Peter while they were fishing in the Sea of Galilee (Matt 4:18-20). In the account in the Gospel of John (1:35-42), Andrew encounters Jesus first, and then rushes to tell his brother "We have found the Messiah".

Other appearances by Andrew in the New Testament include:

- Andrew was present when Jesus healed the fevered mother-in-law of Peter, and when Jesus began healing people from the house of Andrew and Peter in Capernaum (Mark 1:29-34).
- Andrew was with Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Olives when Jesus gave his sermon on the end times (Mark 13:3).

- Andrew finds the initial “five small barley loaves and two small fish” when Jesus feeds the 5,000 (John 6:8-9)
- Andrew is present with Jesus when a voice from heaven booms "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." (John 12:20-30)

### **Church Tradition**

According to Hippolytus:

“Andrew preached to the Scythians [modern day Georgia] and Thracians [modern day Bulgaria], and was crucified, suspended on an olive tree, at Patrae, a town of Achaia [Greece]; and there too he was buried.”

According to Eusebius (Book 3, Chapter 1), Andrew’s ministry was in Scythia.

### **Apocryphal**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> century *Acts And Martyrdom Of The Holy Apostle Andrew* describes the ministry and persecution of Andrew at Patrae, on the northwest coast of Achaia (modern-day Greece). The Acts are purported to have been written by “both presbyters and deacons of the churches of Achaia”:

“WHAT we have all, both presbyters and deacons of the churches of Achaia, beheld with our eyes, we have written to all the churches established in the name of Christ Jesus, both in the east and west, north and south...This faith we have learned from the blessed Andrew, the apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose passion also we, having seen it set forth before our eyes, have not hesitated to give an account of, according to the degree of ability we have.”

The Acts goes on to describe a debate between Andrew and the proconsul Aegeates, who wishes to have the mysteries of Christ revealed to him without accepting Christ and being baptized. Eventually, Aegeates has Andrew tortured and hung on a cross:

“And having thus spoken, the blessed Andrew, standing on the ground, and looking earnestly upon the cross, stripped himself and gave his clothes to the executioners, having urged the brethren that the executioners should come and do what had been commanded them; for they were standing at some distance. And they having come up, lifted him on the cross; and having stretched his body across with ropes, they only bound his feet, but did not sever his joints, having received this order from the proconsul: for he wished him to be in distress while hanging, and in the night-time, as he was suspended, to be eaten up alive by dogs.”

The end of Andrew is described thusly:

“... he became in the sight of all glad and exulting; for an exceeding splendor like lightning coming forth out of heaven shone down upon him, and so encircled him, that in consequence of such brightness mortal eyes could not look upon him at all. And the dazzling light remained about the space of half an hour. And when he had thus spoken and glorified the Lord still more, the light withdrew itself, and he gave up the ghost, and along with the brightness itself he departed to the Lord in giving Him thanks.”

In the somewhat more lurid *Acts Of Andrew And Matthias In The City Of The Man-Eaters*, Andrew is carried by angels to rescue Matthias, who has been imprisoned by cannibals. In one paragraph, Andrew is depicted raising people from the dead, baptizing them, and building a church:

“Then the holy Andrew ordered to be brought up all who had died in the water. And they were not able to bring them; for there had died a great multitude both of men, and women, and children, and cattle. Then Andrew prayed, and they all came to life. And after these things he drew a plan of a church, and he caused the church to be built. And he baptized them, and gave them the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, saying to them: Stand by these, in order that you may know the mysteries of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

## **Bartholomew/Nathanael**

While Bartholomew is mentioned in all four lists of apostles in the New Testament, he is not mentioned in any other context. The name means simply “son of Talmai”, so he may have had a personal name. This personal name may have been Nathanael, mentioned several times in the Gospel of John.

If Nathanael is equated with Bartholomew, we have at least a few characteristics about this enigmatic apostle. In the first chapter of the Gospel of John (John 1:45-51), Philip goes to find Nathanael (the names Philip and Bartholomew always follow each other in the Synoptic Gospel lists) and tell him “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” (NIV, John 1:45). Nathanael makes the famous reply “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” (NIV, John 1:46).

Evidently, though, Nathanael has a good heart, as Jesus says about him “Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.” (NIV, John 1:47). Nathanael has the distinction of being the first apostle to declare that Jesus was both the Son of God and the King of Israel. (NIV, John 1:49)

Nathanael is present at the third post-resurrection meeting of Jesus with the Apostles (John 21:1-14), by the Sea of Galilee. The incident involves a miraculous catch of fish (John tells us 153), and a fish fry on the beach involving Jesus and his disciples. In the passage, we are told that Nathanael is from Cana in Galilee. We may infer that he is a fisherman by trade.

### ***Church Tradition***

According to Hippolytus, Bartholomew preached in India:

“Bartholomew, again, preached to the Indians, to whom he also gave the Gospel according to Matthew, and was crucified with his head downward, and was buried in Allatum, a town of the great Armenia [modern day southern Georgia].”

Eusebius, in his Church History, confirms the ministry of Bartholomew in India, and adds an eye witness account:

“ABOUT that time, Pantaenus, a man highly distinguished for his learning, had charge of the school of the faithful in Alexandria... Pantaenus...is said to have gone to India. It is reported that among persons there who knew of Christ, he found the Gospel according to Matthew, which had anticipated his own arrival. For Bartholomew, one of the apostles, had preached to them, and left with them the writing of Matthew in the Hebrew language, which they had preserved till that time.” (Book 5, Chapter 10)

### ***Apocryphal***

In the *Martyrdom Of The Holy And Glorious Apostle Bartholomew*, Bartholomew preaches in India, and becomes actively involved in casting out demons. One demon describes him as follows (perhaps not a very reliable source!):



“He has black hair, a shaggy head, a fair skin, large eyes, beautiful nostrils, his ears hidden by the hair of his head, with a yellow beard, a few gray hairs, of middle height, and neither tall nor stunted, but middling, clothed with a white undercloak bordered with purple, and upon his shoulders a very white cloak; and his clothes have been worn twenty-six years, but neither are they dirty, nor have they waxed old. Seven times a day he bends the knee to the Lord, and seven times a night does he pray to God. His voice is like the sonnet of a strong trumpet; there go along with him angels of God, who allow him neither to be weary, nor to hunger, nor to thirst; his face, and his soul, and his heart are always glad and rejoicing; he foresees everything, he knows and speaks every tongue of every nation.”

In the course of a long sermon on the basic tenets of the Gospels to King Polymius, (whose daughter was exorcised of a demon by Bartholomew), the Apostle gives this brief description of his calling:

“And when the Lord had conquered the tyrant [Satan], He sent His apostles into all the world, that He might redeem His people from the deception of the devil; and one of these I am, an apostle of Christ.”

After King Polymius converts to Christianity, his brother King Astreges is enraged, and orders Bartholomew beheaded:

“Then the king...ordered the holy apostle Bartholomew to be beaten with rods; and after having been thus scourged, to be beheaded.

And innumerable multitudes came from all the cities, to the number of twelve thousand, who had believed in him along with the king; and they took up the remains of the apostle with singing of praise and with all glory, and they laid them in the royal tomb, and glorified God. And the king Astreges having heard of this, ordered him to be thrown into the sea; and his remains were carried into the island of Liparis.”

King Astreges soon dies a horrible death, and his brother Polymius becomes bishop, and rules for 20 years.

### ***Other Legends***

Other legends say that Bartholomew was flayed alive in Armenia. His remains are said to be, variously, in Rome and in Canterbury Cathedral in England.

## **James, Son of Alphaeus**

We have almost no canonical information about James, Son of Alphaeus, other than that he appears on all four New Testament apostolic lists. Mark 2:14 identifies that Levi/Matthew the tax collector also had a father named Alphaeus, so the two may have been brothers or half brothers.

Some scholars have linked the “James the younger” in Mark 15:40 with James, son of Alphaeus. If this identification is true, then James had a mother named Mary that was present at the crucifixion, and a brother named Josès.

### ***Church Tradition***

Hippolytus identifies that James was stoned to death in Jerusalem:

“And James the son of Alphaeus, when preaching in Jerusalem, was stoned to death by the Jews, and was buried there beside the temple.”

Eusebius doesn't mention James in his Church History.

## James, Son of Zebedee

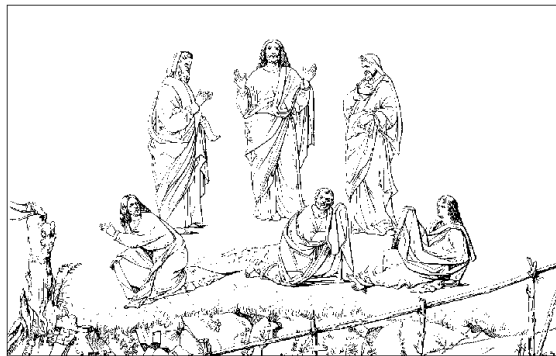
James, son of Zebedee and brother of John is mentioned in all four New Testament apostolic lists. The calling of James (and his brother) is recorded in Matthew:

(Mat 4:21 NIV) "Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, (Mat 4:22 NIV) and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him."

Thus, we know that James was a fisherman, and that he worked with his father. In Luke 5:10, James and John are identified as Peter's partners in the fishing business. Mark 1:20 indicates that the Zebedee family had hired men in the fishing business, perhaps indicating that James and his brother came from a successful family business. Mathew 27:55-56 identifies that the mother of James and John was a follower of Jesus, and was present at his crucifixion.

James and his brother (along with Peter) are traditionally identified as being part of the "inner circle" of the apostles of Jesus, because they were present at several key events that the other apostles were not. These events included:

The transfiguration	Matt 17:1, Mark 9:2, Luke 9:29
The raising of the daughter of Jairus from the dead	Mark 5:35-43, Luke 8:49-56
Present at the mini-apocalypse, delivered by Jesus on the Mount of Olives	Mark 13:3
With Jesus during his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane	Mark 14:32-42, Matt 26:36-46



During the description of the raising of the daughter of Jairus from the dead, the existence of inner circle is clearly outlined:

(Mark 5:37 NIV) "He [Jesus] did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James."

The inner circle is also present at a miraculous catch of fish on the Sea of Galilee (Luke 5:1-11). The brothers were also present when the resurrected Jesus fried fish for some of the apostles on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, as described in John 21.

Mark 3:17 identifies that James and his brother had the nickname “Sons of Thunder”, which may apply to their temper or their impetuosity. This temper is exhibited in Luke 9:51-56 when James and John are affronted because a Samaritan village is not interested in hearing Jesus preach:

(Luke 9:54 NIV) “When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?””

Their impetuosity is demonstrated in Mark 10:35-41, when James and John ask Jesus “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.” The other apostles become indignant at this presumptuousness (Mark 10:41).

### **Post-Pentecostal**

James holds the distinction of being the only apostle in the New Testament that has his martyrdom recorded in the Scriptures:

(Acts 12:1 NIV) “It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them.

(Acts 12:2 NIV) He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.”

Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, reports that James supported his ministry to the Gentiles:

(Gal 2:9 NIV) “James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews.”

This would tend to indicate that James the “pillar” had an important place in the post-Pentecostal church.

### **Church Tradition**

According to Hippolytus:

“James, his brother, when preaching in Judea, was cut off with the sword by Herod the tetrarch, and was buried there.”

According to Eusebius, James was beheaded:

“First Stephen was stoned to death by them, and after him James, the son of Zebedee and the brother of John, was beheaded...” (Book 3, Chapter 5)

Eusebius also records another tradition regarding the death of James:

“And concerning this James, Clement, in the seventh book of his Hypotyposes, relates a story which is worthy of mention; telling it as he received it from those who had lived before him. He says that the one who led James to the judgment-seat, when he saw him bearing his testimony, was moved, and confessed that he was himself also a Christian. They were both therefore, he says, led away together; and on the

way he begged James to forgive him. And he, after considering a little, said, "Peace be with thee," and kissed him. And thus they were both beheaded at the same time." (Book 2, Chapter 9)

### **Other Legends**

Medieval tradition associates James with a ministry in Spain. Other Medieval legends claim that his remains were brought to Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain. His head is also said to rest in a 12<sup>th</sup> century Armenian Church in Jerusalem.

### **John**

John, brother of James and son of Zebedee, is named in all four New Testament apostolic lists. Much of what has already been said about his brother James is also true for John, which is summarized here:

- John was a Galilean fisherman who worked with his father and brother. He was called by Jesus with his brother James. (Matthew 4:21/22). In Luke 5:10, John and his brother are identified as Peter's partners in the fishing business.
- As noted before, John and his brother are traditionally identified as being part of the "inner circle" of the apostles of Jesus, because they were present at several key events that the other apostles were not. These events included:

The transfiguration	Matt 17:1, Mark 9:2, Luke 9:29
The raising of the daughter of Jairus from the dead	Mark 5:35-43, Luke 8:49-56
Present at the mini-apocalypse, delivered by Jesus on the Mount of Olives	Mark 13:3
With Jesus during his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane	Mark 14:32-42, Matt 26:36-46

Also, John and his brother were present when Jesus healed the fever-ridden mother-in-law of Peter (Mark 1:29-31), and when when Jesus causes a miraculous catch of fish on the Sea of Galilee (Luke 5:1-11).

- In Mark 10, John and James incur the displeasure of the other apostles when they ask Jesus, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory." (Mark 10:35-39)
- Mathew 27:55-56 identifies that the mother of John and James was a follower of Jesus, and was present at his crucifixion
- Mark 3:17 identifies that James and his brother had the nickname "Sons of Thunder", which may apply to their temper (see Luke 9:51-56)

John is also mentioned several times apart from his brother in the Gospels:

- John is mildly rebuked by Jesus in Luke 9:49-50 after John complains about a man "driving out demons in your name"
- In Luke 22:7-13, John (along with Peter) is given the important task of preparing the logistics for the Last Supper

John is not mentioned by name in the Gospel of John. Church tradition (more on this later) identifies John with the "disciple that Jesus loved" that is mentioned five times in the Gospel of John:

During the Last Supper, this disciple is asked	John 13:23-26
------------------------------------------------	---------------

by Peter who is going to betray Jesus	
The disciple is given the responsibility of taking care of Mary, Mother of Jesus	John 19:26-27
With Peter, the disciple is told by Mary Magdalene that the tomb is empty	John 20:1-9
The disciple is the first one to identify Jesus at the miraculous catch of fish after the resurrection	John 21:1-14
Jesus seems to indicate that this disciple will outlive Peter	John 21:20-24

## Post-Pentecostal

In Acts, John is depicted as a close associate of Peter, and is involved in the early preaching and healing activities:

Healing a cripple	Acts 3:1-10
Peter and John are jailed by the Sanhedrin, and released after being admonished to no longer teach about Jesus	Acts 4:1-22
Peter and John preach in Samaria, baptizing through the laying on of hands	Acts 8:14-17

Like his brother James, John is referred to as a “pillar” of the church in Galatians 2:9. Paul notes that he supported the Pauline ministry to the Gentiles.

## Church Tradition

There are many strong church traditions regarding John. As early as c. 180 A.D., Irenaeus (Bishop of Lyons from 177-202 A.D.) says that John was the author of the Gospel of John:

“...John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.” (Irenaeus, “Against Heresies”, Book 3, Chapter 1)

Eusebius discusses the reason that John wrote his Gospel:

"Matthew and John have left us written memorials, and they, tradition says, were led to write only under the pressure of necessity...And when Mark and Luke had already published their Gospels, they say that John, who had employed all his time in proclaiming the Gospel orally, finally proceeded to write for the following reason. The three Gospels already mentioned having come into the hands of all and into his own too, they say that he accepted them and bore witness to their truthfulness; but that there was lacking in them an account of the deeds done by Christ at the beginning of his ministry." (Book 3, Chapter 24)

By tradition, John was also the author of three canonical letters, and the Apocalypse. Eusebius was pretty sure about John I, less sure about John II, III, and Revelation:

"But of the writings of John, not only his Gospel, but also the former of his epistles, has been accepted without dispute both now and in ancient times. But the other two are disputed. In regard to the Apocalypse, the opinions of most men are still divided. But at the proper time this question likewise shall be decided from the testimony of the ancients." (Book 3, Chapter 24)

However, all three epistles, and the Apocalypse, were firmly entrenched in the New Testament canon by 367 A.D., and have remained there ever since.

According to Hippolytus, John was banished by Domitian to the Isle of Patmos, and later died in Ephesus:

“John, again, in Asia, was banished by Domitian the king to the isle of Patmos, in which also he wrote his Gospel and saw the apocalyptic vision; and in Trajan’s time he fell asleep at Ephesus, where his remains were sought for, but could not be found.”



The traditions connecting John with Ephesus and Patmos are well established. Eusebius records:

“...Asia to John, who, after he had lived some time there, died at Ephesus.” (Book 3, Chapter 1)

“IT is said that in this persecution [Domitian] the apostle and evangelist John, who was still alive, was condemned to dwell on the island of Patmos in consequence of his testimony to the divine word.” (Book 3, Chapter 17)

Eusebius also records that John outlived Domitian:

“AT that time the apostle and evangelist John, the one whom Jesus loved, was still living in Asia, and governing the churches of that region, having returned after the death of Domitian from his exile on the island... [Irenaeus] in the second book of his work Against Heresies, writes as follows: ‘And all the elders that associated with John the disciple of the Lord in Asia bear witness that John delivered it to them. For he remained among them until the time of Trajan.’” (Book 3, Chapter 23)

The emperor Domitian began his rule in 81 A.D., and died in 96 A.D. This would mean that John would have been in his 80s or 90s when he died.



St. John's Monastery on Patmos – Photo by Jan & Ted Lauer – Scanned by Garfield Cousins

Eusebius also records the words of Clement of Alexandria regarding the preaching and establishment of churches in Asia by John:

“For when, after the tyrant’s death, he returned from the isle of Patmos to Ephesus, he went away upon their invitation to the neighboring territories of the Gentiles, to appoint bishops in some places, in other places to set in order whole churches, elsewhere to choose to the ministry some one of those that were pointed out by the Spirit...” (Book 3, Chapter 23)

Eusebius also records a tradition regarding the death of John:

“The time, of John’s death has also been given in a general way, but his burial place is indicated by an epistle of Polycrates (who was bishop of the parish of Ephesus), addressed to Victor, bishop of Rome. In this epistle he mentions him together with the apostle Philip and his daughters in the following words: “For in Asia also great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the last day, at the coming of the Lord, when he shall come with glory from heaven and shall seek out all the saints. Among these are...John, who was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord, and being a priest wore the sacerdotal plate. He also sleeps at Ephesus.”

Finally, Eusebius records a tradition from Appollonius that John raised a man from the dead:

“He [Appollonius]...relates that a dead man had, through the Divine power, been raised by John himself in Ephesus.” (Book 5, Chapter 19)

## ***Apocryphal***

In the *Acts Of The Holy Apostle And Evangelist John The Theologian*, John is seized on order of Domitian and brought before him. John drinks poison to prove that Jesus and the Holy Spirit protect him. Then a condemned prisoner is made to drink the poison to prove that it is lethal. The prisoner dies, and John promptly raises him from the dead. John is eventually banished to Patmos:

“Domitian, astonished at all the wonders, sent him away to an island, appointing for him a set time.

And straightway John sailed to Patmos, where also he was deemed worthy to see the revelation of the end. And when Domitian was dead, Nerva succeeded to the kingdom, and recalled all who had been banished; and having kept the kingdom for a year, he made Trajan his successor in the kingdom. And when he was king over the Romans, John went to Ephesus, and regulated all the teaching of the church, holding many conferences, and reminding them of what the Lord had said to them, and what duty he had assigned to each. And when he was old and changed, he ordered Polycarp to be bishop over the church.”

In this account, there is some doubt cast as to whether John really died:

“And gazing towards heaven, he glorified God; and having sealed himself altogether, he stood and said to us, Peace and grace be with you, brethren! and sent the brethren away. And when they went on the morrow they did not find him, but his sandals, and a fountain welling up. And after that they remembered what had been said to Peter by the Lord about him: For what does it concern thee if I should wish him to remain until I come? And they glorified God for the miracle that had happened. And having thus believed, they retired praising and blessing the benignant God; because to Him is due glory now and ever, and to ages of ages. Amen.”

## **Judas Iscariot**

Judas Iscariot is the most reviled figure in the New Testament - Jesus actually refers to him as a devil in John 6:70-71. He betrayed Jesus to the Sanhedrin for 30 pieces of silver.

Judas was the son of Simon Iscariot (John 6:71). “Iscariot” is variously interpreted as meaning “dagger-man” (i.e. that Judas was a Zealot), or “man of Kerioth”, a town near Hebron. If the latter is correct, then Judas was the only non-Galilean among the twelve – an outsider from the beginning.

Judas is mentioned in the three Synoptic Gospel lists of the apostles. He is, of course, omitted from the list in Acts.

## The betrayal

The betrayal by Judas is mentioned starkly in Matthew:

(Mat 26:14 NIV) "Then one of the Twelve--the one called Judas Iscariot--went to the chief priests  
(Mat 26:15 NIV) and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty silver coins.  
(Mat 26:16 NIV) From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over."

Luke 22:3 records that Satan entered Judas before he made his deal with the chief priests.

## The Last Supper – the traitor identified

In Matthew 26:20-25, Jesus discusses the fact that he will be betrayed by one of the twelve, and that "It would be better for him if he had not been born." When Judas asks "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."



John 13:27 identifies that Satan entered into Judas at the Last Supper.

## The role of Judas in the capture of Jesus

The actual capture of Jesus is variously described in the Gospels:

"Judas said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed him."	Matthew 26:46-50
"With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs"	Mark 14:43-46
"Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"	Luke 22:47-48
"And Judas the traitor was standing there with them."	John 18:1-5

## Character of Judas

The Gospel of John is especially harsh in its characterization of Judas. In the following passage (which also tells us that Judas was the treasurer of the apostles), Judas is referred to as a thief:



(John 12:6 NIV) “He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.”

Matthew 27:34 records that Judas felt remorse after turning Jesus over to his enemies (“‘I have sinned,’ he said, ‘for I have betrayed innocent blood.’”)

## Death of Judas

The New Testament offers two versions (not necessarily contradictory) of the death of Judas. Matthew 27:5 records that Judas committed suicide by hanging. Acts gives a somewhat more graphic description of the death of Judas:

(Acts 1:18 NIV) “(With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out.

(Acts 1:19 NIV) Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)”

## Judas and predestination

The life and death of Judas Iscariot is often used as an example of predestination. Both Jesus (John 13:18) and Peter (Acts 1:15-20) speak of the traitorous actions of Judas as being in fulfillment of the Scriptures (Psalms 41:9), and Peter says that his end was also foretold by the prophets (Psalms 69:25, 109:8).

## Matthew/Levi

Matthew appears in all four apostolic lists in the New Testament. Mark and Luke also refer to him as “Levi”. Mark 2:14 identifies Matthew (Levi) as the “son of Alphaeus”, so Matthew may have been related to James, son of Alphaeus (brother or half-brother).

Matthew was a tax collector (Matt 9:9) – a singularly unpopular occupation in 1<sup>st</sup> century Palestine! All three synoptic Gospels report that Jesus attended a dinner at the house of Matthew. The version in Luke 5:27-32 identifies that the dinner was held in honor of Jesus by Matthew – “Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house...”

Luke 5:28 tells us that Levi “left everything” to follow Jesus.

## Church Tradition

While the Gospel of Matthew bears no author attribution in the text, very early church tradition identifies the Gospel with Matthew. Bishop Papias of Hierapolis, as early as c. 110 A.D., stated:

“Matthew put together the oracles [of the Lord] in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as best he could.” (Eusebius, Book 3, Chapter 39)

According to Hippolytus:

“And Matthew wrote the Gospel in the Hebrew tongue, and published it at Jerusalem, and fell asleep at Hieres, a town of Parthia.” [Parthia is near modern day Tehran]



## **Apocryphal**

In the apocryphal "Acts And Martyrdom Of St. Matthew The Apostle", Jesus (appearing in the form of a child) sends Matthew to "Myrna, the city of the man-eaters". After casting out demons from the wife, son, and daughter-in-law of the King Fulvanus, the king becomes jealous because they want to spend all of their time with Matthew. The King several times tries to burn Matthew to death, but Matthew is protected by Jesus. In time, the fire used to try to burn Matthew burns up most of the King's kingdom. Matthew eventually dies, and ascends to heaven:

"...we all saw Matthew rising up, as it were, from the bed, and going into heaven, led by the hand by a beautiful boy; and twelve men in shining garments came to meet him, having never-fading and golden crowns on their head; and we saw how that child crowned Matthew, so as to be like them, and in a flash of lightning they went away to heaven."



Eventually the king converts to Christianity, and becomes Bishop of his land. The Acts end with the following:

"And Saint Matthew finished his course in the country of the man-eaters, in the city of Myrna, on the sixteenth of the month of November, our Lord Jesus Christ reigning, to whom be glory and strength, now and ever, and to ages of ages. Amen."

Other traditions record his martyrdom in Ethiopia and in Persia.

An apocryphal Gospel is also attributed to Matthew, that purports to tell about the "birth of the Virgin Mary, and the nativity and infancy of our Lord Jesus Christ".

## **Peter**

Simon Peter, along with his brother Andrew, was a Galilean fisherman. According to Luke 5:3, he owned a boat. Peter and his brother were originally from the town of Bethsaida (John 1:44), but were living in Capernaum at the time of the ministry of Jesus. It appears that Jesus sometimes used the house of Simon and Andrew as a base of operations in Capernaum (Mark 1:32-34, Luke 4:40-43).

Simon Peter is mentioned in all four apostolic lists in the New Testament. John 1:42 identifies that Jesus gave Simon the name "Cephas", or Peter (which means "rock").

Peter was the son of Jonah (Matt 16:17). He was married - 1 Cor 9:5 records that Peter took his wife on some of his missionary journeys. Peter's mother-in-law was healed by Jesus of a fever (Mark 1:29-31, Luke 4:38-39).

## **Calling of Peter**

According to the account in Matthew, Andrew and Peter were the first apostles selected by Jesus who tells them in Mat 4:19 "Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men." (Also, Mark 1:16-17) In Luke 5:1-11, the calling of Peter is associated with a miraculous catch of fish, which causes a frightened Peter to say "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"

A somewhat different account in John 1:41-42, depicts that Simon is brought to Jesus by his brother Andrew. John 1 also indicates that Peter may have been a follower of John the Baptist (John 1:35-40).

Peter is given an especially important role in the Gospel of Matthew when he is the first one of the apostles to proclaim that Jesus is the messiah and the Son of God:

(Mat 16:15 NIV) ““But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”  
 (Mat 16:16 NIV) Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”  
 (Mat 16:17 NIV) Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.”

### The “inner circle”

Peter was part of the “inner circle” of the apostles of Jesus, along with the brothers James and John. They were involved in several key events that the other apostles weren’t privy to:

The transfiguration	Matt 17:1, Mark 9:2, Luke 9:29
The raising of the daughter of Jairus from the dead	Mark 5:35-43, Luke 8:49-56
Present at the mini-apocalypse, delivered by Jesus on the Mount of Olives	Mark 13:3
With Jesus during his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane	Mark 14:32-42, Matt 26:36-46
Along with John, Peter is asked by Jesus to make preparations for the Last Supper	Luke 22:8-13

### Character and characteristics

Peter is especially endearing as an “everyman”, demonstrating his innate practicality when, during the transfiguration, he seems more focused on building some sort of condominiums for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, than on the significance of the two prophets appearing with Jesus:

(Luke 9:33 NIV) “As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what he was saying.)”

Peter is often depicted as having dialogues with the Savior. In these dialogues, Peter is portrayed variously as being impetuous, practical, inquiring, enthusiastic, and sometimes even a little slow. On several occasions, Jesus rebukes him.

The Temple Tax	Matt 17:24-27
"I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."	Matt 18:21-22
"The fig tree you cursed has withered!"	Mark 11:20-25
"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."	John 6:67-70
"Are you still so dull?"	Matthew 15:15-16
Peter asked, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?"	Luke 12:35-48
"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my	John 13:6-9

feet."	
As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water.	John 21:7
"Out of my sight, Satan!"	Matthew 16:21-23, Mark 8:32-33
"You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears..."	Luke 7:40-47
"Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"	John 18:10-11

Prior to Pentecost, Peter is portrayed as a man that wants to have faith, but cannot always maintain it. Matthew 14:25-33 is an example, with Peter believing he can walk on water, but then losing faith because of the strong wind. In Matthew 26:33-35, after Jesus has announced that he will be betrayed, Peter claims "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." Jesus knows better, though, and replies "...before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." (Also, Mark 14:29-31, Luke 22:33-34). Of course, Peter goes on to disown the Lord three times (once given away by his Galilean accent) (Matt 26:69-75; see also Mark 14:66-72, Luke 22:54-62, John 18:15-27)

### Post-resurrection

Peter appears in several key scenes after the resurrection. In Mark 16:1-8, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome are told by a young man dressed in white to "tell his disciples and Peter" that Jesus will see them in Galilee. Some people interpret this to mean that, after disowning Christ three times, Peter is temporarily not considered to be one of the Apostles. In John 21:15-17, Peter is prompted by Jesus to tell him that he loves him three times.

In Luke 24:12 and John 20:1-9, Peter is depicted as viewing the empty tomb. A mysterious reference in Luke 24:34 and 1 Cor 15:5 identifies that Peter was the first apostle to whom the risen Lord appeared. However, there is no other New Testament record of this event.

Along with several other apostles, Simon is present at the miraculous post-resurrection fish catch/fry, depicted in John 21:1-14.

### Death of Peter prefigured

Later Church tradition (see section below) says that Peter met his death by crucifixion under Nero. An eerie set of passages at the end of the Gospel of John seems to prefigure his death (John lived long after Peter, and very likely would have known the details of his death):

(John 13:36 NIV) "Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later."

(John 21:18 NIV) I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."

(John 21:19 NIV) Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

## Post-ascension

After the ascension of Christ, Peter immediately assumes a leadership role - it is Peter that drives the selection of a replacement apostle for Judas, in Acts 1:15-26. This leadership role is seemingly prefigured by Christ in Luke 22:32:

(Luke 22:32 NIV) "But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

## Post-Pentecostal

After Pentecost, Peter, the simple Galilean fisherman, is transformed into a great preacher, healer, and fearless advocate for Jesus Christ. In fact, Peter is accorded the honor of being the first person to preach a sermon in the new church – a sermon that garners 3,000 new converts! (Acts 2:14-41). Peter's activities in the Primitive Church are summarized below:

- In Acts 3, Peter heals a cripple near the Temple in Jerusalem, and again preaches a sermon at Solomon's Colonnade, which gathers at least 2,000 more converts (Acts 4:4)
- Peter and John are put in prison by the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:1-22). Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, uses the occasion to preach the Gospel of Christ to the rulers of the Sanhedrin. One of the most important verses in all of Acts begins to explain why people gave credence to the early Christians:

(Acts 4:13 NIV) "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus."

- In Acts 5:1-11, Peter is the focus of the event which leads to the death of a husband and wife who lied about a contribution to the young church
- In Acts 5:15-16, people bring their sick to be healed by Peter and the other apostles
- In Acts 5:25-42, the apostles are arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin. Peter, the simple fisherman, once again uses the opportunity to lecture the learned Sanhedrin. After being flogged, the apostles are freed.
- In Acts 8:14-25, Peter and John are sent to Samaria to baptize by the laying on of hands. Peter then has a run-in with Simon Magus (Simon the Magician). Later church and apocryphal traditions indicate that the two will meet again in the future.
- In Acts 9:32-43, Peter raises a woman named Tabitha from the dead
- In Acts 10, Peter receives a vision, convincing him that the message of Christ is for Gentiles, too. In Acts 10:44-48, the ministry to the Gentiles blossoms.
- In Acts 11:1-18, Peter successfully defends the baptizing of Gentiles to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem
- In Acts 12:1-9, Peter is arrested by King Herod Agrippa I, grandson of the Herod the Great, and thrown in prison. An angel rescues Peter, perhaps because "the church was earnestly praying to God for him."
- In Acts 15:5-12, Peter plays a key role in convincing the Council of Jerusalem that Gentile converts should be allowed into the young church without restriction - "We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."
- Peter may have preached in Corinth (1 Cor 1:12)

## Relationship of Peter with Paul

The New Testament records that Peter and Paul, the two greatest apostles of the Early Church, did have some interaction with each other. Galatians 1:18, for example, records that Paul stayed with Peter in Jerusalem for a period of 15 days. Peter supports Paul's ministry to the Gentiles at the Jerusalem Coun-

cil in Acts 15. This is further supported in Galatians 2:7-10, when Peter (a “pillar”) is depicted as being an “apostle to the Jews”, and supporting Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles.

There were some disagreements between the two. In Galatians, 2:11-14 Paul describes an argument that he had with Peter in Antioch. In 2 Peter 3:15-16, Peter describes that Paul’s letters are “hard to understand”, but ascribes to them the same authority as the Jewish Scriptures:

(2 Pet 3:15 NIV) “Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.

(2 Pet 3:16 NIV) He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.”

## Keys to the Kingdom

The most controversial passages (in modern terms) in the New Testament regarding Peter are those describing Peter as the “rock” upon which Jesus will build his Church, and assigning him the “keys to the kingdom”. The passages in question are below:

(Mat 16:18 NIV) “And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

(Mat 16:19 NIV) I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”



These verses have been traditionally interpreted by the Roman Catholic Church as indicating that the Christian Church has received its authority from the legacy of Peter. The Roman Church also points to passages such as John 21:16, where Jesus says to Peter “Take care of my sheep”, as further justification that Peter is the founder of the Christian Church.

Protestants have traditionally interpreted the “rock” and “keys” passages to indicate that the *faith* of Peter is the “rock upon which I will build my church”, and that *faith* is the “keys to the kingdom.” Protestants often view that Paul, not Peter, is the founder of the Christian Church as we know it today.

Church tradition (see below) also records that Peter was the first Bishop of Rome, and that all Catholic popes are spiritual descendents from Peter.

Mitigating against this Catholic view of Peter-as-the-first-Pope is the fact that nowhere in the Scriptures does it say that Peter preached in Rome. The closest is a cryptic remark at the end of 1 Peter:

(1 Pet 5:13 NIV) “She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark.”

Also of interest is the fact that the head of the early Jerusalem Church was James, brother of Jesus, not Peter, as noted in this passage from Eusebius:

“But Clement in the sixth book of his Hypotyposes writes thus: “For they say that Peter and James and John after the ascension of our Savior, as if also preferred by our Lord, strove not after honor, but chose James the Just bishop of Jerusalem.”” (Book 2, Chapter 1)

## **Church Tradition**

Eusebius, quoting Papias of Hierapolis (c. 110 A.D.), records a tradition that the Gospel of Mark preserved the Gospel as preached by Peter:

"Mark having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered...he accompanied Peter..." (Book 3, Chapter 39)

Irenaeus (c. 180 A.D.) records a similar tradition, and mentions that Peter and Paul founded the Church in Rome:

"Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter..." (Irenaeus, "Against Heresies", Book 3, Chapter 1)

Two letters in the New Testament are ascribed to Peter. 1 Peter has always been universally accepted as the writing of Peter, with some doubt cast on 2 Peter by some. Eusebius gives his opinion about Peter I and II:

"ONE epistle of Peter, that called the first, is acknowledged as genuine. And this the ancient elders used freely in their own writings as an undisputed work. But we have learned that his extant second Epistle does not belong to the canon; yet, as it has appeared profitable to many, it has been used with the other Scriptures." (Book 3, Chapter 3)

Eusebius also records the tradition that Peter preached in Rome, and fought against the heresy of Simon Magus the Magician (generally considered to be the founder of Gnosticism):

"For immediately, during the reign of Claudius, the all-good and gracious Providence, which watches over all things, led Peter, that strongest and greatest of the apostles, and the one who on account of his virtue was the speaker for all the others, to Rome against this great corrupter of life. He like a noble commander of God, clad in divine armor, carried the costly merchandise of the light of the understanding from the East to those who dwelt in the West, proclaiming the light itself, and the word which brings salvation to souls, and preaching the kingdom of heaven." (Book 2, Chapter 14)

Eusebius records that Peter was put to death under Nero in Rome:

"It is, therefore, recorded that Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was crucified under Nero. This account of Peter and Paul is substantiated by the fact that their names are preserved in the cemeteries of that place even to the present day. It is confirmed likewise by Caius, a member of the Church, who arose under Zephyrinus, bishop of Rome. He, in a published disputation with Proclus, the leader of the Phrygian heresy, speaks as follows concerning the places where the sacred corpses of the aforesaid apostles are laid: "But I can show the trophies of the apostles. For if you will go to the Vatican or to the Ostian way, you will find the trophies of those who laid the foundations of this church." And that they both suffered martyrdom at the same time is stated by Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, in his epistle to the Romans, in the following words: "You have thus by such an admonition bound together the planting of Peter and of Paul at Rome and Corinth. For both of them planted and likewise taught us in our Corinth. And they taught together in like manner in Italy, and suffered martyrdom at the same time." I have quoted these things in order that the truth of the history might be still more confirmed." (Book 2, Chapter 25)

Eusebius also records where Peter preached:

“Peter appears to have preached in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia to the Jews of the dispersion. And at last, having come to Rome, he was crucified head-downwards; for he had requested that he might suffer in this way.” (Book 3, Chapter 1) [Note: Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, and Cappadocia are all located in modern northern Turkey]

According to Hippolytus, Peter was crucified by Nero in Rome:

“Peter preached the Gospel in Pontus, and Galatia, and Cappadocia, and Betania, and Italy, and Asia, and was afterwards crucified by Nero in Rome with his head downward, as he had himself desired to suffer in that manner.”

Eusebius records a tradition from Clement of Alexandria regarding the martyrdom of the wife of Peter:

“They say, accordingly, that when the blessed Peter saw his own wife led out to die, he rejoiced because of her summons and her return home, and called to her very encouragingly and comfortingly, addressing her by name, and saying, ‘Oh thou, remember the Lord.’ Such was the marriage of the blessed, and their perfect disposition toward those dearest to them.” (Book 3, Chapter 30)

Church tradition records that Peter was buried in Rome on Vatican Hill, near the gardens of Nero. The first memorial over the grave was placed there in 160 A.D. A huge basilica was placed there by Constantine in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. A series of excavations instituted by Pope Paul XII in 1940-51, and 1953-7 seems to have verified that the spire of the present St. Peter’s Church in Rome is located about 300 feet above the underground grave of Peter.

## ***Apocryphal***

The *Acts Of The Holy Apostles Peter And Paul* discusses the ministry of Peter in Rome, where he converts the wife (Libia) of Nero to Christianity(!) The bulk of the apocryphal Acts describes the battle in Rome between Peter (and Paul) and Simon the Magician. The battle eventually plays out in front of Nero, and all three (Peter, Paul, Simon) end up dying. The death and burial of Peter is described thus:

“Then both Peter and Paul were led away from the presence of Nero. And Paul was beheaded on the Ostesian road. And Peter, having come to the cross, said: Since my Lord Jesus Christ, who came down from the heaven upon the earth, was raised upon the cross upright, and He has deigned to call to heaven me, who am of the earth, my cross ought to be fixed head downmost, so as to direct my feet towards heaven; for I am not worthy to be crucified like my Lord. Then, having reversed the cross, they nailed his feet up.

And the consummation of the holy glorious Apostles Peter and Paul was on the 29th of the month of June —“

A number of apocryphal writings are ascribed to Peter, including a Gospel, an Apocalypse, an Acts (of Peter and Paul), etc. Eusebius gives his opinion of these works:

“The so-called Acts of Peter, however, and the Gospel which bears his name, and the Preaching and the Apocalypse, as they are called, we know have not been universally accepted, because no ecclesiastical writer, ancient or modern, has made use of testimonies drawn from them.” (Book 3, Chapter 3)



The second century Gospel of Peter describes the period of time after the death of Jesus, adding details to the story of Joseph of Arimathea, and the women at the tomb. Intriguingly, “Mary of Magdala” is described as a “disciple of the Lord”.

The second century “Revelation of Peter” contains detailed descriptions of heaven and hell. It has some stylistic similarities to 2 Peter.

## **Philip**

Philip appears in all four lists of apostles in the New Testament, apparently linked with Bartholomew in the synoptic versions. This identification is enhanced in the Gospel of John. In John 1:43, Jesus finds Philip and tells him “Follow me”. Philip (who is identified as being from Bethsaida in John 1:44) goes and tells his friend Nathanael (generally viewed as being Bartholomew, as in “Nathanael, son of Tolmai”):

(John 1:45 NIV) “Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.””

It is possible that Philip acted in the role of quartermaster or provisioner for Jesus and the apostles, for when Jesus is about to perform his miracle of feeding the 5,000, he says:

(John 6:5 NIV) “When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?”

(John 6:6 NIV) He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.”

(John 6:7 NIV) Philip answered him, “Eight months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!””

Philip also appears in John when a group of Greeks ask him to meet Jesus. After collecting Andrew, the two inform Jesus that he has visitors. (John 12:20-22)

At the Last Supper, in John 14:6-9, Philip asks Jesus to “show us the Father”, and Jesus replies “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”

## **Church Tradition**

According to Hippolytus, Philip preached and was executed in what today is eastern Turkey:

“Philip preached in Phrygia, and was crucified in Hierapolis with his head downward in the time of Domitian, and was buried there.”

According to Eusebius (quoting Clement of Alexandria) Philip was married, and had daughters:

“For Peter and Philip begat children; and Philip also gave his daughters in marriage...” (Book 3, Chapter 30)

Eusebius, quoting Polycrates, discusses the death of Philip and his daughters:

“For in Asia also great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the last day, at the coming of the Lord, when he shall come with glory from heaven and shall seek out all the saints. Among these are Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who sleeps in Hierapolis, and his two aged virgin daughters, and another daughter who lived in the Holy Spirit and now rests at Ephesus...” (Book 3, Chapter 31)

Referencing Papias, Eusebius records a tradition that one of Philip's daughters rose from the dead (it is unclear in the text as to whether Philip did the raising):

"That Philip the apostle dwelt at Hierapolis with his daughters has been already stated. But it must be noted here that Papias, their contemporary, says that he heard a wonderful tale from the daughters of Philip. For he relates that in his time one rose from the dead." (Book 3, Chapter 39)

It should be noted, though, that there seems to be at least some confusion in the works of the ancients regarding the daughters of Philip the Apostle, and Philip the Deacon (Acts 6:5, Acts 21:8-9).

## ***Apocryphal***

The apocryphal *Acts Of The Journeyings Of Philip The Apostle* has Philip preaching in the "cities and regions of Lydia and Asia". After converting the wife of the Roman proconsul, Philip is captured by the irate husband and hung upside down:

"And he ordered Philip to be hanged, and his ankles to be pierced, and to bring also iron hooks, and his heels also to be driven through, and to be hanged head downwards, opposite the temple on a certain tree..."

An angry Philip places a curse on his captors, and 7,000 men (including the proconsul) are swept into an abyss. Jesus appears and reprimands Philip for rendering evil for evil. Philip's punishment is that he will not be able to enter paradise for 40 days after he dies. After Philip "gives up the ghost":

"...the plant of the vine sprouted up where the blood of the holy Philip had dropped...And they built the church in that place..."

In the second part of the same Acts, Philip preaches in Athens in front of 300 philosophers, and eventually ends up in a battle with the Jewish High Priest Ananias (from Jerusalem). Although Philip performs many miracles, Ananias refuses to believe in Christ. Philip buries him, in stages, up to his knees, navel, and neck – and finally consigns him to the Abyss (Hades). The Acts end with:

"And Philip abode in Athens two years; and having founded a church, appointed a bishop and a presbyter, and so went away to Parthia [probably near modern day Tehran], preaching Christ. To whom be glory for ever. Amen."

## **Simon the Zealot**

Simon the Zealot is mentioned in all four lists of apostles in the New Testament – and no other information is given about him whatsoever. Traditionally, Simon is thought to have been a member of the Jewish Zealot party, a group of nationalists that eventually revolted (disastrously) against the Romans in 66 A.D. However, the name could also be translated "the zealous one".

## ***Church Tradition***

According to Hippolytus, Simon the Zealot was the second Bishop of Jerusalem:

"Simon the Zealot, the son of Clopas, who is also called Jude, became bishop of Jerusalem after James the Just, and fell asleep and was buried there at the age of 120 years."

Eusebius identifies that “Symeon, the son of Clopas,” was the second Bishop of Jerusalem, but he does not specifically connect this figure with Simon the Zealot.

The apocryphal *Passion of Simon and Jude* places Simon in Persia.

## Thaddaeus/Judas son of James

Matthew and Mark refer to an apostle named Thaddaeus in their apostolic list. Luke (in both lists) refers to a “Judas, son of James”. Generally, scholars feel these are one and the same. Some manuscripts mention yet a third name – Lebbaeus, as shown in this verse from the King James Version:

(Mat 10:3 KJV) “Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and **Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus...**” (emphasis added)

Thaddaeus/Judas possibly shows up in John, asking the following question:

(John 14:22 NIV) “Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”

(John 14:23 NIV) Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.””

Some scholars identify Thaddaeus/Judas as the author of *Jude*, but most scholars view the author of *Jude* as being the brother of Jesus and James (the Just).

## Church Tradition

Hippolytus records:

“Jude, who is also called Lebbaeus, preached to the people of Edessa, and to all Mesopotamia, and fell asleep at Berytus, and was buried there.”

Eusebius reports the contents of a Syriac manuscript that reports that Thaddaeus was sent by Thomas to Edessa, to heal and preach:

“After the ascension of Jesus, Judas, who was also called Thomas, sent to him Thaddeus, an apostle, one of the Seventy. When he was come he lodged with Tobias, the son of Tobias. When the report of him got abroad, it was told Abgarus that an apostle of Jesus was come, as he had written him. Thaddeus began then in the power of God to heal every disease and infirmity...The same Thaddeus cured also many other inhabitants of the city, and did wonders and marvelous works, and preached the word of God.” (Book 1, Chapter 13)

## Apocryphal

The apocryphal *Acts Of The Holy Apostle Thaddaeus - One Of The Twelve* tells us that Thaddaeus was from the city of Edessa, and was a follower of John the Baptist:

“LEBBAEUS, who also is Thaddaeus, was of the city of Edessa — and it is the metropolis of Osroene, in the interior of the Armenosyrians — an Hebrew by race, accomplished and most learned in the divine writings. He came to Jerusalem to worship in the days of John the Baptist; and having heard his preaching and seen his angelic life, he was baptized, and his name was called Thaddaeus. And having seen the appearing

of Christ, and His teaching, and His wonderful works, he followed Him, and became His disciple; and He chose him as one of the twelve, the tenth apostle according to the Evangelists Matthew and Mark.”

In the Acts, the Governor of Edessa, Abgarus, contracts an incurable disease. He sends a letter to Jesus (!), asking for help. In the course of the reply, Jesus promises to send Thaddaeus to Edessa. The passage is interesting, because it seems to foreshadow the Shroud of Turin:

“And Ananias [a courier], having gone and given the letter, was carefully looking at Christ, but was unable to fix Him in his mind. And He knew as knowing the heart, and asked to wash Himself; and a towel was given Him; and when He had washed Himself, He wiped His face with it. And His image having been imprinted upon the linen, He gave it to Ananias, saying: Give this, and take back this message, to him that sent thee: Peace to thee and thy city! For because of this I am come, to suffer for the world, and to rise again, and to raise up the forefathers. And after I have been taken up into the heavens I shall send thee my disciple Thaddaeus, who shall enlighten thee, and guide thee into all the truth, both thee and thy city.”

Thaddaeus eventually baptizes Abgarus, and establishes churches in Edessa and throughout Syria. Finally, the Acts report that Thaddaeus died in Berytus in Phoenicia:

“And Thaddaeus along with Abgarus destroyed idol-temples and built churches; ordained as bishop one of his disciples, and presbyters, and deacons, and gave them the rule of the psalmody and the holy liturgy. And having left them, he went to the city of Amis, great metropolis of the Mesechaldeans and Syrians, that is, of Mesopotamia-Syria, beside the river Tigris.

Having therefore remained with them for five years, he built a church; and having appointed as bishop one of his disciples, and presbyters, and deacons, and prayed for them, he went away, going round the cities of Syria, and teaching, and healing all the sick; whence he brought many cities and countries to Christ through His teaching. Teaching, therefore, and evangelizing along with the disciples, and healing the sick, he went to Berytus, a city of Phoenicia by the sea; and there, having taught and enlightened many, he fell asleep on the twenty-first of the month of August. And the disciples having come together, buried him with great honor; and many sick were healed, and they gave glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.”

This Acts may have slightly more credibility than some others, as many of the story elements are quoted by Eusebius in his Church History (Abgarus writing to Jesus, Jesus writing back (!), Thaddaeus journeying to Edessa to heal, etc.)

## Thomas

Thomas appears in all four New Testament lists of Apostles. In the Gospel of John, Thomas’s name is listed as “Thomas (called Didymus)”. *Didymus* is Greek for “twin” or “double”. Because the name Thomas is linked with Matthew in the three apostolic lists in the Synoptic Gospels (see, for example, Matt 10:3), some scholars have postulated that Thomas and Matthew were twin brothers.

Thomas appears several times in interesting roles in the Gospel of John. In the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of John, Thomas makes the following curious statement when Jesus suggests that the disciples visit the dead Lazarus:

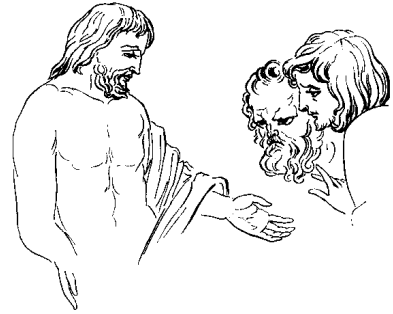
(John 11:16 NIV) “Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him.’”

Thomas also has the distinction of asking the question that prompts one of the most famous answers in the Bible:

(John 14:5 NIV) "Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

(John 14:6 NIV) Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

However, Thomas is most famous for his doubting that Jesus had resurrected from the dead, earning the sobriquet "Doubting Thomas". The incident is described in John 20:24-29, and quotes Thomas as saying "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."



Finally, Thomas is present on the Sea of Galilee when Jesus causes a miraculous catch of fish, and prepares breakfast for the apostles on the beach.

### **Church Tradition**

Hippolytus records that Thomas was an active missionary, and that he met his fate in India:

"And Thomas preached to the Parthians, Medes, Persians, Hyrcanians, Bactrians, and Margians, and was thrust through in the four members of his body with a pine spear at Calamene, the city of India, and was buried there."

Eusebius in his Church History records that Thomas sent other disciples out on missionary journeys:

"Thomas, one of the twelve apostles, under divine impulse sent Thaddeus, who was also numbered among the seventy disciples of Christ, to Edessa, as a preacher and evangelist of the teaching of Christ." (Book 1, Chapter 13)

Eusebius records that Thomas preached in Parthia (near modern-day Tehran):

"Parthia, according to tradition, was allotted to Thomas as his field of labor..." (Book 3, Chapter 1)

### **Apocryphal**

In the *Acts Of The Holy Apostle Thomas*, a reluctant Thomas is assigned missionary duty in India:

"AT that time we the apostles were all in Jerusalem...and we portioned out the regions of the world, in order that each one of us might go into the region that fell to him, and to the nation to which the Lord sent him. By lot, then, India fell to Judas Thomas, also called Didymus. And he did not wish to go, saying that he was not able to go on account of the weakness of the flesh; and how can I, being an Hebrew man, go among the Indians to proclaim the truth? And while he was thus reasoning and speaking, the Savior appeared to him through the night, and said to him: Fear not, Thomas; go away to India, and proclaim the word; for my grace shall be with thee."

In the same apocryphal acts, Jesus appears as the brother of Thomas:

“And he saw the Lord Jesus talking with the bride, and having the appearance of Judas Thomas, who shortly before had blessed them, and gone out from them; and he says to him: Didst thou not go out before them all? And how art thou found here? And the Lord said to him: I am not Judas, who also is Thomas; I am his brother.”

“...I know that thou art the twin-brother of Christ...”

Some people believe that this tradition is preserved in Da Vinci's *Last Supper* – note the apostle on the far left who looks very much like Jesus.

After an active career as a preacher and healer, Thomas is put to death by order of a King Misdeus, on the charge of heresy. In this account, Thomas is executed by spear:

“And when he had prayed, he said to the soldiers: Come and finish the work of him that sent you. And the four struck him at once, and killed him. And all the brethren wept, and wrapped him up in beautiful shawls, and many linen cloths, and laid him in the tomb in which of old the kings used to be buried.”

Later, King Misdeus believes that the bones of the apostle may be able to heal his daughter, who is possessed by a demon. When he goes to the tomb “he did not find the bones (for one of the brethren had taken them, and carried them into the regions of the West).”

Two Gospels have appeared in the name of Thomas. One is an infancy Gospel, purporting to discuss the “great things which our Lord Jesus Christ did in His childhood”. The second is a Gnostic Gospel, purporting to tell “the secret sayings that the living Jesus spoke and Didymus Judas Thomas recorded.” (Miller, p. 305)

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## Notes



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Robert C. Jones grew up in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area. He made his living as a hotel lounge band leader/musician from 1974-1981. In 1981, he moved to the Atlanta, Georgia area, where he received a B.S. in Computer Science at DeVry Institute of Technology. Since 1984, Robert has worked for Hewlett-Packard as a computer consultant.



Robert is an ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church. He has written and taught numerous adult Sunday School courses (see front inside cover). He has also been active in choir ministries over the years, and has taught the *Disciples* Bible Study five times.

Robert is also President of the Kennesaw Historical Society, for whom he has written several books, including "The Law Heard 'Round the World - An Examination of the Kennesaw Gun Law and Its Effects on the Community", "Retracing the Route of the General - Following in the Footsteps of the Andrews Raid", and "Kennesaw (Big Shanty) in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century". A new book, "Images of America: Kennesaw", was published by Arcadia in 2006.

Robert has also written several books on ghost towns in the Southwest, including in Death Valley, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, and Mojave National Preserve.

In 2005, Robert co-authored a business-oriented book entitled "Working Virtually: The Challenges of Virtual Teams". His co-authors were Lise Pace and Rob Oyung.

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