

## GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

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### The 12 Apostles

The study of the 12 Apostles is an intriguing subject - their personalities, their strengths, and their weaknesses. We need always to remember that not only were they human and, like us today, had failures and successes; but they also were trained by our Lord during His earthly ministry.

**Luk 6:13-16** *And when day came, He called His disciples to Him; and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles. Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew; and Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon [not Peter] who was called the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.*

The original twelve disciples of Jesus are mentioned in four lists in the New Testament. These four lists are divided into three groups each, with Peter heading the first group; Philip, the second; and James, the third. Each group in each of the 4 lists has the same persons. However, after the first name there is variety in the order. In all four lists, Peter is at the top and Judas Iscariot is at the bottom. Simon Peter's group has three more people in it - Andrew, James and John - listed in various order according to **Mat 10:2-4**, **Mar 3:16-19**, and **Act 1:13**. John never lists the disciples.

The second group is always begun by Philip; he's always number 5 and is then followed by Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas in various order. The third group is always begun by James, the Son of Alphaeus, and thereafter includes the same men - Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananaean, (which really means the Zealot) and Judas Iscariot, last. Judas is not mentioned in the book of Acts; by then he had committed suicide.

Initially the gospels can appear to be confusing because the Apostles are not always listed in the same order. Nor are they called by the same name. For example, in group three Thaddaeus and Judas, son of James, are the same person. Simon the Cananaean is also Simon the Zealot. It would be easy to mistake this individual for two different people, but he is one individual. Bartholomew is called Nathanael elsewhere. Thomas is called Didymus three times in the gospel of John, which means twin. James on one occasion is called "the Less;" perhaps he was the younger, perhaps he was the shorter. Matthew, whom we met earlier in our study, was called Levi in Luke's gospel.

## PETER

Let's look at the type of people our Lord chose as his disciples. Let's begin in **Luk 6:14** *Simon, whom He also named Peter.* The character of Peter is transparent and easily analyzed. He appears to have been the leader of the apostles on every occasion. He is named first in every list of them, and was their common spokesman. Peter was known for being bold, confident, courageous, frank, impulsive, energetic, vigorous, strong, loving and faithful to his Master in spite of his defection prior to the crucifixion. It is true that he was liable to change, and inconsistency prevailed at times. Because of his peculiar temperament Peter sometimes appeared forward and rash. Yet, his virtues and faults had their common root in his enthusiastic disposition. Such was Peter's makeup, his nature, and his personality traits. Peter was not a phony. However, at times, he was the type of individual who did not think before acting. He apparently had the strongest character in the group, and he frequently served as a spokesman for the disciples. He was their recognized leader. **Mar 1:35-36** *And in the early morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there. And Simon and his companions hunted for Him.*

An inner circle of three apostles existed among the Twelve. Peter was also the leader of this small group. This trio - Peter, James, and John - was present with Jesus on a number of occasions. These three witnessed the raising of a young girl from the dead, **Mar 5:37; Luk 8:51**. They were present at Jesus' transfiguration, **Mat 17:1-2**. And they were present during Jesus' agony in Gethsemane, **Mat 26:37, Mar 14:33**.

## ANDREW

**Luk 6:14** *"Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother;"*

Andreas means "manly," and has also been interpreted as "**the mighty one**" or "**conqueror.**" Andrew was the first called of the Twelve Apostles, which is significant. The choice was an important one, for Andrew's influence on the remaining followers of Christ would be one of searching and desiring higher things and a deeper knowledge of God. These character traits are what encouraged Andrew to first follow John the Baptist and then the Lamb of God to whom John pointed Andrew. Along with a keenness of perception regarding spiritual truths, Andrew also had a strong sense of personal conviction which enabled him not only to accept Jesus as the Messiah, but to win his brother Peter also as a disciple of Christ. Andrew was not the greatest of the apostles, yet he is typical of those men of open-minded understanding and sound common sense without whom the success of any great movement cannot be assured. Void of the boldness and ruggedness of Peter's character, to which only a few can aspire, Andrew had that feature which makes him a pattern within the reach of all - a

simple, earnest determination in carrying out the dictates of his personal convictions. Another feature in Andrew was his eagerness to win souls in private to Jesus. Andrew was not a powerful public speaker. He was a low-keyed individual who was very trustworthy.

While we admire Peter as the foremost apostle through whom 3,000 were added to the church on the day of Pentecost, let us not forget that without Andrew, "**Simon**" would never have become "**Peter**." So well known was his love for souls, that when certain Greeks desired to see Jesus, Andrew was the person to whom Philip brought them.

**Joh 12:20-22** *Now there were certain Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast; these therefore came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip came, and they told Jesus.*

However, Andrew had his faults; in **Joh 6:8-9** he shared in the disciples' unbelief when Jesus tested their faith.

**Joh 6:8-9** *One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?"*

**Luk 6:12-16** *And it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, He spent the whole night in prayer to God. And when day came, He called His disciples to Him; and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles: Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew; and Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon [not Peter] who was called the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.*

## JAMES

The next Apostle we will look at is James, the son of Zebedee and the older brother of John. From the time he was ordained an apostle, James occupied a prominent place among the apostles, and, along with Peter and John, became the special confidant of Jesus. These three apostles alone were present at the raising of Jairus' daughter, (**Luk 8:51**), at the Transfiguration, (**Mat 17:1-8**), and at the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, **Mat 26:36-46**.

Shortly after the Transfiguration, when Jesus was determined to go to Jerusalem, in **Luk 9:51**, they were passing through Samaria, the fury of James and John was kindled by the unkind reception given to our Lord by the crowd, **Luk 9:53**.

**Luk 9:51-56** *And it came about, when the days were approaching for His ascension, that He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem; and He sent*

*messengers on ahead of Him. And they went, and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make arrangements for Him. And they did not receive Him, because He was journeying with His face toward Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, 'Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?' But He turned and rebuked them, and said, 'You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.'*

It was probably for this type of hotheaded rashness and fanaticism that the surname "Boanerges," which means "Sons of Thunder," was bestowed on them when they were ordained to the Twelve, **Mar 3:17**. Note, however, that there was some excuse for their action. The impression left by the Transfiguration was still greatly upon them. They felt strongly that their Lord, whom they had just beheld "in His glory" with "His countenance altered" and "shining garments," should not be subjected to such indignities by the Samaritans. Upon the occasion of our Lord's last journey to Jerusalem, **Mar 10:32**, the two brothers gave expression to this presumptuous rashness in a more selfish manner, **Mar 10:35-45**. They presumed upon their intimacy with Jesus, and made the following request.

**Mar 10:35-40** *And James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Him, saying to Him, 'Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You.' And He said to them, 'What do you want Me to do for you?' And they said to Him, 'Grant that we may sit in Your glory, one on Your right, and one on Your left.' But Jesus said to them, 'You do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?' And they said to Him, 'We are able.' And Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized. But to sit on My right or on My left, this is not Mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.'*

In **Mat 20:20-28**, these words are put in the mouth of their mother, not directly from James and John. However, this request drew forth the rebuke of Jesus and moved the other ten with indignation, **Mar 10:40-45** *And hearing this, the ten began to feel indignant with James and John. And calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, 'You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.'*

James was the first of the 12 apostles to be put to death. Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great, killed James some time between A.D. 42-44. His death is the only martyrdom mentioned in the New Testament, **Act 12:2**.

## JOHN

**Luk 6:14** *Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; Both John and James were men of considerable wealth, assumed from the fact that they had "hired servants" with them and John's wife was one of those women who ministered of their substance to Jesus and His disciples, **Mat 27:55-56**. A comparison of **Mar 15:40-41** identifies the wife of Zebedee, John's mother, with Salome. It seems a fair inference from **Joh 19:25**, though all do not accept it, that Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Salome, the wife of Zebedee, were sisters. If true, James and John were cousins of Jesus, and were also related to the family of John the Baptist.*

John also held an intimate connection with the Lord. He was a young man of fiery zeal and a tendency toward intolerance and exclusiveness, evident in his desire to call down fire upon the Samaritan village. His tendency toward exclusiveness is manifested in the request of his mother as to the place her sons were to occupy in the kingdom - the highest positions. Jesus did not encourage this and rebuked these tendencies, but the tendencies reveal the man. John was in the inner circle of the disciples. Indeed, nearest of all to Jesus, he was called, *"the disciple whom Jesus loved"* (**Joh 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20**). Because of that love, John became the apostle of love. Interestingly enough he is the only one who wrote that he was the disciple that Jesus loved.

John was the kind of man who could profit by the rebuke of Jesus. John's passionate disposition was held in check, and under control, and was allowed to vent only on occasions when it was permissible, and even necessary. In John's gospel writings, note the intensity that he had displayed, but directed only against those who refused to believe in, and to acknowledge, Jesus as the Christ.

**Joh 13:21-23** *When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.' The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking. There was reclining on Jesus' breast one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.*

Did Jesus love all the disciples? According to **Joh 13:1**, *having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.* However, John calls himself, the disciple whom Jesus loved. Note **Joh 19:26** *"When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, Woman, behold, your son!"*

**Joh 20:1-8** *Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb. And so she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb,*

*and we do not know where they have laid Him.' Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they were going to the tomb. And the two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter, and came to the tomb first; and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in. Simon Peter therefore also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he beheld the linen wrappings lying there, and the face-cloth, which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb entered then also, and he saw and believed.*

**In Joh 21:7** *That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord.' And so when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea.*

**In Joh 21:20** *Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; the one who also had leaned back on His breast at the supper, and said, 'Lord, who is the one who betrays You?'*

John had "a quiet and thoughtful temperament" which is not inconsistent with a certain fierceness. It is not without significance that in the three narratives which are cited from the gospels to prove the overbearing temper of John, we are told that Jesus corrected him all three times. Are we to suppose that these rebukes made no impression? Is it more likely that they sank deep into his heart, and that the agony of beholding his Master's crucifixion made them impossible to forget and reject? And as he grew older and wiser, he began that long development which changed that youthful "son of thunder" into the "aged apostle of love." Never forget that love itself has its side of vehemence and passion, and the intensity of love toward a person or a cause may be measured by the intensity of antagonism and of disdain toward those who oppose and contradict that which they love. There are many reflections in the gospel of John and in his epistles, which display this energy of hatred toward the work of the devil and toward those dispositions under the influence of the father of lies. John, as a fervent youth devoted to his Master, carried with him to the end this same disposition which was characteristic. The power options - namely the filling of the Spirit and Bible doctrine - caused him to redirect that energy, fervency and passion toward the things of God.

## **PHILIP**

Next we have Philip. Along with Andrew and other fellow-townsmen, Philip had journeyed to Bethany to hear the teaching of John the Baptist, and there he received his first call from Christ, "Follow me," Joh 1:43. As with Andrew, Philip's Greek name implies he had Greek connections. This is strengthened by the fact that he acted as the spokesman of the Greeks at the Passover. Of a weaker mold than Andrew, he was the one to whom the Greeks would first

appeal when seeking answers from the Lord. Philip was very inquisitive, asked probing questions, and sympathized and understood the doubts and difficulties that the Greeks had. **1Co 1:22** *For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom;*

While Andrew was practical, strong-minded and naturally the type of man to win the impulsive, head-strong Peter; the slower Philip, versed in the Scriptures, appealed more to the critical Nathanael and the cultured Greeks. Philip was very cautious, deliberate, and desirous of submitting all truth to the test of sensuous experience.

**Joh 14:8-11** *Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; otherwise believe on account of the works themselves.'*

Philip concluded the same criterion would also be acceptable to Nathanael. **Joh 1:44-45** *Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'*

Note two things wrong that Philip said:

1. Philip did not find Jesus; Jesus found Philip.
2. Jesus was the Son of God, not of Joseph His reputed father.

We can deduce that in the beginning, Philip was sincere but deficient in knowledge; for it was Christ who found him, not he Christ. This was a fulfillment of a prophecy in **Isa 65:1** *I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask for Me; I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here am I, here am I,' To a nation which did not call on My name.*

**Joh 1:43** *The next day He [Jesus] purposed to go forth into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, Follow Me.*

**Joh 1:46** *And Nathanael said to him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip said to him, Come and see.*

It was the natural mindedness of Philip that influenced Jesus to awaken in Philip, His disciple, a larger and more spiritual faith, in **Joh 6:6**, seeking "to test him."

**Joh 6:4-6** *Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. Jesus therefore*

*lifting up His eyes, and seeing that a great multitude was coming to Him, said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?' And this He was saying to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do.*

This shows Jesus discipling His disciple. The natural reservedness, which affected Philip's beliefs, found expression in his outer life and conduct also. It was not merely modesty, but also a certain lack of self-reliance, that made Philip turn to Andrew for advice when the Greeks wished to see Jesus. The story of Philip's later life shows that he overcame those initial defects in his character, fulfilling the great commission in **Mat 28:16-20**. Philip stands at the head of the second group of the twelve apostles.

## **BARTHOLOMEW**

**Luk 6:14** *"Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew;"*

Not much is known about Bartholomew. Many scholars believe Bartholomew and Nathanael are the same, **Joh 1:45-49**. In the first three gospels, **Mat 10:3; Mar 3:18; Luk 6:14**, Philip and Bartholomew are constantly named together, whereas Nathanael is not mentioned. In the fourth gospel Philip and Nathanael are correspondingly combined, but nothing is said of Bartholomew. Therefore, Nathanael is considered to also be Bartholomew. Bartholomew was born in Cana of Galilee, **Joh 21:2**. He was a very sincere man in whom there was no guile or wickedness.

**Joh 1:45-46** *Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' And Nathanael said to him, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.'*

One of the first characteristics of Nathaniel or Bartholomew was what appeared to be a prejudice in him, as when he says, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" This is not to condemn or judge, but merely to try to give you a picture of what he was like in the natural realm as well as the spiritual realm.

**Joh 1:47-51** *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!' Nathanael said to Him, 'How do You know me?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.' Nathanael answered Him, 'Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these.' And He said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, you shall see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.'*

Nathanael or Bartholomew appears to be a calm, retiring, behind-the-scenes type whom man may not recognize, but God does. According to tradition, he was crucified upside down after being flayed alive. There is no further reference to him in the New Testament.

## MATTHEW

Matthew, the apostle and evangelist, is mentioned in the four catalogues of the apostles in **Mat 10:3**; **Mar 3:18**; **Luk 6:15**; **Act 1:13**, though his place varies between the seventh and eighth and places exchanging positions with Thomas. The call of Matthew illustrates a very prominent feature in the public action of Jesus - Jesus' utter disregard for religious opinion and worldly wisdom. A publican disciple and even more as a publican apostle, Matthew could not fail to be a stumbling block to Jewish prejudice; and therefore, overtly, a source of weakness rather than of strength. Yet, while perfectly aware of this fact, Jesus invited Matthew, one who had pursued the occupation of a tax-gatherer, to the intimate fellowship of discipleship and apostleship. The call of Matthew is all the more remarkable when contrasted with the manner in which our Lord treated others who had overt reputations - outward advantages which would seem to recommend them for a position with Christ.

**Mat 8:18-20** *Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to depart to the other side. And a certain scribe came and said to Him, 'Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.' And Jesus said to him, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.'*

Most likely Judas was upset with that statement since he wanted Jesus to join the bands of the scribes and Pharisees. This scribe in **Mat 8:10-20** showed a desire to follow Jesus by volunteering to become one of His disciples, but the Lord deliberately discouraged him with a challenge. This scribe, whose social position and professional attainments seemed to point him out as a very desirable acquisition for the Lord, was deliberately scared away by Jesus as He gave him a gloomy picture of the destitute condition our Lord's followers might face at times. Confident in the power of truth, He chose the base things of the world in preference to things held in esteem, assured that they would ultimately conquer in the end. Aware that both He and His disciples would be despised and rejected of men for a season, Jesus went calmly on His way, choosing for His companions and apostles "whom He would," undisturbed by the opinions of His generation. He knew that His work concerned all nations and all time.

Matthew is called "Matthew" in the first gospel while in the second and third gospels he is called "**Levi.**" Then in the book of Acts, he is once again called Matthew. Being a tax-collector Matthew was especially hated by the Jews because they considered the tax-collectors to be evil wicked men. Whether he

had more to repent of than his neighbors, we cannot tell. It is true that he belonged to a class of men, many of whom were truly guilty of fraud and extortion, but Matthew may have been an exception. We can only say this, if he had been covetous, the spirit of greed was now gone. If he had ever been guilty of oppressing the poor, he now despised such work. He had grown weary of collecting revenue from a reluctant population, and was glad to follow one who had come to take burdens off instead of laying them on, to release from debts instead of collection from them with severity.

When he was called, we read a very interesting statement. **Luk 5:27-28** *And after that He went out, and noticed a tax-gatherer named Levi, sitting in the tax office, and He said to him, 'Follow Me.' And he left everything behind, and rose and began to follow Him.*

I like the fact that Luke recorded this and I'll show you why. **Mat 9:9** *And as Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man, called Matthew, sitting in the tax office; and He said to him, 'Follow Me!' And he rose, and followed Him.* That's all Matthew says - not even recording that he left everything behind to follow Christ. He had the attitude of the apostle Paul in **Phi 3:7** *But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.* At what period of Christ's ministry he was called does not appear with certainty in the Scriptures, but we do know Peter, James and John were already trustworthy disciples of Jesus. Unlike the first six among the apostles, Matthew did not enter the group from among the pupils of John the Baptist. Following his call by Jesus, Matthew is not mentioned again in the New Testament. According to tradition Matthew preached in Judea and then in foreign nations especially Ethiopia.

## THOMAS

Next we have Thomas, who was also called "Didymus" or "the Twin," **Joh 11:16; 20:24; 21:2**, and is referred to in detail by the gospel of John alone. In **Joh 11:1-54**, when Jesus, despite imminent danger at the hands of hostile Jews, declared His intention of going to Bethany to heal Lazarus, Thomas alone opposed the other disciples who sought to discourage Him, and protested, *"Let us also go; that we may die with him."*

**Joh 11:11-16** *This He said, and after that He said to them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awaken him out of sleep.' The disciples therefore said to Him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.' Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep. Then Jesus therefore said to them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him.' Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with Him.'"*

Thomas, as many of you know, was known as the doubter in the group. When he said *"Let us also go, that we may die with Him,"* this was not a statement of courage but one of pessimism. Thomas had a tendency to stress the negative or unfavorable or to take the gloomiest possible view of things. On the night before our Lord's death, Thomas asked that famous question.

**Joh 14:1-7** *'Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way where I am going.'* Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.'

Now, when Thomas said in **Joh 14:5** *Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?*

Jesus had already answered Peter's question, in **Joh 13:36**. *Simon Peter said to Him, 'Lord, where are You going?' Jesus answered, 'Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later.'*

He told the disciples plainly that He was going to *"His Father's house,"* **Joh 14:2**, ascending to where He had been before, **Joh 6:62**. However, Thomas still cannot raise his mind to the unseen future home where Jesus is going, or realize the way as being through Jesus. After the crucifixion, Thomas apparently severed his connection with the rest of the apostles for a time, as he was not present when the risen Christ first appeared to them.

**Joh 20:25** *When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'* And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus therefore said to them again, 'Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.' But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore were saying to him, 'We have seen the Lord!' But he said to them, 'Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.'

Seeing was not enough for Thomas; not even feeling will satisfy him. Unless he

feels with both hand and finger the spear mark as well as the nail marks, he says he will not and cannot believe. However, he did rejoin them even though he was not convinced that Christ had risen from the dead. While not convincing him of the truth of the resurrection, which is why he said "Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe," at least they encouraged him to be among their number eight days later in the upper room.

**Joh 20:25-29** *The other disciples therefore were saying to him, 'We have seen the Lord!' But he said to them, 'Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.' And after eight days again His disciples were inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst, and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing.' Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.'*

Having received the proofs for which he sought, he made the confession, "My Lord and my God" in **Joh 20:28**, and was reproved by Jesus for his previous unbelief. Thomas is probably best known for his inability to believe that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead, and forever earned the name "doubting Thomas." Although little is recorded of Thomas in the gospels, he is yet one of the most fascinating of the apostles. He is typical of many individuals who have certain conflicting principles difficult to reconcile. He was the type of individual who seemed to have difficulty recovering quickly from setbacks and his inclination was to look upon life with the eyes of gloom or despondency. However, he still was a man of courage and entire unselfishness. With his perplexed faith in the teaching of Jesus there was mingled a sincere love for Jesus the teacher. Even in the incident of Christ's departure for Bethany, his devotion to the Lord proved stronger than his fear of death. Many times his faith and courage triumphed; but when it came into conflict with his standards of belief it was put to a harder test. Thomas desired to test all truth by the evidence of his senses. In this, coupled with a mind consistent with beliefs and disbeliefs, lay the real source of his difficulties with his faith.

It was his sincerity which made him stand distant from the rest of the disciples until he had attained a personal conviction regarding the resurrection; but his sincerity also drew from him the testimony to that conviction, "My Lord and my God." Thomas was also considered by some a native of Galilee, like most of the other apostles. From all of these incidents came the title of "Doubting Thomas," and is thus characterized as "slow to believe, subject to despondency, seeing all the difficulties of a case, viewing things on the darker side." It may be that he was of a critical tendency of mind, in which he did not recognize the statement of

eyewitnesses as a sufficient ground of faith. However, having attained notable faith (for sometimes faith that has overcome doubt is harder than that of those who never doubt), Thomas is promoted above Bartholomew and Matthew in Acts. The case of Thomas does not sanction but condemns skepticism, for if others were to demand the same tangible visible proofs as Thomas demanded, miracles would have to be so continual as to cease to be miraculous, and sight would supersede faith.

The unbelief of Thomas drew forth such an infallible proof of the identity between the crucified and the risen Lord that he who any longer disbelieves and is consequently condemned is left without excuse.

### JUDAS ISCARIOT

Interestingly, Judas Iscariot is always identified as such - Judas Iscariot. Judas was from Kerioth which means he was near Hebron at birth, and being reared there he is the only non-Galilean that Jesus chose. He was the only one from Judea and probably the sharpest of the twelve - that's why he was treasurer. However, don't be impressed by the sharpest of a group. Don't always think that the brightest is the best of the bunch. What you should pay attention to is character and attitude - not intellectual ability only. Our Lord does not grade according to SAT's, He looks at the heart.

Note the title the Lord gave Judas in **Joh 17**. Judas was called the son of perdition in **Joh 17:12** *"While I was with them, I was keeping them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled."*

Notice what He says, not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. Why is that important? If Judas was a believer (which he was not) and he perished, then our Lord did not fulfill the Father's will. **Joh 6:38-39** *"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."*

**Joh 17:12** *"While I was with them, I was keeping them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled."*

To be the "son of perdition" denotes that Judas is a man identified with eternal destruction and whose destiny is the Lake of Fire. The word "perdition" is also used for the antichrist in **2Th 2:3** *"Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction [perdition],"*

In **Rev 17:8** *The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction.*

**Rev 17:11** *And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.*

This makes "son of perdition" a predictive designation. **Act 1:25** says something very interesting about Judas, that he went "to his own place" - the place of his own choosing.

**Act 1:24-25** *And they prayed, and said, 'Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which one of these two Thou hast chosen to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.'*

It was not that Judas was foreordained from eternity past to go to hell without an opportunity to be saved. Instead, he chose to reject Jesus Christ and will suffer the consequences of any person who rejects the Savior. Judas also held the position of treasurer in the ministry of TLJC.

**Joh 12:1-6** *"Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him. Mary therefore took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii, and given to poor people? Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer [steal a little bit at a time] what was put into it."*

Matthew would have been the natural person to handle the money needed to sustain the Lord's ministry because he had been a tax-collector and well acquainted with money matters. However, Judas was the treasurer of the Lord's group of apostles indicating that he was no imbecile. He knew the ins-and-outs of collecting, managing, and spending money better than the others, including Matthew.

**Joh 12:6** *Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor,*

Character trait #1: He did not care about the poor. He was a hard-hearted man, too concerned with feathering his own nest while others, less fortunate, suffered around him **Joh 12:6**.

Character trait #2: He was a thief, pilfering funds from the Lord's treasury, which exposes that Judas was full of avarice or greed. Judas was not in tune with Jesus,

and rejected the Lord's message. Jesus preached the gospel to the poor, **Luk 7:22**. The Pharisees didn't do that. Why?

**Luk 16:14**, *The Pharisees were lovers of money.* Jesus taught that we should go out of our way to help the needy, as far as we are able (parable of the Good Samaritan, **Luke 10:29-37**). Judas did not welcome that message, nor did he want to help the needy. The comment from John that Judas was a thief is intended to stress the avarice of Judas, who saw in the price of the ointment nothing of the beautiful deed for which Jesus praised the woman, but only a means by which his funds would be increased, enabling him to line his own pocket. Even this motive was cloaked under a deceptive plea that the money could be given away to relieve the poor. Thus to covetousness there is added the trait of deceit.

Was Judas saved? **Joh 6:66-71** *As a result of this [in context, hard sayings from Jesus] many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore. Jesus said therefore to the twelve, 'You do not want to go away also, do you?' Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.' Jesus answered them, 'Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?' Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.*

"One of you is a devil" reveals Jesus' omniscience.

**Joh 6:64** *"But there are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him."*

Just like He revealed His omniscience with Nathanael in **Joh 1:47-48** *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!' Nathanael said to Him, 'How do You know me?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.'*

It was the Tuesday night following a dinner party at Mary, Martha, and Lazarus' home in Bethany, when Jesus rebuked His disciples and particularly Judas, that Judas rejected the Lord one time too many. The devil then possessed him the first of two times during the final week of Jesus' life.

**Luk 22:1-3** *Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might put Him to death; for they were afraid of the people. And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve.*

The phrase "*Satan entered into Judas*" is the preposition **eis** plus the aor-act-ind of the verb **eiserchomai**, which is **Eiselthen** with a capital Epsilon that literally means to enter into someone. This same verb with the same preposition and construction is used in **Luk 8:30** *And Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Legion'; for many demons had entered him.*

In **Luk 8:33**, the same prepositional phrase with the exact same verb is used, "*And the demons came out from the man and entered the swine; [eis plus the aor-act-ind of the verb eiserchomai which is eiselthen again] and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake, and were drowned.*"

**Luk 22:2-4** *And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might put Him to death; for they were afraid of the people. And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve. And he went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers how he might betray Him to them.*

The gospels do not state why Judas betrayed Jesus. We may infer at least two reasons. Judas did it after becoming convinced that Jesus was going to die and not reign as King, **Mar 14:3-11**. In that passage Jesus rebukes some of His disciples because a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard broke the vial and poured it over His head. Some of them were irate and they began to ask to one another, "Why has this perfume been wasted?"

**Mar 14:5-10** *'For this perfume might have been sold for over three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.' And they were scolding her. But Jesus said, 'Let her alone; why do you bother her? She has done a good deed to Me. For the poor you always have with you, and whenever you wish, you can do them good; but you do not always have Me. She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial. And truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, that also which this woman has done shall be spoken of in memory of her.' And Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went off to the chief priests, in order to betray Him to them.*

If Judas was convinced that Jesus was going to die and not reign as King, his hopes for political power and influence were dashed. Then secondly, Judas also did it for money, **Mat 26:14-16**. Judas' expectation of financial wealth no longer existed either. Therefore, Judas bargained for what he could receive from the religious leaders (30 pieces of silver). The night of Christ's betrayal began with the Passover feast. Judas was apparently still smarting from Jesus' rebuke. Jesus reclined at the table getting ready to explain what was about to happen while at the same time, the religious leaders were meeting to discuss how they could arrest Jesus and put Him to death. The multitudes intimidated them, and they needed and discussed a private way to apprehend the Lord in **Mar 14:1-2**.

**Mar 14:1-2** *Now the Passover and Unleavened Bread was two days off; and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to seize Him by stealth, and kill Him; for they were saying, 'Not during the festival, lest there be a riot of the people.'*

Satan's demons attended that meeting. Once they knew of the religious leaders' desire, they hastened to Satan with the news. The devil had stepped out of Judas' life for a short time, but then Satan hatched a plan and imparted it to Judas' soul while Judas sat at the Passover table with Jesus.

**Joh 13:2** *And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him,*

Satan apparently did this without possessing Judas because it is not until after Jesus gives bread to him that Satan re-enters Judas.

**Joh 13:3-9** *Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God, and was going back to God, rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. And so He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, 'Lord, do You wash my feet?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'What I do you do not realize now, but you shall understand hereafter.' Peter said to Him, 'Never shall You wash my feet!' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.' Simon Peter said to Him, 'Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.'*

The following very simply describes the fact that Judas was not saved:

**Joh 13:10-11** *"Jesus said to him, He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean;"*

"Washing the feet" refers to rebound; "completely clean" refers to salvation. "Jesus said to him, He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you. For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, Not all of you are clean." As the Last Supper continues, Jesus proceeds to train His apostles in humility, servanthood, and forgiveness, which He illustrates by washing their feet. The Lord's announcement of betrayal, during the solemn Passover occasion, bewilders the apostles. **Joh 13:21-27** *"When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.' The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking. There was reclining on Jesus' breast one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore gestured to him, and said to him, 'Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking.' He, leaning back thus on Jesus' breast, said to Him,*

*'Lord, who is it?' Jesus therefore answered, 'That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him.' So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. And after the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Jesus therefore said to him, 'What you do, do quickly.'"*

Again we have the preposition **eis** plus the aor-act-ind of the verb **eiserchomai** which is **eiselthen** which means to enter into someone. Judas was possessed by Satan - just like the King of Tyre was possessed by Satan, **Eze 28**. This is the second time during the final week that Satan possesses Judas. In **Joh 13:31**, Judas departs the Upper Room where the Lord and the apostles were eating the Last Supper.

**Joh 13:31** *When therefore he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him;"*

Comparing the other gospel accounts, we see the devil motivate Judas to tell the religious leaders that he will find a way to betray Jesus. His plan would avoid confrontation with the crowds gathered in Jerusalem for the Passover, **Luk 22:6**. The religious leaders promptly paid Judas for his treacherous scheme, **Mar 14:10-11**. Judas thought the Garden of Gethsemane would be an ideal place to arrest Jesus because it was outside the city's eastern wall and away from the crowds, **Mat 26:27-28**. Satan, who anticipated the Lord's movements, put this plan into Judas' head. Judas, the traitor, notified the religious leaders that he would identify Jesus with a "kiss."

**Mat 26:48** *Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, 'Whomever I shall kiss, He is the one; seize Him.'*

Why a kiss? It would be nighttime and not immediately apparent to the soldiers who Christ was among His disciples. Once the religious leaders called together the Roman soldiers (a military unit, or cohort, of 600), they tagged along as well, and Judas led them to the place in the Garden where Jesus prayed. This treacherous act by Judas became embedded in the minds of the apostles, so much so that Paul, when explaining the communion service, says:

**1Co 11:23** *For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread;*

If you still believe that Judas may have been saved, look at what Jesus said at the Last Supper. **Mat 26:20-24** *Now when evening had come, He was reclining at the table with the twelve disciples. And as they were eating, He said, Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me. And being deeply grieved, they each one began to say to Him, Surely not I, Lord? And He answered and said, He who dipped his hand with Me in the bowl is the one who will betray Me. The Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of*

*Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.*

If Judas was going to go heaven after his betrayal, isn't that better than non-existence? Being in a place where there shall no longer be any death; no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; a place of perfect happiness! Jesus said **Mat 26:24-25** *'The Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.'* And Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, *'Surely it is not I, Rabbi?' He said to him, 'You have said it yourself.'*

How much clearer can you get than that? In **Joh 6:64**, Jesus says that some of His disciples never believed from the beginning, and He mentions Judas as one of them. Judas did miracles, healed the sick and cast out devils in the name of the Lord; and you mean to tell me he was never saved? In **Mat 7:21-23** Jesus speaks of this. *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven."*

What is the will of His Father?

**Joh 6:40** *"For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."*

**Mat 7:22-23** *"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"*

He had no personal knowledge of them. They were NEVER born again. Yet they did these mighty works, as did Judas. Peter denied the Lord three times (**Luke 22:31-34**), but he had faith and was graciously restored; but Judas was a betrayer who never had faith to begin with, so he died and went to his own place, **Act 1:25**. The manner in which the betrayal by Judas was conducted supports the idea that Judas was actuated by malicious, revengeful feelings. Not content with giving enough information which would enable the Jewish authorities to get their victim into their hands, Judas led the band that was sent to apprehend his Master, and even pointed Him out to them by an affectionate salutation - a kiss. To one in a vengeful mood that kiss might be sweet; but to a man in any other mood, even though he were a traitor, how detestable and appalling! The kiss was not necessary for the success of the plot; for the military detachment was furnished with torches, and Judas could have indicated Jesus to them while he himself kept in the background. Judas was an unbeliever who committed suicide and is now suffering in Hades in the place of torments.

### **JAMES, SON OF ALPHEUS**

**Luk 6:15** and Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus,

This James is generally identified with James the Little or the Less, the brother of Joseph and son of Mary, **Mat 27:56**; **Mar 15:40**. In each list of the apostles he is mentioned in ninth position. He is said to be the brother of Jude, **Jud 1:1**. We know very little of his background except that some teach that he was known for his quietness and humility. Perhaps the type of individual who doesn't stand out in a crowd, but is always faithful.

### **SIMON THE ZEALOT**

**Luk 6:15** and Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon [not Peter] who was called the Zealot;

Simon is called the Zealot and the Canaanite to distinguish him from Simon Peter. He was an ex-member of a fanatical Jewish sect, called the Zealots. Members of this group were fanatical opponents of Roman rule in Palestine. As a Zealot, Simon hated any foreign domination or interference. The Zealots were also known for their fierce advocacy of the Mosaic rituals. He was strong-willed, and once he made up his mind he was the type of individual to go all the way with what he believed. He was not a leader, but a tremendous strong-willed follower. Simon received his call to the apostleship along with Andrew and Peter, the sons of Zebedee, Thaddaeus and Judas Iscariot at the Sea of Tiberias, **Mat 4:18-22**. Although Simon, like the majority of the apostles, was probably a Galilean, the designation "Canaanite" is regarded as of political rather than of geographical significance.

### **JUDAS SON OF JAMES**

Judas, surnamed Thaddeus was also called Judas the Zealot and was a very enthusiastic and intense individual, **Mat 10:3**. The only incident recorded of Judas is in **Joh 14:22**, where during Christ's address to the disciples after the last supper he put the question, **Joh 14:22-25** *Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, 'Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me. These things I have spoken to you, while abiding with you.'*

He seems to have been a follower who needed to fall in love with his Lord. Tradition says he preached in Assyria and Persia and died a martyr in Persia.

**The leading characteristic of each apostle seems to be:**

Peter - impulsive

Andrew - open-minded

James - fanatical

John - passionate

Philip - inquisitive

Bartholomew - composed

Matthew - humble

Thomas - pessimism

James the son of Alphaeus - quietness

Simon the Zealot - strong-willed

Judas son of James - intense

Judas - traitor.

What you want to pay attention to is character and attitude, not intellectual ability only. What did these men have with the exception of one? They were available, they were flexible, they were teachable, and they were dependable. With these four traits character can be built. There was within them not a great deal of intellectual ability, except probably with Judas Iscariot, but they had the things from which character could be built. They were Galileans, also. Galileans were easily recognized when they spoke. This is why during the trial of Jesus, it was a simple matter for the servant girl to detect Simon Peter as one of Jesus' disciples. The name Galilean was also used as a term of contempt or reproach when applied to the disciples of Jesus, **Luk 22:59; Act 2:7**. The people of Galilee were always blamed for neglecting the study of their language, charged with errors in grammar, and especially with absurd mispronunciation, sometimes leading to ridiculous mistakes. A good book to read on this subject is called the "Master Plan of Evangelism" by Robert Coleman, who has done a wonderful job explaining how Jesus worked with His twelve.

In the section on selection, Coleman writes this: "There is no evidence of haste in the selection of these disciples, just determination. What is more revealing about these men is that at first they do not impress us as being key men."

None of them occupied prominent places in the synagogue, nor did any of them belong to the Levitical priesthood, and for the most part they were common laboring men probably having no professional training beyond the rudiments of knowledge necessary for their vocation.

Perhaps a few of them came from families of considerable means, such as the sons of Zebedee, but none of them could have been considered wealthy. They had no academic degrees in the arts and philosophies of their day. Like their master their formal education likely consisted only of the synagogue schools. Most of them were raised in the poor section of the country around Galilee. Only one of the twelve, Judas Iscariot, came from the more refined region of Judea.

By any standard of sophisticated culture then and now they would surely be considered as a rather ragged aggregation of souls. One might wonder how Jesus could ever use them. They were impulsive, temperamental, easily offended, and had all the prejudices of their environment.

They are real people like you and me. They are not saints. We made them into saints, and of course, their life after Pentecost was incredible and certainly deserves our salute, but we've turned these men into celebrities and made them into statues in cathedrals. But that was not the way it should have been. They were just plain garden-variety men who were available, and teachable, flexible and dependable willing to go with Christ. He chose them. This gives people like us hope. People like you and me who can name our faults and weaknesses much quicker than we can name our strengths, plagued by them at times, might think that if the Lord were choosing today, I would never be on that list. You might be surprised! **Jesus saw His men not as what they were, but as what they were to become.** That's a great principle. And so should you and I with our children, the people we work with, our friends, we should see them in the process of what they could become.

I believe He chose mainly Galileans because that was where He was raised. He knew Galileans. He understood the Galilean culture and mind-set. Maybe He also selected men from the same area so that there would be that oneness among them. Who knows the mystery of the choice of Judas Iscariot? He did not pick Judas Iscariot because He was looking for a traitor. He just knew according to the Old Testament that there would be a traitor among them, **Psa 1:9; Psa 109:6-19; Zec 11:12.**

Right away, Jesus gave the twelve their first taste of ministry as He descended to a "level place" on the side of the mountain. **Luk 6:17** *And He descended with them, and stood on a level place; and there was a great multitude of His disciples,*

Standing by His side, His disciples watched in amazement as He cured diseases and cast out demons. There were a lot of **mathetes**, a lot of learners, a lot of men and women sitting around ready to learn hanging on His every word, and think of how they felt when they saw the twelve. One wonders if there wasn't envy wishing he or she had been chosen. There was a great multitude of His disciples and then there's the larger group, a larger circle,

In **Luk 6:17-18** *and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear Him, and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured.*

Many of His other disciples, as well as people from all over the nation, had flocked to this place and "were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing them all."

**Luk 6:19** *And all the multitude were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing them all.*

That was the disciples' first view of boot camp training. What a great moment! I wonder if Peter didn't look wondering, "How could He be that patient, I'd love to have that quality?" Or, if Andrew didn't look and think, "How great it is that He reaches out, if only I were more assertive, I'm not like that." Maybe John, the passionate one, the devoted one, was thinking "How practical of Him to be in touch and accessible, I would love to be like that."

That is part of mentoring. Our Lord didn't just teach them principles and give them facts, He showed them those principles and facts in action. They saw in Him the strengths that He was telling them that they were going to have someday. Their temperaments didn't change. Temperament doesn't change. Their personality didn't change. God gives that prior to birth, that's built into our genes. But the way of dealing with life and people and our attitudes, those are choices we make and things that can change in our lives. How wonderful it was for them to see Him with the crowd, pushing, pulling, and reaching and shoving, and yet still being patient and tolerant. The disciples were impressed. They will spend three and a half years impressed. He was the Best. And then He turned and looked at His men. When all was silent, He delivered His greatest sermon, beginning with a series of beatitudes similar to those recorded in Matthew's gospel. His thesis was simple. Those who follow Him must operate under a set of values opposite that of the world. For example, those whom the world calls miserable, Jesus pronounces "blessed," or happy.

**Luk 6:20** *And turning His gaze on His disciples [you see, He's training], He began to say, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God."*

This had nothing to do with financial ability. He is talking about you who are poor in spirit. You who do not conduct yourself with an elevated opinion of yourself. You who are not arrogant, you are who are teachable. Blessed are you. You have begun to touch the kingdom of God.

**Luk 6:21** *"Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh."*

*"Blessed or happy are you who hunger now,"* doesn't mean that your stomach growls and you haven't had food. It is a hungering for righteousness. It is a hungering for the truth of God. The "hunger" is your desire, passion, dedication, and devotion for righteousness and truth. It is never really having that sense of fullness. You're always ready for more.

**Luk 6:21** *"Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh."*

You who are touched with the sorrows and horrors of the world. You who are moved with compassion, and brought to tears around the needs of others. Happy are you! While others laugh and shove them away, blessed are you for touching their lives. Blessed are you for caring.

**Luk 6:22-23** *"Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and cast insults at you, and spurn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Be glad in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets."*

The world's view is: "They're not going to ostracize me and get away with it!" "They're not going to insult me like that." "They're not going to talk to me like that. Don't they know who I am? I have my rights." He says, "Blessed are you when you are hated and ostracized and insulted, and they spurn your name as profanity." "Happy are you." This is wisdom in reverse order. This is a wonderful truth, but the world laughs at it. As a matter of fact, the more you read through here the more you realize that what the world laughs at, Christ rewards. And what Christ turns off as nothing, the world gives trophies.

**Luk 6:24** *"But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full."*

He is not saying, if you're well off, you're wrong; certainly not! If you earned it, and earned it the right way, it's yours from God. It's the person who trusts in his riches, whose whole dream in life is to get rich; when he gets there, enough is never enough. Woe to you! Does that sound like today's council? Has anyone at work ever told you, "Woe to you if you get rich?" Can you imagine, you're on the sales force and someone says, "Woe to you if you're the top salesman?"

What He is saying is that, you're getting everything now. You wanted to get rich, you are rich, you've got it. Enjoy it!

**Luk 6:25** *"Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep."*

This has the idea of laughing at significant and sacred things. If you do, you will mourn later.

**Luk 6:26** *"Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for in the same way their fathers used to treat the false prophets."*

You see, our Lord's sermon leads us to a crossroads. We must decide whether to pursue the wide path or the narrow path, the world's values or Christ's values, immediate gratification or ultimate glorification. It's not an easy decision because it's easy to go in the other direction. It's much easier to go the way of the world. After all, that's what the majority does. Choosing Christ will open the door to insult and injury. It may mean passing up some tantalizing, worldly delights. But however rocky the narrow road gets, our Lord is there to satisfy our deepest hunger and bestow on us riches this world has never known.

Which way will you choose? Jesus promised his disciples three things: they would be completely fearless, absurdly happy, and in constant trouble. None of that is like the world's counsel. It all boils down to this: if you take the world's way and buy into it, you must abandon Christ's way. Or, if you take Christ's way and buy into it, you need to abandon the world's philosophy.

**Life doesn't revolve around:**

- a. Getting what you want.
- b. Making all the money that you ever dreamed of making.
- c. Life doesn't revolve around being famous, successful or popular.

God's work revolves around not immediate gratification, but ultimate glorification. The world runs from difficulty. Christ says, "I want men who will run toward it." As you go through this passage, you can see the world's payoff is now. While the world's view is for now, Christ's payoff is for all eternity.

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