

Apostles - What We Know From Scripture And History

Week 7 – March 6 & 7, 2024

MATTHEW & THOMAS

THE TWELVE DISCIPLES

Simon Peter, Andrew, James, Philip, Thomas, Matthew
Bartholemew and Simon, Judas, Judas, James, and John

Matthew & Thomas --- All of us have personal characteristics and traits we do not like. Just like Matthew and Thomas, the subjects of this lesson, we can seek change and the grace to continue to grow into what we can be as we turn our lives over to our Savior, Jesus.

More obscure compared to some of the others, these two apostles are still well known.

Matthew If you saw this word in the Greek new testament what would you assume it means?
But the word for Disciple is '*mathetes*', meaning a 'learner' or 'follower'.

His actual name: Matthew - Greek – *maththaios* – pronounced math-thy'-os
and it means 'gift of Yahweh'. He is also called 'Levi'.

As a Jew, why might he be called Levi?

Or it may be that Matthew was more of a Greek name and Levi the Jewish name.

The Gospel of Matthew - He is ascribed to be the author of the Gospel according to Matthew, however the Gospel of Matthew's author is anonymous. Matthew the Apostle is traditionally considered the author. The early church claimed he wrote it and "according to Matthew" was added possibly as early as the second century. While there are credible arguments against his authorship, no alternative writer has been named.

Matthew is only mentioned seven times in the Bible.

All three synoptic gospels have a version his call to follow Jesus. (read and discuss)

"⁹ As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him. ¹⁰ And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. ¹¹ And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹² But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³ Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." –Matthew 9:9-13

"As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him." —Mark 2:14

"After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him." —Luke 5:27-28

In Mark's Gospel, he tells the story of Jesus being in Capernaum and healing the paralytic who was lowered down through the roof.

Read individually and discuss these two passages

Mark 2:13-17 and Luke 5:17-32

Matthew gives us one of the most important trio of statements / commands from Jesus.

Read and discuss:

Matthew 10:34-42 (The Great Commitment)

Matthew 22:34-40 (The Great Commandment)

Matthew 28:1-20 (The Great Commission)

Matthew beyond the Scriptures - Some extra-biblical traditions teach that Matthew extended his ministry to Ethiopia, where he was eventually martyred – some accounts say he was beheaded, stoned, burned, or stabbed. One even suggests he died of old age, like John, but most scholars believe he was probably martyred.

Thomas

His name: - John 11:5-16

Thomas wasn't actually given a name in the original manuscripts. "Thomas" comes from the Aramaic word *tē'omā*, which means "twin." To help clarify who we're talking about though, most manuscripts include the description, "called Didymus" or "called the Twin."

His nicknames:

The Twin - John 11:16 (NASB 95) --- ¹⁶ Therefore Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to *his* fellow disciples, "Let us also go, so that we may die with Him."

Doubting Thomas & Professing Thomas - John 20:24-29

He's only mentioned eight times in the entire New Testament, and four of those times are just lists of the twelve apostles. And while throughout church history people have been happy to fill in the details of his life, few of those details are reliable. (For example, one ancient text even claimed he was Jesus' twin brother . . . what?!)

But while the Bible tells us little about him, Thomas' cautious approach to believing in the resurrection laid the foundation for evidence-based faith and for the Protestant teaching of *sola fide*, or faith alone. And even though he lived 2,000 years ago, Thomas also serves as a foundation of faith for Christians today—those who have not seen and yet have believed.

How did Thomas die?

For such a minor apostle, church tradition is remarkably consistent about his death. An early church calendar reads:

"3 July, St. Thomas who was pierced with a lance in 'India'."

Syrian Christian tradition specifies that this took place on July 3, 72 AD. And *The Acts of Thomas* says he was martyred via spears in Mylapore, India.