

The Master's men - Part 7 *James son of Alpheus, Thaddeus & Simon the Zealot*

Mathew 10:1 to 4



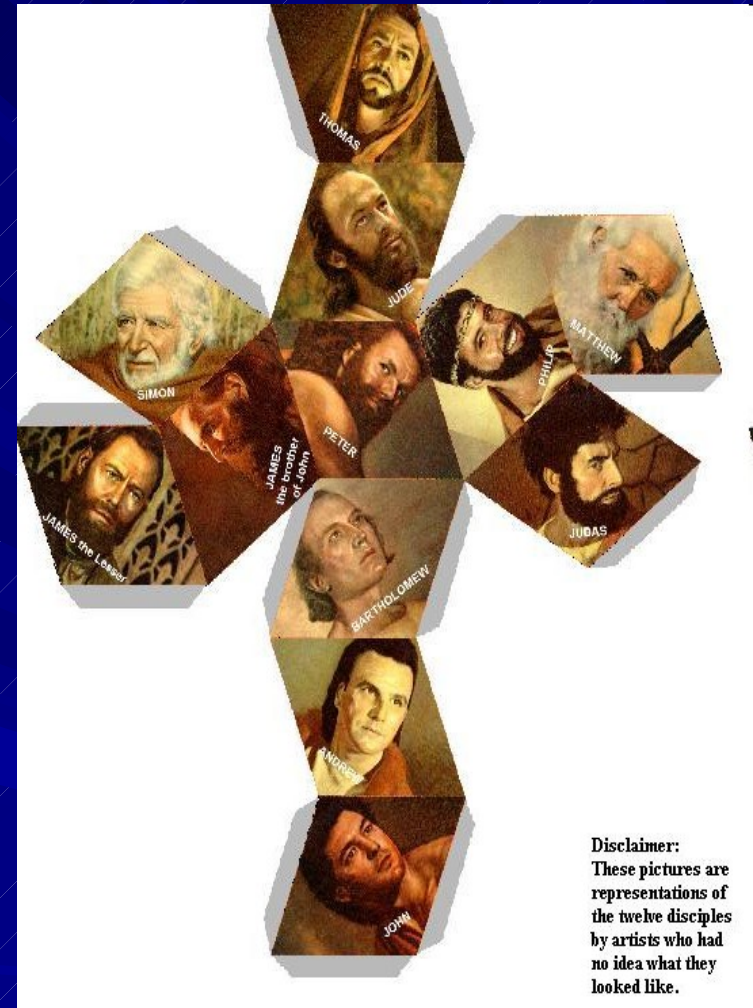
The Master's Community Fellowship

"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." - 2 Timothy 2:21

What does it take to be a real disciple of Jesus Christ ?

Henry Drummond, the Scottish author and evangelist who was once invited to speak at an exclusive London gentlemen's club said "Gentlemen, the entrance fee into the kingdom of heaven is nothing; however, the annual subscription is everything." Because Jesus Christ paid the total price for salvation, it costs nothing to become His disciple. But to follow Him as a faithful disciple costs everything we have.

As we continue our study of the Master's men we are reminded of this commitment just as the real committed disciples left everything they have to follow Jesus Christ. Jesus reminds us of this commitment in John 6:26, 53, 60, 66 - 69



Disclaimer:
These pictures are representations of the twelve disciples by artists who had no idea what they looked like.



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Up close & personal: JAMES SON OF ALPHEUS – The unknown apostle

Name: James son of Alpheus, also known as “James the less” (Mark 15:40)

Former Occupation: Unknown

Hometown: Unknown

Family relations: Two possibilities: He could be the brother of Mathew, because Mathew is also known as “son of Alpheus” or a cousin of Jesus Christ as Clopas is a form of “Alpheus” and Jesus mother Mary has a sister also named “Mary” the wife of Clopas. Further James the Less’ mother is also named “Mary.” It is also possible he is both Mathew’s brother and Jesus cousin, either case there is no mention of this and he seemed to be very low profile.



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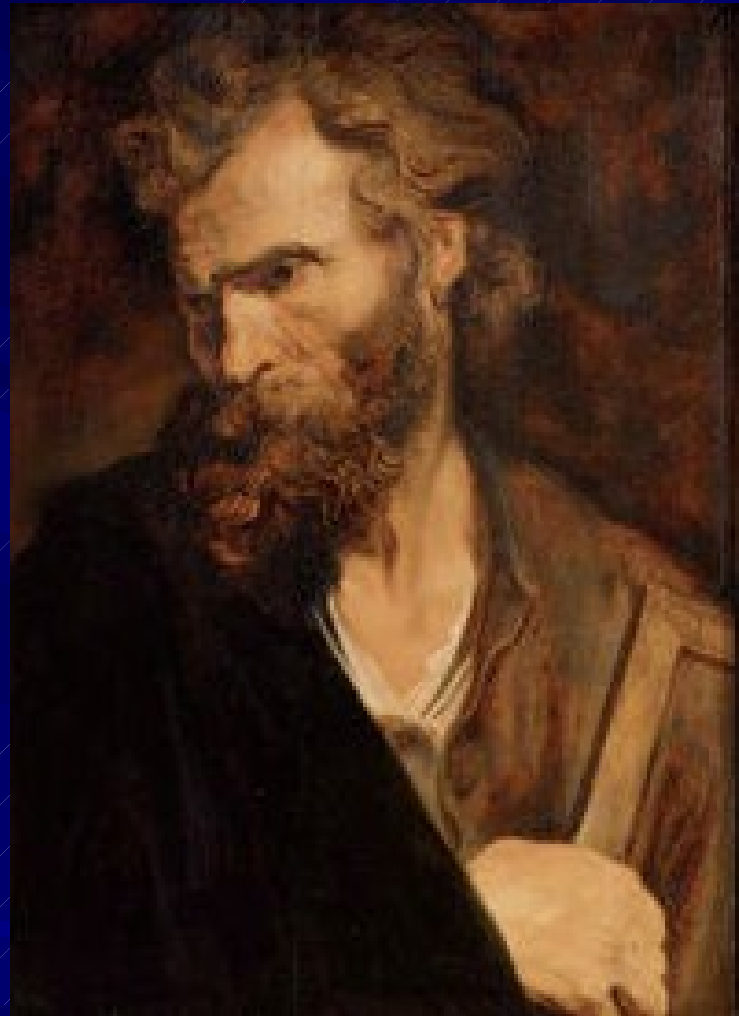
Apart from some facts about his name & possible family relationships, nothing is said about James the less in Scripture. Nothing is recorded of him speaking a single word or doing something specific in the Gospels. He remains one of the most obscure Apostle which we really know nothing about, but considering that he is one of the twelve, we can assume that he fulfilled the role and the job that Jesus Christ gave him to do.

AT THE END OF LIFE OF James the Less



The early church fathers say that he preached in Persia and he was martyred by being crucified in Egypt. Other church tradition says that he was asked by the high priest asked to stand on the Temple wall and speak against Jesus to the crowds. James instead spoke in favor of Jesus and many were converted. So the religious leaders threw James down from the Temple wall. Yet he did not die, so they began to stone him. Still he did not die, so a man took a fuller club (used to beat out clothing) and clubbed him to death.

Up close and personal: Thaddeus “The mysterious apostle”



Name: Thaddaeus (Hebrew name means: *breast child*), otherwise called as *Lebbaeus* (Hebrew: *Heart Child*) *Thaddeus*. Luke calls him *Judas the son of James*. Most likely *Judas* (Hebrew name means *Jehovah leads*) was his original name and *Thaddeus* and *Lebbaeus* were descriptive names added by family and friends. Called as “*Jude*” in most modern translations to distinguish from *Judas Iscariot*.

Known family Relationships: Unknown

Former Occupation: Unknown

Residence: Unknown

Note: He is not the author of the epistle of *Jude*.



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The only instance in the Gospels where Thaddeus was mentioned is in John 14:2. During the night before his arrest and trial Jesus told them that the he who keeps his commands is the one that loves him and he who loves him shall be loved by the father and that Jesus will love him and will disclose himself to Him. To which Thaddeus asked him “Lord what then has happened that you are going to disclose yourself to us and not to the world ?”

Thaddeus obviously was confused how could Jesus manifest himself outwardly only to those he loved without manifesting himself to everyone else. In other words like most Jews of his days, he was still expecting that Jesus would reign and rule physically.

Jesus did not rebuke Thaddeus for his misunderstanding and further clarified what he said by the negative side of the truth. Jesus clarified that what he is establishing is a spiritual kingdom where only those that love and trust him can understand, believe and can accept what he really meant.



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AT THE END OF THE LIFE OF THADDEUS



Tradition holds that Thaddeus preached the Gospel in Judea, Samaria, Idumaea, Syria, Mesopotamia and Libya.

He reportedly suffered martyrdom about 65 AD in Beirut, in the Roman province of Syria, together with the apostle Simon the Zealot, with whom he is usually connected. It is said that he was blessed with the gift of healing and through him hundreds of people in Syria were healed. He is said to have healed the king of the country and converted him to Christianity. An unbelieving nephew of the King who did not like the fact that the king became a Christian, killed the Apostle Thaddeus with a club.



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Up close and personal: Simon the Zealot “The leftist apostle”

Name: Simon the Zealot, or Simon Zelotes.

Known family Relationships: *Unknown*

Former Occupation: *Unknown*

Residence: *Unknown*

Note: Named as Simon the Zealot to distinguish him from Simon Peter. (The term erroneously translated in some translations as “Simon the Canaanite” is a mistranslation of the Hebrew word “Kananaios” which is derived from the Hebrew word “ganna” meaning zealous.)



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As with the other two disciples who remains very obscure and mysterious to us, nothing is said about Simon Zelotes anywhere else in the Gospels. The only thing we know about him is the possible fact that he is a Zealot.

Zealots (Along with the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes) were one of the four dominant religious-political parties in Israel during the time of Christ. Each of the 4 parties all want the same ultimate goal of ushering in the “Kingdom of God” in order to free Israel from foreign rule although each have different plans of achieving it. Among the 4, Zealots are far more motivated by politics than religion. They were primarily guerilla fighters and made frequent surprise attacks on Romans post and patrols. They sometimes resorted to terrorism and carried out assassination plots that we they were called by the Jewish historian Josphehus as “sicarii” (Daggerman) Zealots have so much zeal for a national identity that their continual harassing of the Romans led to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D 70.

Zealots are said to have started under Judas Maccabaeus when Israel revolted against Greek conquerors. During the time of Christ another Zealot leader named Judas was have said to be an outstanding Zealot leader. The last we hear from the Zealots was in A.D 72 during their last stand which lasted for 7 months in the fortress of Masada, led by a Zealot named Eleazar.

We can easily conclude that Simon, being a Zealot was a man of intense dedication and perhaps violent passion. His always being listed next to Judas Iscariot suggest that those men were somewhat two of a kind whose primary concern about the Messiah was earthly rather than spiritual. He probably joined Christ because he thought he had found a better leader that was sure to bring in the kingdom of God. But whatever their original motivations were in following Christ, it is apparent that Simon the Zealot's earthly concern soon vanished becoming more concerned about his devotion towards Christ as he soon became one of the twelve who was martyred for his faith.

AT THE END OF THE LIFE OF SIMON



Tradition states that he traveled and preached in the Middle East and Africa with the Apostle Thaddeus as his evangelism partner. There are lots of places that is claimed to be his place of martyrdom and a lot of causes for his martyrdom also. Some say he was crucified, one popular story says he was sawn in half while another popular traditional story says he was martyred together with the Apostle Thaddeus.