

Matthew 10:1-4

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/matt/matt-10/matthew-101-4/>

Jesus empowers His group of twelve disciples to perform miracles before He sends them throughout the land. Matthew lists the twelve apostles by name.

The parallel gospel accounts of this event are found in Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 6:12-16.

At some point, either as *Jesus* was out and about His circuit going through the cities and towns teaching, preaching, and healing, or after He finished this tour, He *summoned His twelve disciples*.

Jesus had a larger group of followers, also regularly referred to as *His disciples* (Luke 10:1; John 6:66). But *Matthew* informs the reader here, that *Jesus* had a closer group from among *His disciples* known as the *twelve*. *Matthew* states that *Jesus summoned His twelve disciples*, while Luke's account of this event provides more details. Luke adds that *Jesus* spent the night in prayer before selecting *the twelve* (Luke 6:12-16).

The twelve disciples will be with *Jesus* throughout the rest of His ministry. They will witness His miracles. They will hear His parables and discuss their meaning with Him in less busy moments. They will follow Him wherever He travels. They will be with Him in the upper room for the "Last Supper" (Matthew 26:20) and witness all that followed between then and their Lord's arrest. All but one of *the twelve* will abandon Him during His trial, hiding during His execution on the cross and in the day that follows. They will interact with the resurrected Lord after God raises Him back to life, and receive the Spirit of God to empower them to launch the Great Commission. According to Church tradition, they all suffered for their faith, dying a martyr's death, except for John, who suffered the death of exile.

Jesus gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Before Christ sends His disciples out to harvest more followers and *disciples*, He assigns them with power to perform supernatural miracles. For a time, at least, *the twelve* will be able to heal like *Jesus* was able to heal, because *Jesus gave them authority to heal*. They will be able to cast out demons like *Jesus* was able to cast out demons. This *authority* does not come from themselves, but from *Jesus* who commissioned them. In doing this for His *disciples*, *Jesus* is giving them the same pattern that He followed with His Father. In the gospel of John, *Jesus* said that He does nothing of His own initiative or power, but only what the Father tells Him to do. Throughout His earthly life, *Jesus* always acted entirely within the authority His Father granted Him. In many respects, *Jesus* is giving His *disciples* the opportunity to be like Him.

He also may be giving them this authority to help disperse the crowds that seem to be making it difficult for *Jesus* to communicate His message. By commissioning *the twelve* with these powers, *Jesus* might be able to spend more time teaching and less time healing. In addition, the gospel of the kingdom is proclaimed by *twelve* additional men, instead of by *Jesus* alone. The reach of

Jesus's ministry is greatly expanded by this strategy. Finally, by giving *the twelve authority* to perform miracles, it also attracts less attention from His enemies toward Him, and helps Him keep His identity concealed until the appointed time, even as more and more Jews are blessed and offer more praises to God for the marvelous things He is doing.

The twelve are both *disciples* and *apostles* of *Jesus*. Before *Matthew* gives *the names of the twelve*, he uses the word *apostles*, instead of only *disciples* to describe them. The designation is important. Disciple means "learner" or "follower." Jesus had many disciples. Luke indicates that He had no fewer than seventy (Luke 10:1). Apostle carries more weight and authority. An apostle is literally one who is sent out on behalf of the one who sent him. They are like an ambassador. An apostle's words and actions represent and carry a similar weight of the one the ambassador represents. Centuries later when the church was sorting out which written works should be included in the New Testament, a primary consideration was Apostolic sponsorship.

The first of the twelve was *Simon, who is called Peter*. *Matthew* may have begun with *Peter* because of *the twelve* he was the most well-known to his Jewish readership in the years that followed Christ's death and resurrection. The word translated *first* can also mean first in rank. *Peter* is featured as one of the main personalities ministering in Judea in the first half of Acts, and seems to be the leader of the twelve. It would make sense then to begin with the leader, and someone who is familiar.

Simon who is called Peter, is probably the disciple that we also know the most about. *Peter*, along with his brother Andrew, were among the first of Jesus's *disciples* according to *Matthew* and *John* (Matthew 4:18-20; John 1:40-42). *Peter* was a Galilean fisherman whose given name was Simeon (Acts 15:14). Simeon is the namesake of the second oldest of Jacob's (later Israel) *twelve* sons (Genesis 29:33). *Simon* is the Greek version of Simeon. Both Simeons were described as short-tempered men of action. Jacob's Simeon, along with his brother Levi, took revenge on the people of Shechem for the rape of his sister. "Each took his sword and came upon the city unawares, and killed every male" (Genesis 34:25). Until he became disillusioned by Jesus' arrest, *Simon Peter* was willing to fight to the death for Jesus, and as his Master was being arrested, cut off a man's ear, before Jesus told him to stop (John 18:10). One of *the twelve* tribes of Israel was named after Simeon, son of Jacob.

While *Simon* was the Greek version of his given name, this disciple was more widely known by the nickname, *Peter*. *Peter* is the Anglicized version of the Greek word for "rock" or "stone" which is "Petros." *Peter* is also sometimes referred to as "Cephas" which also means "rock" (John 1:42). Petros is a good description of Peter's personality. Rocks are hard and *Peter* was hard-headed. *Peter* is blunt. He speaks his mind, which sometimes results in him saying awkward things (Mark 9:5-6). Sometimes Peter's frankness leads him to say evil things, such as when he rebuked Jesus (Mark 8:32-33). But he also on occasion speaks bold truth as evidenced by the fact that *Peter* blurted out to *Jesus* that He was the Messiah (Matthew 16:13-17). His rough actions mirrored his plain and honest mind. He is sincere in the things he says, whether it is getting out of the boat to walk on water, or in being willing to die for his Lord.

Peter was among the three (along with *James* and *John*) of Jesus's closest friends. The trio witnessed *Jesus* reveal His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9; Mark 9:1-9;

Luke 9:28-36). *Peter* infamously denied *Jesus* in the wake of His arrest and weeps bitterly when he recognizes his cowardice. The resurrected *Jesus* restored *Peter* and reaffirmed to his broken disciple that He had big plans for him, if he would follow Him to the death (John 21:15-22). *Peter* did follow Him. *Peter* exemplifies the primary characteristic *Jesus* seemed to apply to His selection of apostles—the willingness to fight and die for the cause. None of the twelve appear to have had credentials that would have impressed the Jewish elites.

Peter boldly preached the gospel at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-41). He is used by God to bring the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10). And he valiantly led the church in the face of constant persecution, first from the Jews (Acts 4:1-22; 5:17-42), later from King Herod (Acts 12:1-19), and eventually from Rome. It is believed that *Peter* was crucified under Nero in Rome. Tradition claims that *Peter* asked to be crucified upside down because he felt unworthy to be killed in the same manner as his Lord.

Simon, who is called Peter is believed to have been the source for Mark's gospel account. It was to the house of Mark's mother where *Peter* came when he was miraculously released from prison (Acts 12:12). He is the author of at least two epistles (1 Peter and 2 Peter). In them, he urged his readers to live by faith in the face of fiery trials and false teachers so that they might obtain the reward of divine "inheritance" (1 Peter 1:4) and enter *Jesus*' "eternal kingdom" (2 Peter 1:11) as his Master taught him and his fellow *disciples* to do (Matthew 6:20, 33; 7:13-14, 21).

Jesus loves *Peter* and will use this fisherman from Galilee to do great things for His Kingdom. *Peter*'s sincerity and fearlessness will be used by God mightily.

The second apostle *Matthew* names is *Andrew, Peter's brother*. Like his brother, *Andrew* was fisherman and an early follower of *Jesus*. But before *Andrew* followed *Jesus*, he was a disciple of John the Baptizer (John 1:35-40). *Andrew* probably followed John for a short time after the Baptizer relocated his ministry to Galilee (where *Andrew* lived) following his arrest and interrogation by the religious authorities in Jerusalem (Matthew 4:12). After John told *Andrew* that *Jesus* was the "Lamb of God," *Andrew* found out where *Jesus* was staying and spent the night with him. The next morning, *Andrew* told *Peter* that he had found the Messiah and brought him to *Jesus* (John 1:41-42).

Elsewhere the Bible says that *Andrew* brought the young boy who had the fishes and loaves to *Jesus* (John 6:8), that he and *Philip* brought some curious Greeks to see *Jesus* (John 12:20-22). After *Jesus* prophesied that the beautiful stones of the temple would be torn down, *Andrew*, along with *Peter*, *James*, and *John* asked *Jesus* what He meant (Mark 13:3). *Andrew* is last mentioned by name in the Bible in Acts 1:13 where he is waiting in the upper room in obedience to the risen Lord's commands to go to Jerusalem and wait.

Church tradition holds that *Andrew* was martyred and killed for his faith and executed on an x-shaped cross.

The third apostle *Matthew* names is *James the son of Zebedee*. *James* and his brother, *John* were Galilean fishermen, and likely worked in the family business for their father, *Zebedee*, and were partners with *Peter* (Luke 5:10). When Matthew 27:56 and Mark 15:40 are harmonized, it

appears that James' and John's mother was Salome. These brothers were called to follow *Jesus* shortly after *Andrew* and *Peter* were called to follow Him (Matthew 4:21-22). *Jesus* referred to *James and John* as "'Boanerges,' which means 'Sons of Thunder'" (Mark 3:17). Both brothers were zealous. On at least one occasion their zeal was misguided when they asked if their Master wanted them to call down fire from heaven to destroy a Samaritan village who spurned *Jesus*'s request for hospitality.

"When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined 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. But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem. 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.' And they went on to another village." (Luke 9:51-56)

James was fiery and ambitious. He wanted to be great. He prompted his mother to vicariously ask *Jesus* to appoint her sons to sit on *Jesus*'s left and right side at the coming of His kingdom (Matthew 20:20-21, Mark 10:35-37). This request stoked resentment and jealousy among the other disciples (Mark 10:41). But *Jesus* did not discourage their ambition. He redirected their fierce zeal to be servants, and encouraged their ambition to be great.

"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 this way 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.'" (Mark 10:42-45)

Interestingly, in Revelation 3:21, *Jesus* offers this reward, to share His throne with Him, to any believer in Laodicea who overcomes as He, *Jesus*, overcame. One trial *Jesus* overcame was the temptation to live in His own will, and to seize power rather than serving the mission His Father sent Him to serve.

Like *Peter*, *James and John* appeared to be part of *Jesus*'s closest group. The trio were allowed into the room when *Jesus* raised *Jairus*'s daughter from the dead (Mark 5:37). They were the only three disciples to witness *Christ*'s transfiguration (Matthew 17:1, Mark 9:2, Luke 9:28). And *James, Peter, and John* were brought by *Jesus* further into the Garden of Gethsemane and asked to pray for Him as the Lord was deeply distressed about the cup He was about to drink (Matthew 26:36-27).

James was the first of the apostles to be executed and martyred for his faith (Acts 12:2). He was killed at the command of Herod Agrippa I of Judea around 44 A.D. The Sons of Thunder also demonstrate that *Jesus* selected His closest followers to have sufficient zeal to die for the cause to which they committed.

The fourth apostle *Matthew* names is *John*, *James*'s brother. *John* is seen alongside his brother every time *James* is mentioned in the gospels. *John* was particularly close to *Jesus* during His

earthly ministry. In his own gospel account, it is often thought that *John* references himself by the description, “the disciple whom *Jesus* loved.” This disciple was the one who reclined beside *Jesus* at the last supper and asked who the betrayer was (John 13:23-25); who was the lone disciple who stood at the cross with *Jesus*’s mother (John 19:25-27); who ran with *Peter* to see the empty tomb (John 20:2-10); and who was with *Peter* and the risen Lord *Jesus* when the latter restored the former on the shore of Galilee (John 21:1-22). *John* also may have been the unnamed disciple who along with *Andrew* was first turned onto *Jesus* by *John* the Baptist (John 1:35-40).

In Acts, *John* is mentioned four times. He is in the upper room waiting with the other disciples (Acts 1:13). He was with *Peter* when *Peter* healed the lame man by the Beautiful Gate and then gave a sermon (Acts 3). As this sermon was being shared, *John* was arrested along with *Peter* by the temple guard and threatened by the Sadducees (Acts 4:1-23). And *John* was sent with *Peter* by the other apostles to Samaria to investigate the reports that the Samaritans had received the gospel (Acts 8:14). The only time he is mentioned in the non-Johannine epistles is when Paul describes him along with James (*Jesus*’s half-brother), *Cephas* (*Peter*) as “reputed pillars [of the Church]” (Galatians 2:9).

John was the author of four epistles. These were 1 *John*, 2 *John*, 3 *John*, and Revelation. *John* received the visions that were the source of Revelation while exiled on the island of Patmos (Revelation 1:9). Church tradition holds that *John* later died in exile on this island.

The fifth apostle *Matthew* names is *Philip*. *Philip* was from the fishing village of Bethsaida, the hometown of *Peter* and *Andrew* on the northeastern shore of Galilee (John 1:44). *Jesus* personally called *Philip* to “Follow Me” the day after He summoned *Peter* and *Andrew* (John 1:43). *Philip* led his reluctant brother, Nathanael, to *Jesus* (John 1:45-51). The other three times *Philip* is mentioned in the Gospels are when he brought the Greeks to *Andrew*, and together the two led them to *Jesus* (John 12:21-22); when *Jesus* tested *Philip* asking Him where they were to buy food for the multitudes, before Christ miraculously fed them (John 6:5-7); and when *Philip* asked *Jesus* to show the Father to the disciples (John 14:8-9).

In between *Jesus*’s ascension into heaven and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, *Philip* is with the disciples in the upper room (Acts 1:23). It’s possible that *Philip* the Apostle could be the evangelist named in Acts 8:25-40, but it seems more likely that this *Philip* was one of the seven deacons listed in Acts 6:5. This account tells us that *Philip* obeyed an angel of the Lord and traveled to the desert road of Gaza. There he encountered an Ethiopian eunuch. He answered the eunuch’s questions and led him through the scriptures to faith in Christ. After he baptized the eunuch, *Philip* was whisked away to Azotus where he preached “the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea” (Acts 8:40).

Many years later Paul stays in the house of “Philip the evangelist” in Caesarea on his way to bring donations to the poor in Jerusalem. Luke wrote that this *Philip* had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses (Acts 21:8-9). Church tradition holds that *Philip the Apostle* was martyred and killed for his faith and either crucified or beheaded in Hierapolis, a Roman city in Anatolia (modern Turkey, which was the Roman province called “Asia”) around the year 80 A.D.

The sixth apostle *Matthew* names is *Bartholomew*. This disciple is only mentioned by this name in the four listings of disciples. Besides Matthew's listing, it includes Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:14-16, and Acts 1:13. *Bartholomew* is never mentioned by this name in John's gospel. In all four listings, Bartholomew's name immediately follows *Philip*. *Bartholomew* means "son of Talmai" and may have only been a patronymic name.

It is possible that this "son of Talmai" is the same Nathanael who *Philip* told "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph (John 1:45). Nathanael's response and his introduction to *Jesus* are interesting.

"Nathanael said to him, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!' 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 will see greater things than these.' And He said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.'" (John 1:46-51)

Church tradition holds that *Bartholomew* was martyred and killed for his faith in Armenia by crucifixion, decapitation, or being skinned alive.

The seventh apostle *Matthew* names is *Thomas*. The name *Thomas* in Hebrew means "twin." Beyond the listing of disciples, he is only mentioned by name on three other occasions in scripture. All of them are found in the gospel of John.

The first is after Jesus informs the disciples that He will travel to the village of Bethany, outside Jerusalem, to see Mary and Martha and weep for the death of his friend, Lazarus. In a sign of commitment to Jesus and pessimistic concern for His safety, Thomas tells his fellow disciples "Let us also go, so that we may die with Him" (John 11:16). The selection of Thomas also demonstrates that Jesus chose those who would have the commitment to die for the cause.

The second time we see *Thomas* in scripture is when *Thomas* is skeptical and doubts the disciples accounts that Jesus has risen from the dead. He famously declared, "Unless I 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" (John 20:25). The third and final time occurred eight days later, when Jesus did appear to Thomas and he confessed "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).

According to Church tradition, *Thomas* was martyred and killed for his faith as he shared the gospel in India.

The eighth apostle *Matthew* names is himself. *Matthew* was a Roman *tax collector* in the employment of Herod Antipas. His job was to collect taxes on goods that flowed up and down the highway that ran from Damascus through Capernaum where he was headquartered, to the port town of Acre on the Mediterranean coast or to Jerusalem to the south. As a *tax collector* he

would have known the price of goods and been an excellent record keeper. To hold such a post, Matthew would have been fluent in Aramaic, the household language throughout Judea, and Greek, the commercial language of the Roman Empire. He also would have known a fair bit of Latin, the official language of the Roman administration. As a Jew, Matthew was fluent in Hebrew. Because he collected taxes for Rome, *Matthew* would have been despised by his fellow Jews as someone who sold out to the enemy. Tax collectors were known to overcharge the rates and grow rich off the excess.

Jesus called *Matthew* to be a disciple and later attended a party at Matthew's house (Matthew 9:9-13). Matthew is known as "Levi" in Luke's Gospel (Luke 5:27, 6:15). Mark writes that he was the son of Alphaeus (Mark 2:14). It is possible that Matthew was related to a second apostle named *James*, who also had a father named *Alphaeus* (Mark 3:18). The Bible never officially states that these two disciples were related, but they may have been. *Matthew* is the author of this Gospel account. He is not mentioned again in scripture after Luke lists him with the other disciples in Acts 1:13. Jesus' selection of Matthew would likely have been considered controversial, but the Bible makes clear God looks past externalities and sees the heart (1 Samuel 16:7).

Church tradition holds that *Matthew* was martyred and killed for his faith, possibly in Ethiopia.

The ninth apostle *Matthew* names is *James the son of Alphaeus*. This disciple is not obviously mentioned by name outside the listings of the twelve anywhere in scripture. He may have been the half-brother to his fellow *apostle*, *Matthew*, whom Mark also describes as "the son of Alphaeus" (Mark 2:14). The Bible never overtly makes this claim, but it does provide several points of evidence that, when drawn together, show that they might be related.

Church tradition holds that *James the son of Alphaeus* was martyred and killed for his faith.

The tenth apostle *Matthew* names is *Thaddaeus*. Like *James, the son of Alphaeus*, outside of the four listings of the twelve (Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:14-16, and Acts 1:13), *Thaddaeus* is not mentioned by name anywhere else in scripture. In the Luke and Acts listings (which were both written by Luke), Thaddaeus is called "Judas, the son [or brother] of James."

Church tradition teaches that *Thaddaeus* was martyred and killed for his faith in Syria.

The eleventh apostle *Matthew* names is *Simon the Zealot*. This *Simon* is a mysterious disciple. The Greek text in Matthew does say that he was a "Zealot" as the translators suggest. Matthew says he was a "Canaanite" ("Kananaios"). Mark's list also uses the term "Canaanite." It is in Luke's list that we learn that *Simon* "was called *the Zealot*" (Luke 6:15). Luke repeats this label in Acts 1:13. These terms on the surface appear at odds with each other. Canaanites were pagan Baal worshipers whom God commanded the children of Israel to annihilate and drive from their land. Israel only partially obeyed. Canaanites were the living example of what God did not want His people to emulate. Their culture was filled with human exploitation, and included child sacrifice. The term *Zealot*, on the other hand, referred to the militant political group of Jews who were zealous to liberate Judea from the pagan influence of Roman occupation. It seems odd that someone who belonged to Jewish military organization dedicated to eliminating pagan influence

would also be known as a “Canaanite.” Perhaps this connection made sense to *Simon the Zealot/Canaanite* and those who knew him but is lost to us?

Church tradition claims that *Simon the Zealot* was martyred and killed for his faith, but its legends vary wildly as to where this was to have occurred. Some say he was killed in Samaria, some in Persia, and others say he was executed as far away as Spain or England.

The party of Jewish Zealots waged the Jewish wars that began in AD 66 and ended in AD 73. The headquarters of the Zealots was in Gamla, a fortress town about five miles from the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. The Romans placed a legion on the eastern shore of Galilee, perhaps because of the presence of the Zealots. It could be that Simon was a member of that party, in which case he would have been part of a group of twelve that included a tax collector who worked for the Romans as well as a Zealot who was dedicated to eliminating the Romans. During the Jewish Wars, the Zealots at Gamla jumped from the cliff on which the city was located rather than be captured by the Romans. It is estimated that between three and four thousand leapt to their death. Jerusalem was razed to the ground as a part of this war in 70 AD. The final stand was made by the Zealots at Masada, when roughly a thousand Zealots took their lives rather than be captured by the Romans.

It seems clear that Jesus desired the zealot spirit, and its attendant ambition, but intended to redirect it toward a courageous advance of the Gospel of the Kingdom (Matthew 4:17).

The last and twelfth apostle *Matthew* names is *Judas Iscariot*. *Judas Iscariot* was the apostle who betrayed Jesus. The name *Judas Iscariot* means “Judah of Kerioth.” Kerioth was a town located in the far south of Judea, approximately 25 miles south of Jerusalem and 10 miles west of the Dead Sea. *Judas* had the distinction of being the only disciple from Judea. The Gospel of John indicates that Jesus spent his first year in Judea, with little known fruit. It could be that *Judas* was His only disciple from that area, and the one who would betray Him, which would make complete Judea’s rejection of Jesus.

Judas was the treasurer of the disciples. But he embezzled their funds. He miserly begrudged Martha and Lazarus’s sister, Mary, when she used expensive perfume to wipe Jesus’s feet instead of donating it to the Lord where he could secretly steal from the donation (John 12:4-6). *Matthew* reports that it was this occasion where *Judas* sought out Jesus’s enemies to bargain a price for betraying His master to them. His opportunity came quickly when *Judas* was in the city of Jerusalem with *Jesus* and the other disciples for Passover. He agreed to do this for thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-16). Luke says that Satan entered *Judas* as he did this (Luke 22:3). Since *Judas* was from Judea, he might have relied upon old connections in making this bargain.

Judas went with *Jesus* and the disciples to the upper room. There *Jesus* washed the feet of his betrayer (John 13:5). As He led the Passover Feast, *Jesus* announced that one of His disciples would betray Him and quietly identified *Judas* before sending him away. The other disciples were ignorant to what was happening and believed *Judas* was running an errand (John 13:21-28).

Judas did not return to *Jesus* until he came accompanied by a large, armed crowd sent by the chief priests and city elders (Matthew 26:47). He identified *Jesus* with a kiss. As *Jesus* was being tried for execution, *Judas* deeply regretted what he had done and tried to return the money. The priests refused it. *Judas* threw the money in the temple sanctuary, fled, and hanged himself. (Matthew 27:3-5) Luke describes *Judas* hanging himself as he fell on his sword and details that “all his intestines gushed out” (Acts 1:18). Matthew 27:4 indicates that *Judas* had great remorse when he saw that “he betrayed innocent blood.” His later suicide might have presaged the zealots who would a generation later kill themselves when they did not get their own way. Many believe the inter-fighting of the zealots in Jerusalem was largely responsible for their defeat.

As a group *the twelve* were an eclectic bunch. They came from different backgrounds, poor fisherman, wealthy Roman tax collectors, and national Zealots. They all appear to be from the Galilean region, with the exception of *Judas Iscariot*. What *the twelve* had in common was an ambition to be great and a zealous, fighting spirit that was willing to die. All but one made the transition from willingness to die for a national cause to willingness to die for God’s kingdom, a kingdom that is not of this world (John 18:36).

With His guidance and redirection, *Jesus* will make tremendous use of such men. They and others will found a movement that will sweep the world, bringing dignity to the oppressed, and contesting the morality of exploitation. Rome will crush the political zealots, but will fall to the spiritual zealots, when the Emperor Constantine will turn over Rome to church leaders in 330 AD.

Biblical Text

Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.