

# The Original 12 Apostles



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## Peter



Peter or Simon Barjonas (Simon son of Jonah) was one of the first four apostles called to the ministry. With Andrew, James, and John, he shared not only the calling of Apostle, but also a common occupation of a fisherman. The Four men are believed to have been business partners in a fishing venture when the Savior passed by on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. To the four men was given a simple call as the Savior said to them, "Come follow me and I'll make you fishers of men". Showing their faith and devotion from the start the scriptures record that they dropped their nets and followed him straight way. Early in their relationship, Jesus told Peter that he would be called 'Cephas' which means stone or rock. Peter, through his perseverance, became just that. He was strong and fast in his defense of the gospel. The Lord eventually selected Peter as the President of His church and left him with the stewardship of running the church after His death. Peter was eventually crucified by the Romans; however, he did not feel worthy to die the same death as the Savior so they crucified him upside down. His death took place in approximately 64 AD.

## James



James, sometimes better known as the brother of John, served as the first counselor in the first, First Presidency of the church. As stated previously, he was a fisherman by trade. In Hebrew his name is Jacob. Apparently, King James wanted his name associated with Holy Script and changed Jacob to read James. Of the three members of the First Presidency, least is known about James. Obviously, the Lord had great trust and faith in him; however, we have few examples of his diligence. He was the brother of John the Beloved, and the son of Zebedee. After a life of service, he ended his mortal existence by refusing to give into the wicked demands of Herod. Consequently, he was killed (year unknown). There are two traditions about his death. The first says that Herod beheaded him, while the other says that Herod had him stoned and beaten at the hands of his fellow Jews and finally dashed his brains out with a fullers club.

## Judas



Judas is known as Lebbeus Thaddeus or Judas the brother of James. Some accounts separate him by saying, Judas, not Iscariot. Here again, we have an apostle of whom we know very little. There is not the confusion surrounding Judas like James the Lesser, but we frankly just don't know him very well. His death is said to have taken place in Edessa in the year 72 AD via crucifixion; however, it is also believed that he died at the hands of a halberd as shown in the sculpture created by Tornvaldsen. Again there is some obscurity as to the accuracy of the record.

## Nathanael



Nathanael or Bartholomew is another somewhat obscure Apostle. We know that he was a friend of Phillip; however, little is recorded as to his personal merit. He was designated by Christ as "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile". We know that he had a home in Cana of Galilee and that he was a fisherman by trade. He is referred to by different names in the Gospels. It is thought that Bartholomew is an association since it means 'son of Tolmai'. Tradition states that Nathanael also died in much the same fashion as the other apostles. Unfortunately, we have no recorded information conveying the details of his

## Nathanael -continued-

death or his life after the death of the Savior. We know that he ministered as an apostle; however, details are vague at best. The Danish Sculpture, 'Tornvaldsen' sculpted him with a knife as a symbol for his martyr death. Maybe Tornevaldsen, who lived several hundred years ago, had access to records that we do not have.

## Andrew



Andrew, the brother of Peter, was originally a follower of John the Baptist. Both he and John the Beloved had faithfully served John until the Messiah started his ministry. As Christ began to preach, John the Baptist instructed them to follow Him. He was so impressed with the Savior that he went and found his brother Petr and told him that he had found the Promised Messiah. Andrew was one of the seven apostles that were told of their special call prior to the Savior officially calling the twelve Apostles. Andrew was present for many miracles, the feeding of the five thousand, the Lord's ascension, and many others; however, we know little of his personal works. Likewise, we know little about his death. Tradition says that he was crucified in Edessa, but the year and details are unknown.

## James the Lesser



James the lesser or James II, has probably the controversial history of the original Apostles. Some say that he is indeed the brother of Jesus, being a son of Mary and Joseph. Others say that 'this' James is an entirely different person, than Jesus' brother with the same name. One Gospel writer refers to him as the son of Alphus, which leads some to speculate that he is a brother of Matthew. In addition, there are several controversial works, attributed to this James, whose authenticity are questioned. Poor James was undoubtedly a faithful Apostle worthy of our memory, yet his life is somewhat obscure. The lack of clarity in his life also accomplished his death. He is said to have been beaten and stoned by a group of Jews, who finally bashed his brains out with a fullers club; however, this tradition is also associated with the death of James the brother of James. Someday we might all marvel when we find out who this James really was.

## John



John the Beloved, or the Revelator, is known as the disciple that Jesus loved. He was seated next to the Savior at the Last Supper and is said to have rested his head on the Savior's bosom. At the crucifixion, he was told by the Savior to take Mary, Jesus Mother, into his own home and care for her as if she was his own mother. John served as the second counselor in the First Presidency and served as the President of the Church after the deaths of Peter and James. He offended Caesar with his vies and was consequently sentenced to death. He was to be placed in a cauldron of boiling oil. As the Bible records, the Savior had promised John that he would live until his second coming. Much to Caesar's surprise, John was unharmed by the boiling oil. Unable to kill John, Caesar sentenced him to spend the rest of his days on the prison isle of Patmos.

## Simon Zelotes



Simon Zelotes or Simon called Zelotes is distinguished from the other Apostles by being a Canaanite. The term Zelotes and Canaanite could be speculated to mean several things; however, James E. Talmage says that in Simon's case it refers to a Jewish sect or faction that believed in maintaining the Mosaic rituals with great zeal. It is from this sect that we get the modern day usage of the word 'zealot'. Talmage further conjects that Simon must have learned great moderation and toleration from the teachings of Christ, which were quite revolutionary to the various Jewish factions. The details of Simon's personality and works are absent from modern records. Simon's death took place in Britain in the year 74 AD. According to tradition, he was crucified.

## Phillip



Phillip was a man from the same town as Peter, Andrew, James, and John. They all came from a small town called 'Bethsaida'. Most probably he knew the other four apostles from life in the town. The day after Peter, James, John, and Andrew were called, the Savior was traveling out of Galilee and he came upon Phillip. The Savior recognized his as a 'Son of Israel' and gave him a commission to come and 'follow me'. Phillip not only accepted the divide call, but he quickly ran to tell his friend Nathanael of the great news.

## Phillip -continued-

## Matthew



With relatively short exposure to the Savior, he bore testimony of Him. Not much is known of Phillip's life. His claim to fame is that he was the one at the feeding of the five thousand who questioned the Savior as to how they could feed so many with so little. Otherwise, Phillip is only mentioned in connection with other apostles. Phillip also died a martyr. He was scourged, thrown in jail, and finally crucified in Heliopolis in 54 AD.

Matthew or Levi as he is referred to, is the dreaded Publican. A publican was basically a tax collector. In Matthew's case, he collected taxes for the Romans. Since the Romans were not looked upon with high favor among the Jews, Matthew's occupation brought additional scrutiny. He was also called Levi, probably indicating that he was of priestly descent. We don't really know a great deal of him. He was the son of Alpheus and an Israelite by birth. He was a faithful Apostle and served the Lord well. In fact, it is said that he was the most active apostle after the death of the Savior. He is said to have journeyed far and wide from the Holy Land to spread the Gospel. Perhaps that is why his death is reported to have taken place in distant India. According to tradition, he was cruelly beaten as a result of his missionary efforts and then crucified until the breath of life departed his mortal body.

## Doubting Thomas



Thomas finds a warm spot in the heart of many. After the death of the Savior, the Apostles were devastated. Their Savior and friend was gone. It was with great excitement that reports came back that the Savior had risen and in spite of death, He lived. Thomas doubted this great truth and has since born the name 'Doubting Thomas'. Aside from his brief doubt, Thomas loved the Savior. During persecution he once told the other disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him'. Thomas was with the Savior at His ascension, but we have no other Biblical record of him after that point. We assume that he continued to fulfill his role as Apostle. Oddly enough, we find record of his death occurring in the distant country of India. Evidently his missionary efforts ended with the pagan priests of India thrusting him

## Doubting Thomas -continued-

## Judas Iscairiot

Due to Judas' betrayal of the Savior, few artists paint or sculpt him.

- No Picture Available -

through with a spear. Most people depict Thomas with the sign of the square indicating his preciseness and perfection. Unfortunately, the underlying tone is that he required a perfect knowledge rather than relying on faith. This might be a harsh and inaccurate judgment of a faithful disciple.

Judas was the only Jew among the original twelve Apostles. The other eleven were from the district of Galilee. It is thought that he came from a small town south of Jerusalem, near the Dead Sea. The town is called 'Kerioth' and it is suspected that the name 'Iscairiot' is derived from the town (Is-keriot). We do not know anything about his lineage except for the fact that his father was named Simon. Judas occupied an interesting position among the Apostles. He served as treasurer of the company. He would collect offerings made by faithful saints and apply them to the effort most assuredly under the direction of the Savior. The Apostle John indicates in his writing that Judas was less than honest and trustworthy in this charge. Judas appeared to be quite worldly or materialistic. On one occasion, he murmured the fact that a woman anointed the Savior's feet with such costly oil. The ointment could have been sold for a dear price and at least have been used to feed the poor. The most known act of greed was the act of betrayal he performed against the Savior for 30 pieces of silver. The Jewish leaders paid him for his deed and it consequently led to the Savior's death. He identified Jesus to the guards by giving him a kiss. After seeing what he had done he returned to the Jewish leaders with his silver in an attempt to undo his deed. They rejected his remarks and he left in great grief. He was later found in a potter's field where he had ended his own life by hanging. There are some that suggest that Judas did not want the Savior to die, but rather to show the world who he was. It is suggested that he wanted the Savior to show his great power and heavenly might. He wanted the Messiah as outlined by the Jewish thoughts of the time.