

JESUS' TWELVE

FIRST SERVANTS IN THE CHURCH

Thomas

Matt 10:3
Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

- What word immediately comes to mind when you hear the Apostle Thomas's name?
- Does he really deserve that as a description of his life?
- The Bible narrative gives us very little detail about Thomas.
 1. He was probably a Galilean.
 2. Most likely a fisherman by trade
- The first mention of Thomas by name was when Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs.
- He is also called Didymus, and both his names mean "twin." **John 11:16**
 1. Possibly his real name was Judah and nickname was "twin."
 2. Distinguish him from the other two disciples named Judah. (Brother of James and Iscariot)
- Scripture portrays him as a person with a melancholy temperament.
- Thomas could find the dark lining in every silver cloud.
- However, Thomas was a believer and struggled against his doubts, and was ready to abandon his doubts at every opportunity.

Thomas in Bethany

- The gospel of John gives us three sketches of what Thomas was like.
- In John 11, Jesus was just notified of the illness of Lazarus.
- The disciples feared going to Lazarus' home in Bethany because it was just outside of Jerusalem.
 1. They reminded Jesus that they tried to stone Him the last time He was in Jerusalem.

John 11:8

2. At this point Thomas spoke up and said, "Let us go, that we may die with him."
3. Thomas viewed the only possible outcome would be them all dying. **John 11:16**
4. However, if the Lord was going to go, then he was going with Him.

Thomas in the Upper Room

- In John 14, Jesus was trying to prepare the hearts of His disciples for His imminent death and departure.
- Jesus tried to alleviate the concerns by telling them of the joys of Heaven. **John 14:2-4**
- Thomas doubted and confessed his ignorance of knowing where He was going. **John 14:5**
- Because of Thomas's question, we have the wonderful words of the sixth verse. **John 14:6**

John 11:8

His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

John 11:16

Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

John 14:5

Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

Thomas after the Resurrection

John 20:25

The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

Matt 11:2-3

Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

- On the very day of the resurrection, Jesus went to the house where the disciples had gathered.
- He wanted to comfort them and assure them that He had risen from the dead.
- Unfortunately, Thomas was not present.
 1. Why wasn't he there?
 2. Surmising from his personality, perhaps he wanted to be alone in his grief.
- After Jesus left he showed up, but doubted what the others were telling him.
- "Except I shall see...." **John 20:25**
 1. Because of this statement, he has forever been called Doubting Thomas.
 2. When he saw Jesus' hands eight days later, he believed.

Understanding Doubt

- Doubt is not the opposite of faith.
 1. The opposite of faith is unbelief.
 2. You can have strong faith and still have some doubts.
 3. Doubt always co-exists with faith; in the presence of certainty, there is no need of faith at all.
 4. Example: **Mark 9:24**
- Doubt is not unforgiveable.
 1. John the Baptist doubted Jesus in **Matthew 11:1-6**.
 2. Jesus did not condemn him, but simply reminded him of what the Scriptures teach.
- Faith is not a feeling, but an active trust in God's Word.

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Mark 15:40

There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;

Heb 11:33-34

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

James the Less

- James reminds us that though not recognized by the world, we are still important to God.
- The Bible only tells us that his name is James the son of Alphaeus. **Luke 6:15**
- Matthew's father's name was also Alphaeus, and it could be they were brothers.
- **Mark 15:40**, refers to him as "James the Less."
 1. Most likely a nickname
 2. The Greek word for less is *micros* and primarily means someone young or small in stature.
 3. James was likely a quiet person who faithfully served in the background.
- He reminds us of the unnamed people mentioned in **Hebrews 11:33-38**
- He is also a reminder that though faithful, patient, humble service may go unnoticed and unrecorded by men, it is not forgotten by God.

Simon the Zealot

- Luke calls him "the Zealot," and Matthew and Mark call him "Simon the Canaanite."
 1. Not a reference to him being born in Canaan or the village of Cana
 2. Comes from the Hebrew root meaning "to be zealous"
 3. Simon was once a member of the political party known as the Zealots.

Zealots

1. The Zealots were a radical political party that hated the Roman occupation.
 2. They advanced their agenda primarily through terrorism and acts of violence.
 3. Believed only God Himself had the right to rule over the Jews
 4. Had the belief they were doing God's work by assassinating Roman soldiers
 5. After a failed rebellion in A.D. 6, the Zealots went underground and their acts of terror became more selective and secretive.
 6. They formed a party of secret assassins called *sicarii*, or "dagger-men."
 7. They liked to burn Roman targets and stab Roman politicians, and then retreat to the remote areas of Galilee to hide.
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- It is amazing that Jesus would select a man like Simon to be an apostle.
 - Several historical sources say that after the destruction of Jerusalem, he took the Gospel north to the British isles.
 - He found a more fruitful cause to give his life for.

Luke 6:15

Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes,

Judas, Son of James

John 14:22

Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

Matthew 10:3

Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

- When the apostle John mentions him, he calls him “Judas, not Iscariot.” **John 14:22**
- He actually had three names.
 1. In **Matthew 10:3**, he is called “Lebbaeus, whose surname is Thaddaeus.”
 2. *Judas* was most likely given to him at birth.
 3. *Thaddaeus* means “child” or “mama’s boy,” indicating he might have been the youngest.
 4. *Lebbaeus* literally means “heart child” indicating he had a tender, child-like heart.
 5. Zealots make great preachers, but so do tender-hearted, compassionate disciples like Lebbaeus.
- The New Testament records one incident involving Judas. **John 14:21-22**
 1. In the text Jesus is talking about his soon departure.
 2. Judas asks Him why He disclosed Himself to them and not the world.
 3. In verse 23 Jesus says that He would manifest Himself to anyone who loves Him.
 4. Jesus was teaching that He wasn’t going to take over the world externally, but rather take over hearts one at a time.
- Most traditional church teachings suggest Judas took the gospel to Edessa, modern-day Turkey.
- It is believed he was clubbed to death for his preaching, and the club has been the symbol attached to his life.
- This tender-hearted servant followed His Lord faithfully to the end.

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Jesus' Last Words

Matt 28:18-20
And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mark 13:34
For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

- From Galilee the disciples found their way back to Jerusalem, where the risen Lord showed Himself once more.
- We have preserved for us the last words Jesus spoke to His disciples.
 1. **Matthew 28:18-20**
 2. **Mark 16:15**
 3. **Luke 24:47-53**
 4. **Acts 1:4-8**
- It was natural and needful that Jesus speak some last words to the chosen.
 1. He wanted to give them instructions for guidance in their future labors.
 2. Christ was not sentimental in His words like before His passion.
 3. His last words were instructive like as a man taking a long journey. **Mark 13:34**
 4. He wanted to encourage them on their way through the world as messengers of the kingdom.
- Jesus had kind actions as well as kind words for His followers at His departing.

The Departure

- There were no farewell kisses, hugs or symbolic actions.
- The manner of His departure was gracious towards those whom He was leaving behind.
- The eleven remaining disciples did not grieve over the Lord's departure.
 1. They marveled and gazed wonderingly towards the skies.
 2. No sadness was left behind.
 3. They returned to Jerusalem with great joy as if they had gained, not lost a friend.
- The task Jesus gave His apostles was to preach repentance and remission of sins.
 1. The plan of operation was to begin in Jerusalem.
 2. Jesus was going to show Jerusalem the full extent of His long-suffering and mercy.
 3. Jerusalem would set the pattern to be repeated in Judaea, Samaria, and then the uttermost part of the earth.
- What an amazing commission for fishermen to receive!
 1. Jesus knew the insufficiency of His instruments.
 2. However, He promised them a power to accomplish this amazing task.
- Jesus spent three years transforming their character and enlarging their hearts.
 1. They were to be less like their past selves, and more like their Master.
 2. They were no longer ignorant and weak, but under the guidance of the Spirit of grace and holiness.

Acts 1:4-6

And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

Power From On High

Acts 1:7-9

And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

- The power promised to the disciples was indispensable for their success.
- They fully understood that the power was needful.
- To produce spiritual results, something more than eloquence, intellect, money, and organization are required.
- True spiritual power cannot be produced, but must come providentially and graciously from on high.
- The world can only be evangelized, not by titles or those in clerical robes, but by men who have the power of the Holy Spirit.
- For ten days after the ascension they prayed, read Scriptures, and encouraged one another.
- The power that came with the descent of the Holy Spirit corrected the notion that Christ's Kingdom was of a political nature.
 1. A kingdom founded through such power is not a kingdom of this world.
 2. This kingdom would embrace every tribe, tongue, race and nation.

"If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world."

- C.S. Lewis

JESUS' TWELVE

FIRST SERVANTS IN THE CHURCH

Judas: The Traitor - Part 1

Matt 26:14-15
Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

- The most scorned of all the disciples is Judas Iscariot, the betrayer.
- Every time Judas is mentioned in Scripture, we also find the notation about his being a traitor.
- He committed the most horrible act of any individual, ever.
- His story is an example of the depths to which the human heart is capable of sinking.
- Judas stands also as a warning about the evil potential of spiritual carelessness and squandered opportunities.
 1. He was intimately familiar with everything Jesus taught.
 2. Yet he remained in unbelief and went into eternity hopeless.
- Judas was as common as the rest, without earthly credentials.
 1. He began exactly like the others had begun.
 2. While the others were increasing in their faith, he was becoming more a child of hell.
- The lesson is that God's sovereign plan cannot be overthrown even by those who hate Him.

His Name

- Judas's name is a form of *Judah*, meaning "Jehovah leads."
- With such a name, his parents must have had great hopes for him.
- His surname, *Iscariot*, signifies the region he came from.
 1. Most likely came from Kerioth-hezron, a small town in southern Judea. **Josh 15:25**
 2. He was the only apostle who did not come from Galilee.
- Many of the other apostles were brothers, friends, and coworkers; but Judas was a solitary figure the others knew little about.
- He was able to work his way into a place of trust and became the treasurer of the group.
- When Jesus predicted one of them would betray Him, no one suspected Judas. **Matt 26:22-26**

His Call

- The call of Judas is not recorded in Scripture.
- He probably was a young, zealous Jew who hoped Jesus would overthrow the foreigners.
- Judas was not attracted to Christ on a spiritual level, but rather followed Jesus out of selfish desire, ambition, and greed.
- He chose to follow and Jesus also chose him.
- His role of betrayal was ordained before the foundation of the world.
 1. **Psalm 41:9**
 2. **Zechariah 11:12-13** (Jeremy in **Matthew 27:9-10**)
- When Jesus chose Judas, He *knew* Judas would be the one to fulfill the prophecies.

Matt 26:22-25
And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

John 6:70
Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

Psalms 41:9
Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.

- Judas had every opportunity to turn from his sin, and heard every lesson Jesus taught during His ministry.
- He heard numerous appeals from Christ urging him *not* to do the deed.
 1. Jesus even told the disciples that one of them was the devil. **John 6:70**
 2. He also cautioned them about what would come to the person who betrayed Him. **Matthew 26:24**

The Disillusionment

- Judas became progressively more disillusioned with Christ.
- The rest of the apostles began to catch on that the true Messiah was not what they first expected.
 1. However, their love for Christ overcame their worldly ambitions.
 2. They received His teachings and gladly became partakers.
- Judas hid his disappointment under his blanket of hypocrisy.
- He looked for ways to steal money to help compensate his lost time and interest.
- In the few glimpses we have, he had long been growing embittered, but tried to keep it hidden.
 1. As early as John 6, Jesus referred to Judas as “a devil.”
 2. At some point in the final days of Christ, Judas’s disillusionment turned to hatred.

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Judas: The Traitor - Part 2

John 12:2-3
There they made him a supper; and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

- Shortly after the raising of Lazarus, Jesus was invited to the home of "Simon the Leper."
Matthew 26:6
 1. Lazarus was present with Mary and Martha who were helping to serve.
 2. **John 12:2-3** records the event of Mary anointing the feet of Jesus.
- To Judas the act was shocking in its extravagance.
 1. He viewed it as an overt act of worship.
 2. It seemed to be a huge waste; and once poured out, it could not be used again.
 3. **John 12:4-5** tells of how much money Judas thought the perfume could be sold for and given to the poor.
 4. His response was clever as he feigned concern for the poor.
- Jesus reprimanded Judas, and this seemed to be a turning point in Judas's outward behavior.
- From that point forward, he sought opportunity to betray Him. **Matthew 26:14-16**

His Betrayal

- Judas slipped away from Bethany and traveled the one and a half miles to Jerusalem.
 1. He met with the chief priests and sold out Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.
 2. Judas took the money and returned and blended back into the group.
- Jesus washed the disciples' feet, even Judas's.
 1. Judas remained unmoved and continued to be the hypocrite.
 2. Jesus commented to the group that not all of them were clean.
 3. All twelve began to ask, "Is it I", even Judas - but only because he was worried how the others would perceive him.
- No one seemed to anticipate that Judas would be the traitor.
- It was only after Jesus sent Judas away that He instituted the Lord's Supper.
 1. **John 13:21** tells us that Jesus was troubled in spirit with Judas in their presence.
 2. Judas was polluting the fellowship with his rejection of kindness and mercy.
- Judas went straight from the Upper Room to the Sanhedrin.
 1. This was not a sudden impulse or an act borne only out of passion.
 2. This dark act was deliberately planned and premeditated.
- Judas knew Jesus went regularly to Gethsemane to pray with His disciples. **John 18:2**
- Judas went to the garden with a "band of men" and officers and Pharisees. **John 18:3**
 1. No exact number of troops is given, but there were probably hundreds of soldiers.
 2. They came fully expecting the worse.

Matt 26:14-16
Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

John 18:2
And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.

John 18:3
Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Matt 26:48

Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.

Matt 26:50

And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

Acts 1:18-19

Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

- Judas had a pre-arranged signal to identify Jesus. A kiss. **Matthew 26:48**
 1. Before the signal was given, Jesus stepped forward and identified Himself.
 2. Judas, a hypocrite to the end, feigned feelings for Christ and kissed Him.
 3. Jesus, ever gracious, addressed him as *friend*. **Matthew 26:50**

His Death

- Soon after the deed was done, Judas's conscience immediately came alive.
- The money, which had been important to him before, now did not matter. **Matthew 27:3-4**
- His remorse was not the same as repentance.
 1. He was sorry, not because he sinned against Christ, but because his actions had not satisfied him.
 2. Sin brings guilt, and Judas's sin brought him unbearable misery.
 3. **Acts 1:18-19** adds the final note to his life.
- We can draw some important lessons from his life.
 1. Judas is an example of lost opportunity and was damned because of his failure to heed what he heard.
 2. Judas is the epitome of wasted privilege. With great privilege comes great responsibility.
 3. Classic illustration of how the love of money is a root for all kinds of evil.
 4. There are Judases in every age. People who seem to be true disciples but turn against Christ for selfish reasons.
 5. Judas is proof of the patient, forbearing goodness of Christ. **Psalms 145:9**