

CHAPTER 1

PETER

When people think of the twelve disciples of Jesus, the first person to come to mind is usually Peter. In Matthew 10:1-4 the twelve apostles or disciples are named. Which name comes first in the list? _____ When something needed to be said (or even when something did not need to be said), who was usually the first disciple to speak up (see John 6:66-69; Matthew 16:13-16; Mark 9:2-6)? _____

Which disciple was usually the first to jump into action (See John 21:7 and Matthew 14:28-30)? _____ Peter was always quick to jump into things even though it is wise to look before one jumps! For example, before jumping into a swimming pool, it is always good to look first and see if the pool is filled with water!

Peter was also quick to say things. Sometimes he said the right thing (Matthew 16:16), and sometimes he said the wrong thing (Matthew 16: 21-22). Too often Peter would *spea**k** first* and *thi**n**k later*; consequently, he is remembered as an impulsive and impetuous man who was quick to speak and quick to act.

The Bible tells us more about Peter than any of the other disciples. Although he had his problems, Peter was a man who really loved His Master. The Lord used Peter in a very special way. Let us take a brief look at seven episodes in the life of Peter:

1. The Miraculous Catch of Fish (Luke 5:1-11).

What was Peter's other name (Luke 5:3)? _____ What was Peter's occupation (Luke 5:2)? _____ In Luke 5:4 the word "draught" means "catch." Jesus was telling Peter how to fish. Here we have a carpenter telling an experienced fisherman how to do his work and how to catch fish! Did Peter obey the Lord (Luke 5:5)? _____ How successful had Peter and the other fishermen been on the previous night (Luke 5:5)? _____ How successful were they when they did what Jesus said to do (Luke 5:6-7)? _____

Why do you think Peter said what he did in Luke 5:8? Why did he think he was such a sinful man? Had he recently killed anyone? Had he tried to drown his brother Andrew in the lake? In a similar way God helped Isaiah see his own sinfulness (see Isaiah 6:5).

Have you ever seen your own sinfulness before a HOLY GOD? Have you ever cried out and said, "Lord, You are so great and so holy, and in contrast I am so sinful and so wicked"? When we measure ourselves by other people, we may not seem so bad, but when we measure ourselves in light of a holy God, we see how sinful we really are.

Jesus told Peter that he would be a different kind of fisherman: "...from henceforth (from now on) thou shalt _____" (Luke 5:10). Later in this chapter we will learn that Peter became an excellent FISHER OF MEN!

2. Walking on the Water (Matthew 14:24-33).

The fourth watch (Matthew 14:25) is from 3 to 6 a.m. For hours the disciples had been struggling in the midst of a stormy sea. When the disciples saw Jesus, they said, "It is a _____" (Matthew 14:26). The word "spirit" means PHANTOM or GHOST. They had never seen a real person walk on water, and so they thought it must be a GHOST!

There are some people who do not believe the Bible and do not believe that the miracles we read about in the Bible really happened. Some say that Jesus did not really walk on the water. They say that He was really walking on a sandbar! They say that when Peter got out of the boat, he stepped onto a sandbar also, but as he walked towards Jesus, he fell off the sandbar! Do you think this is really what happened? _____ Sometimes the explanations of unbelieving men are very foolish.

Read verses 28-29. Did it take courage and faith for Peter to step out on water? Would **you** have done what Peter did? Would you have left the safety of the ship? And remember, the storm was still raging (see verse 32). Peter was not walking on a still and calm lake!

Did Peter just start walking on the water or did he wait until Jesus told him to do so (Matthew 14:28-29)? _____ Sometimes people get into trouble because they try to do something which God has never told them to do.

Why did Peter sink (see Matthew 14:30)?

_____ What lesson should this teach each and every believer? Peter had **faith** (verses 28-29), and Peter also had **fear**. Do **faith** and **fear** together very well? _____

Peter started well. He began his first steps by FAITH, but he did not **continue** by FAITH.

Christ did not change.

His command (v.29 "Come") did not change.

But, Peter changed. Peter took his eyes off Jesus!

Is Jesus always ready and willing to pick up the believer when he fails and falls (verses 30-31)?

Where will you keep your eyes this week--on the **storm** or on the **Savior**? The storms that we face in life may be very real, but we must be guided through them just as an airplane is guided in landing (by the lights on the runway) or as a car is guided down the highway (by the road). We must keep our eyes on the Savior, but this does not mean that we ignore the problem and pretend it is not there. God wants us to face the problems and the storms of life bravely, keeping our eyes on the Savior (His power, His promises and His provision):

**"I can bravely face the storm
because my eyes are on the Lord!"**

What are the "storms of life" that you sometimes face? Difficulties at school? Problems with friends? Problems at home? Things that make you afraid? How can you get your eyes fixed on **the Saviour** (His power, His promises, His provision)? In the midst of the storm, is He all you need? _____

When Peter walked on the water, he knew the storm was there, but he believed His SAVIOR could help him to walk on the water in the midst of the storm. Later he sank because his faith failed, and he somehow thought that the storm was greater than his Saviour. See Psalm 25:15. Don't get your eyes on the **net** (the problems of life and the storms of life). Where should your eyes be? _____

3. The Arrest of Jesus (John 18:3-12).

When Jesus was arrested, there was a great multitude of Jews and Romans who came to take Him away. Were these men armed with weapons (John 18:3)? The small band of 11 disciples was greatly outnumbered by this large group of people who had come to arrest Jesus.

How many weapons did the disciples have (Luke 22:38)? _____ Who had one of these swords (John 18:10)? Was Peter quick to use this sword? _____ Was this an act of courage or an act of fear? _____ Peter had lots of **zeal** (a strong feeling of interest and enthusiasm that makes someone very eager or determined to do something), but did he have good aim? _____ Do you think that Peter was really trying to slice off the man's ear, or was he probably aiming for something else? _____ What did Jesus do about this "ear problem" (Luke 22:51)? _____

Did Jesus tell Peter to keep on using his sword (John 18:10)? _____ Do you think Jesus really needed Peter's help? _____ See Matthew 26:53. Could Jesus have received help that would have been much better than Peter's help? _____ How big was this army of angels that Jesus could have called? A **legion** at full strength was made up of 6,000 soldiers. Therefore, more than 12 legions means more than _____ angels! That is quite a large angelic army! Even one angel is much more powerful than any man or group of men could ever be! Did Jesus pray and ask God to send this army of angels? _____ Why or why not? Why did Jesus allow these people to arrest Him? Why did Jesus allow these wicked people to put him on the cross?

If Christ had not gone to the cross, what would this have meant to you? If Christ had not died on the cross, would there be any way that you could be saved? Why is it absolutely necessary for Jesus to go to the cross? (Compare Matthew 16:21-22.)

Actually, Jesus did not even need the help of the angels. In John 18:5-6, we learn that Jesus said, "I am he." What happened to all those who had come to arrest him?

_____ Jesus could have said "DROP DEAD," and they all would have dropped dead, but Jesus did not desire to kill people. He came to save people (John 3:17; 1 Timothy 1:15).

4. Peter's Three Denials (John 18:15-27).

Peter very BOLDLY and very BRAVELY cut off the ear of Malchus. Very soon, however, this bold and brave Peter became a COWARD. The same Peter who once said that he would follow Jesus even if it meant death (John 13:37) was about to deny his Lord how many times (John 13:38)? _____ You can read about these three denials in John 18:17,25-27. Was Peter proud of his Lord or was he ashamed of his Lord? _____

Did Peter speak the truth or did he speak lies? _____
 Did Peter gladly CONFESS the Lord or did he cowardly DENY the Lord? _____

The last denial was the worst one of all. The man who asked him the third question was a relative of Malchus (John 18:26). This man was sure that he had seen Peter in the garden. Peter was the very man who had sliced off his relative's ear, but Peter denied the whole thing. Why do you think Peter denied his Lord? Why did Peter want these people to think that he had no connection with Christ at all? What about you? Are you connected to Jesus Christ? Do you belong to Him? Has Jesus saved your soul? Are you proud of your SAVIOUR and what He has done for you? Are you glad to talk about Him to others?

Peter fell deeply into sin. Peter failed his Lord. After these three denials was Peter sorry for what he had done (Luke 22:62)? _____ When you fall into sin, does it bother you? Do any tears come? Is sin a serious thing to you? Did you know that sin is something very serious to the Lord? It was so serious that God sent His only Son to die on the cross FOR YOU!

5. Catching Men (Acts chapter 2).

Have you ever gone on a fishing trip? How many fish did you catch? Suppose you went on a fishing trip and came home with 3,000 fish. Would this be a successful trip? _____

Peter once went on a fishing trip and caught 3000! In Luke 5:10 Jesus had told Peter that he would catch _____. In Acts chapter 2 we learn that Peter preached to a great crowd of Jewish people. Peter was not ashamed of Christ any more. He boldly and courageously preached to these people and told them about His wonderful Lord and Saviour (see Acts 2:14 and the verses following). Did the message get through to their hearts (Acts 2:37)? _____ Earlier Peter had used a metal sword to slice off a man's ear, but now in Acts Peter is using God's Word which is sharper than any sword (see Hebrews 4:12). With God's Word Peter was able to pierce into the hearts of men. Peter's audience was "cut to the heart," and they cried out, "WHAT SHALL WE DO?" (Acts 2:37). Peter told them what to do in Acts 2:38-40. A great number of people did what Peter said (Acts 2:41). About how many people were saved on this day (Acts 2:41)? _____ God used Peter on this day to catch 3000 men! This fisherman had become a "FISHER OF _____" (Matthew 4:19).

Actually this sermon was just the beginning of his powerful preaching. Peter had not finished preaching the good news: he had just begun! He would preach many other messages and many more people would be caught. Another of Peter's sermons begins in Acts 3:12.

Have you been caught? Has the living God captured you? Have you believed the good news about Christ? If so, are you spreading the Word to others so that they might be caught also?

6. Peter in Prison (Acts chapter 12)

In Acts chapter 12 we learn that Herod the King was persecuting the Christians and treating them very badly (verse 1). What did this king do to James (Acts 12:2)?

_____ What did he do to Peter (Acts 12:3-4)?

_____ What did the Church (the believers) do for Peter (Acts

12:5)? _____ Did God answer the prayers of these believers (Acts 12:6-11)? _____

Peter came and knocked at the door. Many believers were inside this house praying to God and asking God to get Peter out of prison (see Acts 12:12-13). Did Rhoda let Peter in (Acts 12:14)?

_____ When the believers heard Rhoda's announcement, did they believe her? _____ Did they say, "Praise God! Our prayers have been answered, and Peter has been released"? _____ (See verse 15). Finally when they saw Peter they were _____ (verse 16).

What does this teach us about prayer? Should we be surprised and shocked when God answers our prayers? When we pray, we should pray BELIEVING (Mark 11:24).

7. Peter's Death (John 21)

Jesus told Peter about his death long before it ever happened. The Lord described Peter's death in John 21:18-19. Would Peter die as a young man or an old man (John 21:18)?

_____ Does the Lord know all about you and all about your life and all about your death even before it ever happens? _____

Peter was curious, and he also wanted to know what would happen to John (see John 21:20-22). In a nice way the Lord told Peter that His business with John was NONE OF PETER'S BUSINESS (John 21:22)! God has a unique plan and purpose for each individual person. The important thing is not what God will do with someone else. The important thing is for each of us to obey Christ's command to follow Him" (see John 21:22). I must let the Lord use my life in a wonderful way regardless of the failures or successes of others.

Peter wrote two of the books that we find in the Bible. Which books are these?

1) _____ 2) _____ The book of 2 Peter was the last book that Peter ever wrote. In 2 Peter 1:14 Peter spoke about his coming death. He knew that the day of his death was fast approaching, and he was ready to go and be with the Lord.

Although the Bible does not say how Peter died, tradition (the historical records that have been handed down to us) tells us that Peter was crucified on a cross upside down. This took place during the time of Nero who was ruler of the Roman empire. Peter did not feel that he was worthy to die the same way his Lord died, so he was crucified in a different way—upside down.

Death for the believer is not the end; it is just the beginning! Death for the believer is just the doorway that brings the believer into eternity and into the presence of His SAVIOR. Death for the believer means "to depart and to be _____ which is far _____" (Philippians 1:23). Peter knew that he would put off his temporary "tent" or "tabernacle" which was his body. See 2 Peter 1:14. Peter also knew that being "absent from the body" meant being **present (at home) with the Lord**" (2 Corinthians 5:8).

If you were to die *today*, what would happen to you? Are you ready to die? Are you ready to live?

You in Peter and Peter in You

We have been studying the man Peter and what he was like: strong-willed, aggressive, courageous, quick to act, quick to speak, impulsive, impetuous, bold, courageous, brave, believing, strong at times and very weak at other times, etc.

Are you like Peter? How? Was Peter like you? How?

As you think back to the life of Peter, can you find yourself in Peter? How? As you think about your life today, can you find Peter in you?

What are Peter's good points that you share? What are Peter's weak points that you share?

What lessons have *YOU* learned from the life of Peter?



CHAPTER 2

ANDREW

Following the order of disciples as listed in Matthew 10:2-4, this lesson on Andrew is the second in a series of lessons on the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ. We want to get to know these men so that we might learn valuable lessons from those who followed the Lord. In learning about their lives, we want to discover how we are like these men and how in many ways these men are like us. We want to discover virtues (good qualities) in the lives of these disciples that we should imitate, and we need to recognize any sins in the lives of these disciples that we should avoid.

Last week we considered the life of Peter, listed first in Matthew's list of the disciples. Which disciple is listed second in this list (Matthew 10:2)? _____ Who was this man's brother (Matthew 10:2)? _____

What did these two brothers do for an occupation (Matthew 4:18)? _____

_____ Because this was true, how might you describe Andrew and Peter (circle the words that you think would describe them)?

rugged

accustomed to indoor life

lazy

accustomed to outdoor life

courageous

flabby

muscular

strong

weak

hard working

Who were Andrew and Peter's fishing partners (Luke 5:10)? _____ and _____ Apparently these four men worked together and fished together.

Andrew the Seeker

Deep in his heart Andrew knew that there was more to life than just fishing and making money and going through the daily routine. He knew that there was something much more important and he wanted to find it. Somehow Andrew learned about a great prophet whose name was _____ (John 1:6). This man was none other than John the Baptist. Andrew decided to leave his fishing for a time, and soon he became a disciple (follower) of John the Baptist. Andrew is mentioned in John 1:35. He was one of these two disciples of John (although we do not read his name until we come to John 1:40).

John the Baptist Points Andrew to Jesus

One day Andrew and another disciple were with John the Baptist. Jesus was there also (John 1:36). John the Baptist was a great prophet (see Matthew 11:11), but in John 1:36 we see John pointing to another Person who is much greater than he. John pointed to Jesus and said, "Behold the _____ of _____" (John 1:36). Why do you think Jesus was called the Lamb of God? (Compare also John 1:29).

When the two disciples heard John the Baptist say these words, what did they do? Did they continue to follow John the Baptist or did they leave John and start to follow Jesus (John 1:37)?

Andrew was a SEEKER! His search made him leave his nets and boat for a time to seek John the Baptist, but his search was not over yet! John the Baptist pointed him to Jesus, the Lamb of God! When people are seeking, they need to be pointed in the right direction. If someone comes to you seeking to be saved and wants to know the Lord, where should you point him? Don't point them to yourself, but like John, point them to someone who is much greater than you are! Point them to the Lord Jesus Christ, God's only Saviour. When a seeker finds Christ, his search will be over.

Andrew and this other disciple stayed with Jesus on that day (John 1:38-39). Did Jesus know that these men were SEEKERS (John 1:38)? _____ Did He turn them away or did He let them come (John 1:39)? _____

Seek and Ye Shall Find

True seekers will never be disappointed. If a person really seeks to know the truth and to know the true God, then this person **will find what he is looking for**. Andrew was a true seeker and Andrew truly found the Lord. God's promise to SEEKERS is found in Jeremiah 29:13 -- "And ye shall _____ Me, and _____ Me, when ye shall _____ for Me with _____ your heart." God will not disappoint those who truly seek Him! In Hebrews 11:6 we learn that God is a "rewarder of them that diligently _____." Those who seek God with all their heart (diligently) will be rewarded! Those who seek God will find God! Andrew was a SEEKER. Was Andrew a FINDER (John 1:41)? _____ What did he find (John 1:41)? _____

Help Others to Find What You Have Found!

Did Andrew keep his discovery to himself or did he share it with others (John 1:41)? _____ Who was the first person with whom he shared it (John 1:41)? _____ In last week's lesson we learned that the Bible says a lot about Simon Peter. The Bible says little about Peter's brother Andrew, but we must never forget that it was ANDREW who brought his brother Peter to the Lord.

Suppose a man were to spend all his life seeking to find a cure for cancer. Finally as an old man he discovers the cure. He finds the very thing that he has been searching for all his life. What should he do now? Should he keep it a big secret? Should he tell no one about his discovery? Should he share it and make it known? Andrew did not keep his discovery to himself. He made it known. His attitude was this: **"I found Him, and Peter, I want you to find Him too!"**

What about you? Have you discovered Jesus Christ? There are many people who go to church and Sunday School every week and are familiar with Bible stories, and yet they have never discovered Jesus Christ and come to know Him as their personal Saviour. You must find Him before you can help others to find Him! It's one thing to know about Christ, but it's quite another thing to know Christ in a personal, saving way. Everyone knows about the President of the United States but not many people know him personally.

If you have found Christ and are discovering the joy of knowing Christ in a personal way, are you

sharing your discovery and your joy with others? Have you shared your joy with your brother or sister or parents? Have you shared your joy with your friends? What a joy it is to introduce others to Christ!

Andrew was a man who brought others to _____ (John 1:42).

Fishers of Men

Andrew later returned to his fishing occupation. One day Jesus met Andrew and his other fishing partners by the sea of Galilee. What were Peter and Andrew doing when Jesus walked by (Matthew 4:18)? _____ In Matthew 4:19 Jesus called them and said, "_____ Me, and I will make you _____ of men." This means that from this time forth, instead of catching fish they would catch _____ (Luke 5:10). Did they do what Jesus told them to do (Matthew 4:20)? _____ Their occupation was changed from fishers of fish to fishers of men!

All men are like fish swimming in the ocean of time. Moreover these "fish" are all swimming in the waters of death and destruction, because the Scripture has concluded _____ under _____ (Galatians 3:22). Graciously, the Saviour of men reaches down and is able to draw people into His wonderful net and catch them for His kingdom. Have you been caught and captured by the Saviour? Has God saved you from this evil world system that you were swimming in (Galatians 1:4)? _____ Have you been caught and rescued by God's grace?

God Himself is the great FISHERMAN (the great "catcher of souls"). And yet, God uses men to catch other men. God used Andrew to catch P _____. God wants us to have a part in the great work of catching and saving souls which He is doing. In Proverbs 11:30 we read, "He that _____ souls is _____." Andrew was a soul winner! Andrew was concerned for others. Andrew was wise!

Practical Minded Andrew

Andrew was a practical minded man. He did not walk around with his head in the clouds. He knew how to look at whatever was happening, size up the situation and offer some practical suggestions.

One day Jesus and the disciples were with a large crowd made up of thousands of hungry people. Jesus first asked Philip what should be done (John 6:5-7). Practical Andrew then looked around, sized up the situation, and told Jesus exactly how much food might be available (John 6:8-9). Did Andrew think that this amount of food would be enough for such a vast crowd of people (John 6:9)? _____ We all know the story of how Jesus took the barley bread and fish and fed this huge crowd of people with food left over to spare!

Andrew needed to learn an important lesson. "LITTLE IS MUCH IF GOD IS IN IT!" We need to give God the little that we have, even if it does not seem like very much. It is amazing what God can do with it if we put it in His hands! He can bless it and multiply it and do wonders with it! You may not have great abilities or great talents, but if you take the little that you do have and give that to God, you will be amazed how God will use you and bless your life.

We also learn about practical Andrew in John 12:20-22. There were certain Greeks who wanted to see Jesus and have an interview with Him (John 12:20-21). Philip came and told Andrew about these people who were interested in seeing Jesus. Andrew sized up the situation and decided to bring the request to Jesus to see what the Lord would say (John 12:22). His decision is good practical advice for

all of us. When we are not sure what to do about something, we can always take it to the Lord and let Him handle the matter. As one hymn writer wrote, we can "take it to the Lord in prayer."

Concern About the Future

In Mark 13:3-4 we learn that Andrew and three other disciples were concerned about what would happen in the future. Most people are interested about future things and what is going to happen in the world. How do we rightly learn about the future? Do we find someone who can read a crystal ball? Should we read some book by a person who claims to be a modern day prophet? Should we trust in astrology and try to determine the future by the stars?

Andrew and the other disciples went to the right Person to find out about what was going to happen. They asked the right Person. Did Jesus give them accurate and true information (Mark 13:5-31)? God's Word is the only safe place to go to find out about the future. Why is this so? (See Mark 13:37) In the Bible God has given to us **everything** that we need to know about the future so that we can live the right way TODAY!

Andrew's Death

The Bible does not tell us about Andrew's death. We must get our information from historical records that have been handed down to us, and some of these records may not be very accurate.

In one account we are told that Andrew was faithfully preaching in the area which today is known as Greece. Even unto the time of his death, he was still seeking to bring others to Jesus and to share his discovery with them.

According to the tradition, one of the governmental leaders (the proconsul) was angry that Andrew was continuing to preach Christ and refused to stop. He commanded Andrew to join in sacrificing to the false gods of the heathen people. Andrew refused. Then, the proconsul ordered that Andrew be severely scourged (whipped) and crucified. To make Andrew's death more lingering, he was fastened to the cross with cords rather than nails. Praising God and still telling others to come to Jesus, Andrew hung on the cross for two days before he finally died. The cross he died on was in the form or shape of an "X." Since the time of Andrew's death, this type of a cross has been called "St. Andrew's cross."

You in Andrew and Andrew in You

We have taken a look at the man Andrew. The New Testament does not have too much to tell us about this man. We have learned that Andrew was a seeker, concerned for others, a real "fisher of men," practical, concerned about future things, and faithful to Christ to the very end.

ARE YOU LIKE ANDREW? HOW? WAS ANDREW LIKE YOU? HOW? What lessons have **YOU** learned from the life of Andrew?

CHAPTER 3

JAMES

What is the third name found in the list of the 12 disciples as found in Matthew 10:2-4?

_____ Who was this man's father (Matthew 10:2)?

_____ Who was this man's brother (Matthew 10:2)?

_____ James was probably older than his brother John because his name usually comes first when the two are mentioned (See Matthew 10:2 and 17:1).

Don't Get Confused!

James was a common name in New Testament times. There are two other men who also had this same name, and we do not want to get them confused with the man we are studying in this lesson:

1) JAMES THE BROTHER OF THE LORD (GALATIANS 1:19).

Jesus had a half-brother by the name of J _____ (Matthew 13:55). This man is mentioned often on the pages of the New Testament. After His resurrection Jesus made a special appearance to this man (1 Cor. 15:7). He also became the leader of the Church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13; 21:17). He was also the human author of the book of James (see James 1:1).

2) JAMES THE SON OF ALPHEAUS (MATTHEW 10:3).

This man was also among the 12 _____ (Matthew 10:2). In Jesus' small band of twelve men were two men by the name of James. We are not told very much about James the son of Alphaeus whom we will study in a later chapter. We are given more information about James the son of Zebedee, and this is the man we want to study in this chapter

* * * *

The Lord is not the author of confusion; therefore, whenever James, the son of Zebedee, is mentioned, the Bible very clearly identifies him, either as the son of Zebedee or the brother of John.

Leaving and Gaining

What did James do for an occupation? (See Matthew 4:21 and compare it with verse 18.)

_____ What were James and John doing when Jesus called them (Matthew 4:21)? _____ These two brothers made a

decision to follow Jesus. In order to follow Him they had to leave certain things. Can you think of at least three things which they left (Matthew 4:21-22)? 1) _____ 2) _____
3) _____

In Mark 10:28, Peter said, "Lo, we have left _____ and followed thee." Could James have said the same thing? _____ Read what Jesus said about this in Mark 10:29-31. When people leave things because of Christ, do they also GAIN certain things? _____ Do they end up with their hands empty or with their hands full? _____ Will a follower of Christ GAIN *now* in this life, or will he GAIN *only* in the life to come (Mark 10:30)? _____

When a person becomes a Christian, are there certain things that he should leave or let go of? What would some of these things be? Are there some things that a believer might "lose out on"? What are some things that a believer GAINS in the life to come? What are some things that unsaved people will LOSE in the life to come? James left all for Christ, but he was not a loser; he was a winner. At the end of his life, as we will see, he lost his head for Christ, but even then he was not a loser; he was a winner!

The Son of Thunder

Jesus gave James and John a nickname. He called them BOANERGES (BO-A-NUR-JEZ). What does this name mean (Mark 3:17)? _____ He probably called them this name because of their "stormy personality." Usually when we think of thunder, we think of a storm--even a violent kind of storm with lightning bolts coming down from the sky. James and John were fervent and sometimes fanatical men. At times they even became quite "hot-headed" as we shall see.

We can learn about the "Sons of thunder" by reading Luke 9:51-56. As Jesus and his disciples were traveling on their way to Jerusalem, they were very poorly received by the people in a certain village of the Samaritans (Luke 9:51-53). Which two disciples were greatly angered by the way these Samaritans mistreated Jesus (Luke 9:54)? _____ and _____ Did they think of a nice, peaceful solution to the problem? _____ These "sons of thunder" wanted to command _____ to come down from _____ and _____ them (Luke 9:54). They wanted God to send down some lightning bolts to destroy them!

What did Jesus do? Circle the right answer after you read Luke 9:55:

- a. He agreed with what they said.
- b. He rebuked them for what they said.
- c. He thanked them for what they said.
- d. He said, "Go and do as thou hast said."

The "sons of thunder" did not have the right kind of spirit (Luke 9:55). They had an angry, condemning and judging kind of a spirit that wanted to consume and destroy the Lord's enemies. They failed to understand the very reason Christ came into the world: "For the Son of man is _____ come to _____ men's lives, but to _____ them" (Luke 9:56). Jesus' solution was much more peaceful and merciful: "...they went to another village" (Luke 9:56).

Why did Jesus come into the world (John 3:17; Luke 19:10; 1 Timothy 1:15)?

_____ If God were to give each one of us exactly what we deserved, we should all get lightning bolts from heaven! We should all get destroyed because of our sins. The Lord is a very merciful God.

Have you ever gotten angry at a certain person and wished that this person would somehow drop dead or be removed from this earth? Perhaps this person has even mistreated you or done things that are really wrong. Did you know that God wants to be merciful to that person also? Did you know that God is very good and kind to that person **right now**? (See Matthew 5:43-48). This person may really be your enemy, but Jesus said, "_____ your enemies" (Matthew 5:44).

Who Is The Greatest?

James and John were the "sons of thunder." They were also the "sons of ambition." They wanted to be great in the kingdom of God. They wanted to have the best position of all. When the most important subjects of the Kingdom are all seated, they wanted to have the two seats that were the closest to the King! James and John were two men who really needed to be humbled!

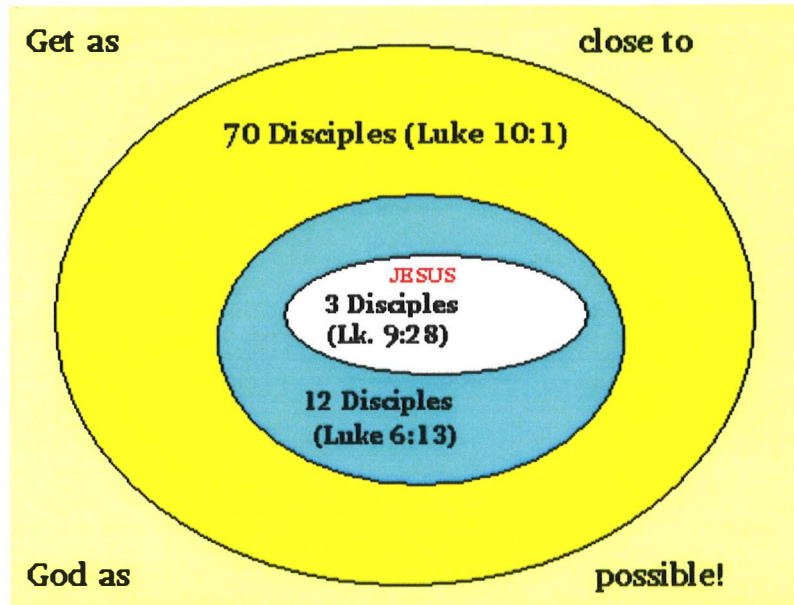
Notice their request in Mark 10:35. They were saying something like this: "Master, we want You to do for us whatever we want!" Some people pray like this. Instead of looking for what God wants, they want God to do for them whatever they want! They want God to be their SLAVE and do whatever they want or desire! Did Jesus promise that He would do whatever they wanted (Mark 10:36)? _____ What was their request (Mark 10:37)

_____ James and John had a mother who also had something to do with this request (Matthew 20:20-21). She asked for special honors for her two sons!

Were the other disciples pleased when they found out about this request that James and John had made (Mark 10:41)? _____ They probably wanted the same thing! According to the words of Jesus in Mark 10:42-45, what is the real secret of greatness? To be truly great in God's sight, what must a person do? How does God measure greatness? No one is greater than the KING, but what was the King willing to do (Mark 10:45)?

The Inner Circle

James was one of the disciples who was part of the Lord's inner circle. The Lord had many disciples. Seventy disciples are mentioned in Luke 10:1. Some disciples were closer to the Lord than others. Jesus at times would call aside certain disciples to do certain things that the other disciples could not do. Although Jesus had many disciples, he chose twelve of these men to be with Him in a special way (Luke 6:13). Of these twelve men, Jesus would at times select three to take with Him certain places. These three men were allowed to do certain things that the other nine were not. Here then are the different "circles" of disciples:



Was James one of the disciples in the inner circle (Luke 9:28)? _____

The Bible tells us three things that Jesus did with these three disciples. In each of these occasions, the other nine were not included:

1. Who were the only three disciples who saw Jesus and Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-5)? _____ Were they allowed to tell the other nine disciples what they had seen (Matt.17:9)? _____
2. Which three disciples were with Jesus when He raised up the daughter of Jairus from the dead (Mark 5:37-43)? _____ Did He allow any others to follow Him (Mark 5:37)? _____
3. In Matthew 26:36, Jesus told the eight disciples to sit down. Judas was not with the group at this time. Which disciples did Jesus take with Him (Matthew 26:37)? _____
 _____ Jesus gave these three men the special opportunity to share in the very difficult experience that He was going through. Did these three disciples do very well (Matthew 26:40,43,45)? _____ He gave them a great opportunity, but they were unable to take advantage of it!

Think of a Shepherd and his flock of sheep. The Shepherd loves all the sheep in the flock. Many sheep stay far away from the shepherd, and they graze on the outskirts of the flock. There are other sheep that stay very close to the Shepherd and walk right beside him. In fact, there may even be some young lambs which the Shepherd may pick up and carry in his arms.

As believers, we need to stay close to the Shepherd. Are *any of us* as close to Him as we should be? _____ We need to seek to get closer and closer to our Lord. If we are in the outer circles, we need to seek to work our way into the inner circles. How can a believer get closer to the Lord? How can a believer get farther away from the Lord? Does God want each believer to DRAW NEAR (James 4:8; Hebrews 10:22)? _____

James was also among the group of four disciples who asked the Lord about what would happen

in the future (Mark 13:3). See also **Chapter 2** on the life of Andrew in this series of studies on the 12 Disciples. James was also present each of the three times when Jesus appeared to His disciples after the resurrection (John 20:19,26; **21:2**).

The Martyrdom of James

Concerning the death of James, we do not need to depend upon tradition or historical records that have been handed down to us. The Bible clearly tells us about the death of James.

James was the first of the twelve disciples to give up his life as a martyr. He was not the first Christian martyr. That honor belonged to Stephen. James was the first of the disciples to be killed, and his death took place about 14 years after the resurrection of Christ.

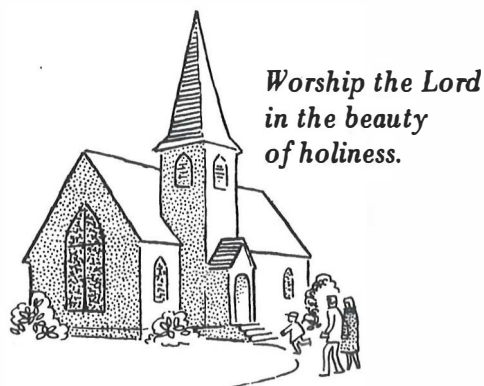
What was the name of the ruler who was persecuting the church at this time (Acts 12:1)?
_____ What did this king do to James and how (Acts 12:2)?

_____ Soon after this, did God bring an end to this king's life (Acts 12:23)? _____ The words of Jesus in Mark 10:39 were fulfilled. James did drink of the cup of suffering just as Jesus had promised.

We must remember that the sword did not bring an end to James' life; it only brought an end to his earthly existence. As soon as the sword brought physical death, James was "absent from the _____" and "present with the _____" (2 Cor. 5:8). Was James worse off or better off (Philippians 1:21,23)? _____

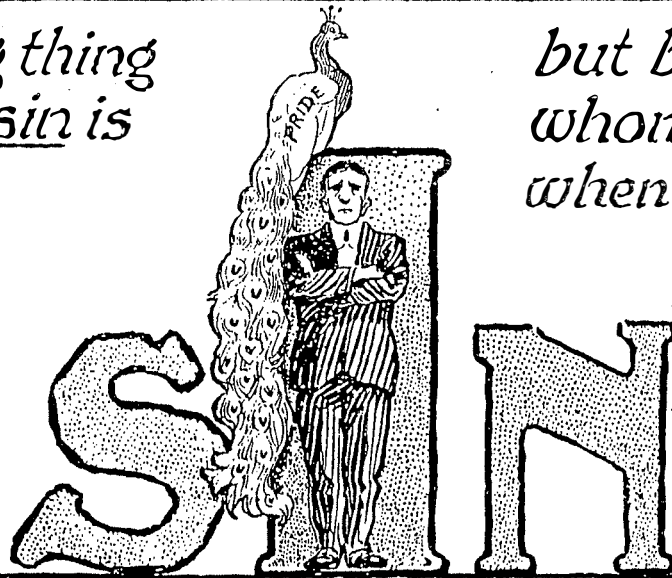
You in James and James in You

James was a man who had his good points and bad points. At times he was a fervent son of thunder who needed to calm down and have a more merciful spirit about him. He was a man of ambition and pride and Jesus needed to give him a lesson in humility and true greatness. James was a devoted follower of Christ who left all to follow his Master. He stayed close to the Lord and was part of the "inner circle." He served Him faithfully to the end, and he was the first of the twelve disciples to die and enter into the presence and joy of Christ. As you think back to the life of James, can you find yourself in this man? As you think about your life today, can you find James in you? What are his good points that you share? What are his weak points that you share?



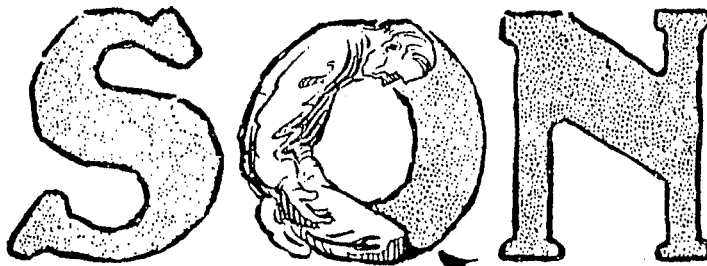
The big thing about sin is the **I**;

but behold whom we see when that **I**



but

"I HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST; AND IT IS NO LONGER I THAT LIVE, BUT CHRIST LIVETH IN ME: AND THAT LIFE WHICH I NOW LIVE IN THE FLESH I LIVE IN FAITH, THE FAITH WHICH IS IN THE



becomes zero

pace

OF GOD, WHO LOVED ME, AND GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR ME" GAL. 2:20 R.V.

CHAPTER 4

JOHN

Because of what we studied in [Chapter 3](#) we should already know some things about John. Who was John's brother (Matthew 4:21)? _____ Assuming that the first brother named is the older brother, was John older or younger than his brother (Matthew 4:21; 10:2)? _____

Who was the father of John (Matthew 4:21)? _____

What was John's occupation (Matthew 4:21)? _____

Do not confuse the Apostle John with another important man who was called John (see John 1:6). The "John" mentioned in John 1:6 is JOHN THE BAPTIST. Here are some of the key DIFFERENCES between these two men:

JOHN THE BAPTIST	JOHN THE APOSTLE
He had no brother.	His brother was James.
He was a great prophet.	He was a fisherman.
He was not one of Jesus' 12 disciples.	He was one of Jesus' 12 disciples.
He died before Christ went to the cross. (He had his head removed by Herod. See Matthew 14.)	He died as an old man many years after Christ went to the cross.
He wrote no books of the Bible.	He wrote 5 books of the Bible.

Because the author of the Gospel of John never mentions his name when he refers to himself in his book, we conclude that John is probably the unnamed disciple mentioned with Andrew in John 1:35-39. John, who was once a disciple of John the Baptist, has a similar early life history as Andrew. See [Chapter 2](#) on the life of Andrew.

Closest and Nearest

In the last chapter, we studied that Jesus had an "inner circle" which was made up of three men: Peter, James and John. At certain times these three men were taken certain places and allowed to do certain things that the other nine disciples were not. Out of these three men, John seemed to be the one disciple who kept the nearest to his Lord. Out of all of the Lord's sheep, John seemed to stay the closest to the Great Shepherd. We say this for the following reasons:

1. John had a very keen awareness of how much His Saviour loved him. Again and again he refers to himself as the disciple "whom _____" (John 13:23 and see also John 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20,24). The Shepherd loves all of His Sheep, but not all the sheep appreciate or understand or fully realize His love. Jesus loved John, and ***John knew it and believed it!*** What about you? Are you convinced that the Saviour loves you? How do you know this? It is hard to get close to someone or draw near to someone if you are not sure that this person really loves you? John was sure! He knew the love of Christ, and this love drew him closer and closer to the Lover of his soul!
 2. Which disciple was closest to Jesus when they sat (or reclined) at the table on the night before Jesus died on the cross (John 13:23)? _____ All of the disciples were around the table, but John was closest to his Lord.
 3. When Jesus hung on the cross, which disciple was right there at the foot of the cross and close enough so that Jesus could talk to him (John 19:26)?

 4. Although motivated by pride and ambition, John had a strong desire to be close to the King (Mark 10:35-37). He wanted to sit right next to Jesus (Mark 10:37)! John never wanted much of a distance to come between him and his Lord.
 5. John was given the privilege of being the human author of five books of the Bible (more than any other of the 12 disciples were privileged to write). What were the five books that John wrote?

- Hint: Four are among the last five books!**
6. John was very sensitive to His Lord. Which disciple was the first to understand the significance of the empty tomb (John 20:2-8)? _____ Which disciple was the first to recognize Jesus (John 21:1-7)?

The Lord wants every believer to come nearer and nearer and closer and closer to Himself. How can a believer draw NEAR to God? Why does God sometimes seem "far away"? Why is there sometimes a "distance" between the believer and His Saviour? What do the following verses teach you about drawing nigh or near to God? See Psalm 34:18; Psalm 119:150-151; Psalm 145:18; James 4:8.

Glimpses of the Apostle John

The Bible does not tell us a great deal about the apostle John. We must learn about him through different bits and pieces that we find in the gospels and in the book of Acts. In Luke 9:49 John

saw a man doing what? _____ (The word "devils" means "demons"). In whose Name was this man doing this? _____ Did John and the others try to stop this man from doing what he was doing? _____ Why? _____ Was John right in what he did (Luke 9:50)? _____ Was this man an ENEMY ("against us") or an ALLY ("for us")? _____

Many have copied John's mistake. They think, "If he is not part of our little band (or group, or church), then he must not be serving Christ." They imagine that no man can be a soldier of Christ unless he wears their exact uniform. They try to stop every person who will not serve Christ **in their way**. They think, "If people do not follow us in every way, then how can they be following Christ?"

Example: The church of which you are a member may be associated with other Bible believing churches. There may be other Bible believing churches who are not part of your particular association. Does this mean that all other churches are not really serving Christ? _____ Should every person be condemned who does not attend churches that are part of your association or denomination? _____ Can you think of other examples of how people today could make the same mistake that John made?

J.C.Ryle's comments on this passage are very fitting:

Our Lord Jesus Christ gives us a warning against a bigoted and illiberal spirit. Who this man was and why he did not consort with the disciples, we do not know. But we do know that he was doing a good work in casting out demons, and that he was doing what he did in the name of Christ. And yet John says, "we forbade him." Very striking is the reply which the Lord at once gave him: "Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us."

Thousands, in every period of Church history, have spent their lives in copying John's mistake. They have labored to stop every man who will not work for Christ in their way, from working for Christ at all. They have imagined, in their petty self-conceit, that no man can be a soldier of Christ, unless he wears their uniform, and fights in their regiment. They have been ready to say of every Christian who does not see everything with their eyes, "Forbid him! Forbid him! for he followeth not with us."

The plain truth is, that we are all too ready to say, "We are the men, and wisdom shall die with us" (Job 12:2). We forget that no Church on earth has an absolute monopoly of all wisdom, and that people may be right in the main, without agreeing with us. We must learn to be thankful if sin is opposed, and the Gospel preached, and the devil's kingdom pulled down, though the work may not be done exactly in the way we like. We must try to believe that men may be true-hearted followers of Jesus Christ, and yet for some reason may be kept back from seeing all things in religion just as we do. Above all, we must praise God if souls are converted, and Christ is magnified,—no matter who the preacher may be, and to what Church he may belong. Happy are those who can say with Paul, "If Christ be preached, I rejoice, yea and will rejoice," (Phil. 1:18) and with Moses, "Enviest thou for

my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that all did prophesy." (Numbers 11:29)

[Taken from *Ryle's Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*, under Luke 9:49-50]

In Luke 22:8 we learn that Peter and John were sent by Jesus on an assignment to prepare _____ (see also verses 9-13). In John 13:23-26, John asked the Lord a key question. John was a close companion of Peter, and these two men are often mentioned together:

John 20:1-10	Peter and John discover the empty tomb.
John 21:18-22	Peter and John hear the Lord speak of their future.
Acts 3:11	Peter and John are together when the lame man is healed.
Acts 4:1-22	Peter and John are arrested for preaching the gospel.

The Son of Thunder Became the Great Apostle of Love

As we studied in the previous chapter, James and John were called by Jesus the "sons of _____" (Mark 3:17). These men were very intolerant of anyone who seemed to be an enemy of their Lord. Because they completely misunderstood the Lord's love even for His enemies (Luke 9:56), they were very quick to desire the destruction of the enemies of the Lord (Luke 9:51-55).

Jesus rebuked John and said to him, "For the Son of man is not come to _____ men's lives, but to _____ them" (Luke 9:56). Let's go to John's own writing and see if he learned his lesson and see if he finally understood the reason Christ came into the world:

John 3:17--Why was Christ sent?

John 12:47--Why did Christ come?

1 John 4:14--Why did the Father send the Son?

The mark of a wise man is not that he never makes mistakes, but that *he learns from his*

mistakes! John learned Jesus' lesson of love, and he learned it well!

The Son of Thunder who was so zealous and so ready to throw lightning bolts at anyone who disagreed with him became a changed man by the grace of God. John, the son of thunder, became John, the Apostle of love. As you quickly look through the book of 1 John, can you find verses which speak on the important subject of LOVE? (See especially chapter 4.) Write down some of these verses _____

If a man is a good LOVER, then he must also be a good HATER! If a man loves THE TRUTH, then he must also hate ERROR. John was a good LOVER, and John was a good HATER! He hated that which was false and that which was wrong. He would not tolerate ERROR for one minute (see 1 John 4:1-6) . When it came to that which was wrong and that which was false, John did not lose any of his thunder! The Bible says in Psalm 97:10, "Ye that _____ the LORD, _____ evil."

According to Irenaeus (a man who lived in the 2nd century), there was once a false teacher by the name of Cerinthus. One day the Apostle John saw Cerinthus in the public bath and fled saying, "Let us flee, for Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within." We are not sure that John really made this statement, but it does remind us that John was a man who really loved the truth and hated that which was against the truth. Are you a truth-lover? Are you an error-hater?

In Galatians 2:9, John is mentioned by the Apostle Paul. Paul describes James (the brother of Jesus), Cephas (Peter), and John as those who "seemed to be P_____." In a building nothing is more important than a pillar. Compare Judges 16:29-30. Without the pillar the building would collapse! Thus John was a **key man** in the early church. In Ephesians 2:20 men such as Peter, James and John are said to be FOUNDATIONAL men. It was through these men that God gave us His Word, the Bible, and there is no greater foundation than this!

John's Later Life

John died sometime at the end of the first century during the early part of the reign of Emperor Trajan, who began to reign in 98 A.D. As far as we know, John was the only disciple among the 12 who was not put to death as a martyr. He was probably born about 1-5 A.D., and if this was the case, he lived to be about 90 or 95 years old.

Even though John was not a martyr, he did suffer persecution for His Saviour:

1. As we have seen, he was arrested with Peter for preaching the gospel (Acts 4).
2. He was arrested again with the other apostles and beaten (Acts 5:18, 40).
3. There must have been many other persecutions that we are not told about (compare John 16:1-4, 33).
4. One tradition says that John was sent bound to Rome and under orders from Emperor Domitian, he was condemned to be cast into a caldron of boiling oil. God worked a miracle, and the oil did him no harm. Whether this occurrence really happened we cannot be sure, but we do know that God promised to protect His apostles in amazing ways (Mark 16:18). This story reminds us that a believer cannot die until his work is done. God still had work

for John to do! For further information on the persecution of first century men, refer to *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*.

- 5. John was exiled or banished to a little island called Patmos (Revelation 1:9). It was here that he wrote the book of Revelation and where God showed him some amazing things about the future.

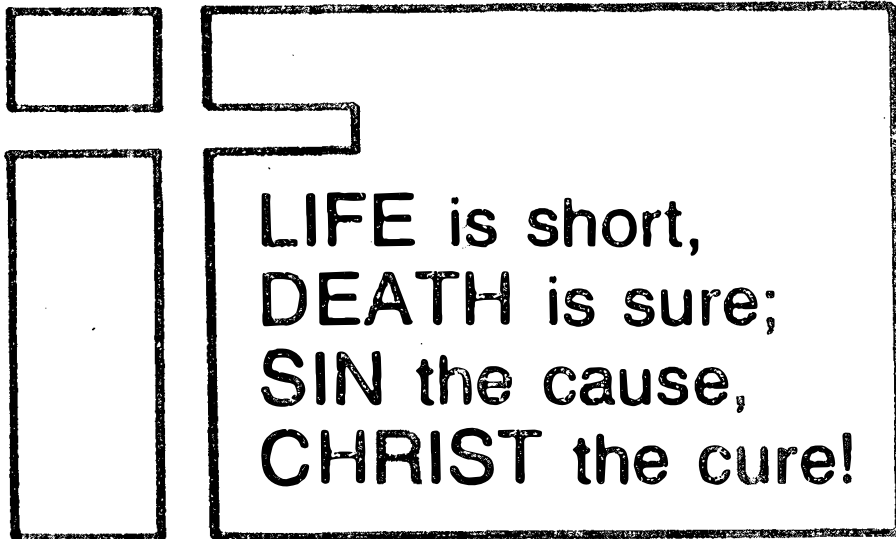
John was the last disciple to die. Who was the first disciple to die (Acts 12:1-2)?

_____ One brother was the first to die, and the younger brother was the last to die. This should remind us that God has a different plan for each believer. God had a plan for James, and God had a plan for John. God has a unique plan that is especially fitted for each individual. In John 21:18-22, we learn that God had different plans for John and Peter. Do not expect God to deal with you the same way He deals with other believers. God may allow some things to happen to you that do not happen to others. ***God knows what is best for each person. Just trust Him. Get your eyes off others (John 21:21-22) and follow Christ!***

Are you thankful for the life of John the Apostle? What lessons have you learned from the study of His life? In what ways was John a good example to follow? In what ways can you learn from some of the mistakes that John made? Are there similarities between you and John? Are you like him in certain ways? Is he like you in certain ways?

How do the following words make you think of John?

- LOVE
- HATE
- CLOSEST
- FAITHFUL
- THUNDER
- AUTHOR
- OLD MAN



CHAPTER 5

PHILIP AND BARTHOLOMEW

Review of Chapters One through Four

We have now studied four of the 12 disciples: Peter, Andrew, James and John. As a review quiz, please answer the following 20 questions, using the names of the four disciples as listed above:

1. Who was the first disciple to be martyred (to die for his faith)? _____
2. Which disciple died as an old man and was never martyred? _____
3. Which disciple was usually the first one to act or speak? _____
4. Who was Peter's brother? _____
5. Who was John's brother? _____
6. Who walked on the water? _____
7. Who were the "sons of thunder"? _____
8. Who denied the Lord three times? _____
9. Who was the "apostle of love"? _____
10. Which of these disciples were fishermen? _____
11. Which disciple wrote five New Testament books? _____
12. Which three disciples were in the "inner circle"? _____
13. Which disciple was in the innermost circle? _____
14. Who preached on the Day of Pentecost resulting in about 3000 people being saved and baptized? _____
15. Which disciple seemed to stay nearest and closest to the Lord? _____
16. Who were the Sons of Zebedee? _____
17. Which disciple was at the foot of the cross when Jesus died? _____
18. Which disciple sliced off the ear of Malchus? _____
19. Which disciple brought Peter to the Lord? _____
20. Who was "the disciple whom Jesus loved"? _____

PHILIP

In all the lists of the disciples, the name of Philip always comes.... (circle the correct answer)

a.	fourth	See Matthew 10:2-3, Mark 3:16-18, Luke 6:13-14, and Acts 1:13
b.	fifth	
c.	sixth	
d.	seventh	

Do not confuse this man with another man who is also named Philip whom we read about in Acts 6:5, Acts chapter 8 and Acts 21:8. The Philip whom we are studying in this chapter is called PHILIP THE APOSTLE (see Matthew 10:2-3). The Philip that we read about in Acts chapter 8 is called PHILIP THE _____ (see Acts 21:8). Both of these men loved the Lord and served Him faithfully.

Philip Meets the Lord

We first read about Philip in chapter one of the Gospel of John. What was the name of Philip's hometown (John 1:44)? _____ This small fishing village was located on the shore of the Sea of Galilee (see a map of Bible lands). What other disciples were from this same village (John 1:44)? _____

In John 1:43, we learn about the time when Jesus called Philip. Jesus found Philip and said to him, "_____ ME!" (John 1:43). Do you think Philip did this? _____ It is true that Jesus found Philip (John 1:43), but it is also true that Philip found Jesus. In John 1:45, Philip said, "WE HAVE _____ HIM!" Philip was a seeker! He was looking for the Messiah. Did Philip find what he was looking for? _____ Those who seek God will find God: "If thou _____ Him, He will be _____ of thee" (1 Chronicles 28:9). Are you a seeker? Do you desire to find the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord and God?

Philip Finds Nathanael

Jesus found Philip (John 1:43) and Philip found Jesus (John 1:45). As soon as Philip had found Jesus, he wanted to find someone else (see John 1:45). Philip had made a great discovery, and he wanted to share this discovery with his friend Nathanael. In many ways Philip was like Andrew (see John 1:35-41). After Andrew found the Lord, he quickly went and told _____ (John 1:41). After Philip found the Lord, he quickly went and told _____ (John 1:45).

Let's learn two important lessons from Andrew and Philip:

LESSON #1—WE NEED TO FIND CHRIST AND MEET HIM IN A PERSONAL WAY.

There are some people who go to Sunday School every week and even read their Bibles at times, and yet they have never really found Christ and have never really come to know Him in a personal way. Jesus Christ wants to come into your life and make Himself very real to you. He even stands at the door KNOCKING (Revelation 3:20). What must *you* do (Revelation 3:20)?

_____ **How** can you do this? Have you done this?

Benjamin Franklin could never share with anyone else the wonderful discovery of the telephone because he never discovered the telephone. Alexander Graham Bell invented and discovered the

telephone about 100 years later! A person cannot share with others what he has never found or discovered himself. A person must first discover Christ for himself, and only then can he begin to share Him with others. Before Andrew ever went to Peter, something wonderful happened to Andrew. Before Philip ever went to Nathanael, something wonderful happened to Philip. Has something wonderful happened to you? Have you met a wonderful Person (compare Isaiah 9:6)? Have you found Him to be a wonderful Saviour and Friend and Lord?

LESSON #2—WE NEED TO SHARE WHAT WE HAVE FOUND WITH OTHERS.

Andrew told Peter what he had found (John 1:41). Philip told Nathanael what he had found (John 1:45). Have you told anyone what YOU have found? There are many people whom you know who have never met Christ in a personal and real way. They have never discovered **WHO** Jesus really is and **WHAT** He has done for them. How can you help these people? Go out and tell others what you have found!

Philip was a man who was familiar with the Scriptures. He knew what God had said in His Word. Philip said, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets, did write" (John 1:45).

MOSES WROTE ABOUT THE COMING MESSIAH. Philip may have been thinking about the great passage found in Deuteronomy 18:15-19. The GREAT PROPHET mentioned here in verse 15 is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE PROPHETS WROTE ABOUT THE COMING MESSIAH. Philip was aware of many passages found in the writings of the Old Testament prophets that spoke of the coming Saviour-King (see for example Micah 5:2; Isaiah 9:6-7; Isaiah 40:3-5; Jeremiah 23:5-6). The entire Old Testament looks ahead to the coming of Christ. Philip knew this and was convinced that he had found the Person that the Bible talks about.

We need to make sure that the Christ whom we discover is the Christ that the Bible talks about. Some people think that they have discovered Christ, but the Christ they have discovered is not the Christ of the Bible. There is a Christ whom they have made up in their own minds (such as a "Jesus Christ Superstar" or a "Jesus Christ the revolutionist"). If the Christ whom people talk about does not resemble the Christ of the Bible, then they have not really discovered the real Person of Jesus Christ.

Philip is Tested by Jesus

What question did Jesus ask Philip in John 6:5?

_____ (The word "whence" means "from where"). Jesus already _____ what He would do (John 6:6). Jesus knew that He would feed these thousands of people by a great miracle. Jesus asked Philip this question because He wanted to test Philip's faith and see what Philip would say.

Did Philip think that it was possible to buy food for such a great number of people (John 6:7)?
 _____ Would even 200 pennies (200 *denarii*) be enough to buy bread for each person to take just a

little (John 6:7)? _____ Two hundred *denarii* is a large sum of money. The silver *denarius* is a Roman coin. It was the amount of money that an average worker would receive for one day's work. For a man to earn two hundred *denarii* he would have to work _____ days! How much money does your father make for one day's work? Multiply this by 200 and you will understand the amount of money Philip was talking about!

Philip's answer showed how little faith he had in his Lord. He should have said something like this: "Lord, it is impossible for us to buy food for these thousands of people. If You want these people fed, then You will have to do something. A miracle is needed, and I believe you are able to do it. We can't do it, but YOU CAN! Since You have proved that You can provide wine at a wedding (John chapter 2) and since You have proved that you can heal the sick and diseased (John 6:2), then I believe that You are also able to feed this vast crowd. I'm going to trust you to do what is best for these people!" Philip needed to learn that nothing was too hard for the Lord. The Lord has no problem when it comes to supplying that which is needed!

Philip Learns Another Lesson

Philip is also mentioned in John 12:20-22 and John 14:6-9. In this last passage Philip learned a valuable lesson. Jesus had been talking about COMING TO THE FATHER and KNOWING THE FATHER (see verses 6-7 in John 14).

When Philip heard Jesus' answer to Thomas, he said, "Lord, _____ the _____, and it **sufficeth** us [it's enough, it's all we need]" (John 14:8). Philip had a good desire. He wanted to know the Father. He wanted to see the Father, but Philip failed to understand something that was very important. If a person really comes to know Jesus Christ, then who else do they come to know (John 14:7)? _____ The person who has seen Christ has also seen _____ (John 14:9)! Philip wanted to be shown the Father, but he failed to understand that he had already been shown the Father. Jesus Christ is the One who reveals and makes known God the Father.

Perhaps Philip wanted some amazing and spectacular manifestation of God (something he could see with his eyes). He was looking for additional revelation, but he needed to understand that he had all the revelation that he needed, and this revelation is found in Jesus Christ.

There are people today who are looking for **added revelations**. They want God to reveal Himself and make Himself known to them in special ways. They want to have a special vision or a special dream or to receive a message from God in some other special way such as by speaking in tongues, etc. They need to understand that what they already have is ENOUGH! The Bible is all that they need! God has revealed Himself fully in the Bible. As we go to the Bible, we get to know Jesus Christ. As we get to know Jesus Christ, we get to know God the Father (John 14:7). We do not need new or additional revelation. Rather, we need to pay attention to the revelation which God has already given to us!

Philip's Later Life

The Bible does not tell us a great deal about Philip. In this chapter of notes we have already mentioned all the verses that talk about Philip.

Historical tradition tells us that Philip preached the gospel in Asia Minor, probably spending most of his time in the area called Phrygia (see a Bible map). An early historian by the name of Eusebius called him “the great light of Asia.” Philip brought Nathanael to the Saviour, and we can be sure that before his life was over he had brought many more people to Christ.

We do not know much about the death of Philip, but it is quite certain that he died the death of a Christian martyr. He was a man who was "faithful unto _____" (Rev. 2:10)!

BARTHOLOMEW

Bartholomew is found in all of the lists which give the names of the disciples (Matt. 10; Mark 3; Luke 6; Acts 1), but the New Testament does not tell us anything else about Bartholomew.

It is very likely that Bartholomew was the same person who is called Nathanael in John chapter 1. Reasons that support this possibility are as follows:

1. In New Testament times it was not uncommon for a person to have two names. For example, Matthew the tax collector was also called by the name Levi (see Matthew 9:9 and compare Luke 5:27,29).
2. In the gospels written by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the name Bartholomew is mentioned, but the name Nathanael is never found. In John's gospel the name Nathanael is mentioned but the name Bartholomew is never found.
3. In the gospel of John, chapter one, we learn that Philip and Nathanael were good friends. In fact, it was Philip that brought Nathanael to Jesus. In the other three gospels the name Bartholomew is always found after the name of Philip (Mark 3:16-17; Matthew 10:2-3; Luke 6:14 and following).
4. In John 21:2 and 14 the Bible seems to indicate that Nathanael was one of the 12 disciples of Jesus. Since the name “Nathanael” is not found in any of the lists which give the names of the 12 disciples, then we assume that this man must have had another name. Bartholomew seems to be the most likely choice.

We cannot be absolutely sure that Bartholomew and Nathanael are one and the same person, but the above four reasons make it seem quite likely that this was so. If they were not the same person, then the Bible tells us practically nothing about Bartholomew other than listing his name. If they were the same person, then we know several things about this man from chapter one of John's gospel.

Nathanael Meets Jesus

Nathanael was a man who knew the Bible. He had a good knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures. This is why he said, “Can there any _____ thing come out of _____? (John 1:46). He did not know of any Old Testament passage which said that the Messiah would come from the city of Nazareth. He may have been thinking of the important prophecy found in Micah 5:2 which clearly states that Israel's King must come out of the town of B_____. Of course Nathanael did not realize that “Jesus of Nazareth” was born in Bethlehem, not Nazareth. Nazareth was the town where He grew up, but it was not His birthplace.

Nathanael had his doubts but he was a sincere and open-minded man, and so he left his fig tree and followed Philip. Notice the first thing Jesus said to Nathanael: “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no _____ [deceit, trickery]” (John 1:47). Nathanael was not a tricky or deceitful person. He was a man with an honest and sincere and open heart. He was one of the Jews of his day who was waiting and looking for the coming of **the Promised One**, the Messiah.

Nathanael was surprised by the words which he heard. He asked, “How do you know all about me?” (compare John 1:48). The answer that Jesus gave him was even more surprising! “Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the _____ tree, I _____ thee” (John 1:48). Jesus saw Nathanael even though Jesus was not there! Nathanael was amazed to hear Jesus describe the very scene where he had just been! Even before Philip spoke to Nathanael, Jesus knew all about this man! Was this proof enough to convince Nathanael who Jesus really was (see John 1:49)?

Jesus knew all about Nathanael. He knew what Nathanael was thinking! He knew just where Nathanael was! He knew just what kind of a person Nathanael was! The same is true for us. The Lord knows all about us! He knows you better than you know yourself! He knows all about you and all about your thoughts. He knows all about your problems and doubts and worries. He knows your heart.

When we go to the doctor we want him to know as much about us as possible. The more he knows about us the better he will be able to help us. We can then trust him to do what is best for our body. The Lord Jesus is the great Doctor of the soul! He knows all about us, and He knows exactly what is wrong with us. We need to trust Him and allow Him to do His wonderful work in our soul!

Nathanael was an open-minded man who was open to correction. At first he was wrong in his opinion of Jesus (John 1:46), but he soon changed his mind after Jesus spoke with him (John 1:48-49). God wants us to have open hearts and to have minds that are willing to change when we are confronted with the truth.

The last thing we read about Nathanael is found in John 21:2. He went fishing with six other disciples and Jesus appeared unto them (John 21:14). The Bible does not tell us anything else about this man.

Historical tradition does not give us very much helpful information either. We must say the same thing about Bartholomew as we said about Philip. We are not sure how he died, but we can be quite sure that he was put to death because he faithfully preached Christ as “the _____ of God and the _____ of Israel” (John 1:49). He too shall receive the martyr's crown (see Rev. 2:10)!

WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND IN THE LIVES OF PHILIP AND BARTHOLOMEW THAT SHOULD BE FOUND IN YOUR LIFE ALSO?

CHAPTER 6

THOMAS

In the list of disciples found in Matthew 10:2-4, which name appears seventh on the list?

_____ This disciple was also called by another name as we learn in John 11:16. What was this other name? _____ Both of these names mean the same thing. The name "Didymus" means "double" or "twin." The name "Thomas" means "twin" also. Thomas must have been a twin, although the Bible does not mention anything about his twin brother or sister.

The Character of Thomas

The Bible does not tell us very much about Thomas. In fact, it is only the Gospel of John which really gives us information about this man. The other Gospels mention his name but do not tell us anything about him.

The Gospel of John teaches four things about the disciple named Thomas:

1. Thomas was slow to believe. Because of his unbelief he has been called "DOUBTING THOMAS." His attitude could be expressed in these words: "Unless I see it, I won't believe it!"
2. Thomas was a man subject to despondency. He could become easily discouraged or depressed. "Gloomy" is another word that describes his personality.
3. Thomas saw the darker side of things. He was the kind of person who on a partly sunny day looked at the clouds and never saw the blue sky. Instead of looking ahead and seeing the blessings, he saw only the difficulties that were involved. He was a pessimist which means he did not usually think things would turn out very well.
4. Thomas was a disciple who was full of ardent and fervent love for his Master. He was a fearless and loyal follower of Christ.

Thomas is Mentioned in the Gospel of John

The first real mention of Thomas is found in John chapter 11. In this chapter the Lord suggested to His disciples that they return to Judaea (John 11:7). Bethany, the town of Lazarus, was located in Judaea (see John 11:1). Also Bethany was located right next to Jerusalem where many of the Lord's enemies were. Were the disciples concerned that Jesus wanted to return to this region (John 11:8)? _____ They knew that the Jews had tried to kill Jesus before (see John 10:31-32, 39) and that they would probably try to kill Him again.

In John 11:15, Jesus said to the disciples, "...let us go unto him (Lazarus)." Which disciple spoke right up and said to the other disciples, "Let us also go" (John 11:16)? _____ Was

Thomas afraid to go? _____ Was he willing even to die with Christ? _____ We can see something of the courage that Thomas had as well as his loyalty to his Master. What did Thomas think would happen to Jesus and to all the disciples (John 11:16)? _____ His devotion to Christ was stronger than his fear of death. Thomas tended to see the darker side of things. He thought things would turn out for the worst. Death filled his vision. Thomas was wrong, of course. Even though the disciples did go with Jesus to Bethany, not one of them was killed! Thomas was all gloomy and concerned over something that never even happened.

Was Thomas' outlook good or bad? Was it right or wrong? Was it right for him to have death as his outlook? Thomas failed to pay attention, and he missed what the Lord had just said: "And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may _____; nevertheless let _____ go unto him" (John 11:15). In this verse Jesus did not say "to the intent ye may die," but He said, "to the intent ye may _____." What was the intent of God? Jesus wanted to take them to Bethany so that they might _____, not so that they might die! Jesus was not bringing them into a "DEATH" situation. He was bringing them into a wonderful situation in which God would be G _____ (John 11:4). Thomas failed to pay attention to what the Lord was saying! Do *you* sometimes fail to hear what God is really saying in His Word? Do you sometimes miss the whole point? Do you sometimes think that God's intent for you is something terrible when it is really something wonderful?

Are you like Thomas? Do you tend to see the darker side of things? Do you always think things will turn out for the worse? Do you worry about things that never even happen? Do you always see the clouds and never the blue sky? Remember, God Himself is in charge of this world and all that happens in it. God is not in heaven trying to make everything turn out terrible. God is an Expert at making things turn out for His glory and for man's good. The believer needs to realize that God works all things together for _____ (Romans 8:28) and not for bad. The believer does not need to grumble or complain or become gloomy. Instead, what are we told to do (Ephesians 5:20)? _____ What are we told to do in Philippians 4:4? _____

How does worry and unbelief and grumbling and gloominess affect us? Can such things affect a person PHYSICALLY? In what ways? Can such things affect a person MENTALLY? SPIRITUALLY? How?

We learn more about Thomas in John chapter 14. In verse one, Jesus said, "Let not your heart be _____." The heart of Thomas was probably very troubled at this time. This night was the very night that Jesus would be arrested. The situation did not look very good, especially to Thomas. What wonderful promise did Jesus give His disciples in John 14:3?

Jesus wanted to bring these men through the dark clouds of gloom so that they could see the bright skies of hope. It is true that Jesus would leave the disciples and be killed, but it is also true that He would rise again and someday COME AGAIN! Jesus said, "And where I go ye know and the way ye know" (John 14:4). In other words, "You know I am going to heaven and you know the way to get to heaven!"

Which disciple was all confused about these words that Jesus spoke (John 14:5)? _____ Once again Thomas was not paying close enough attention, and he missed the whole point. In spite of what Jesus had already said (John 14:1-3), Thomas saw very little hope. He just saw the darkness of the tunnel and failed to see the bright light shining at the end of the tunnel. At least Thomas was honest enough to tell the Lord that he did not understand.

Jesus helped Thomas, and the answer that the Lord gave to Thomas is one of the most important salvation verses in the Bible:

"Jesus saith unto him [Thomas], I am the _____,
the _____ and the _____ no man
_____ unto the Father but by _____" (John 14:6).

Have you memorized this verse? What does this verse mean? How can a person get to heaven?

Thomas is also mentioned in John chapter 20 and also in John 21:2. He was one of the seven disciples who went on this fishing trip. Let us now consider the very important passage found in Chapter 20 of John.

Doubting Thomas

On the first Easter Sunday evening, the Lord Jesus appeared to His disciples (John 20:19). Were the disciples blessed by this appearance of their risen Lord (John 20:20)? _____ Which disciple was not present on this occasion (John 20:24)? _____

The Bible does not tell us why Thomas was absent. Maybe he had a good reason for being away, or perhaps he did not. All we know is that for some reason he did not join his fellow disciples at this gathering on this first Easter Sunday evening. Because of his absence he lost out on a real blessing! He did not share in the "gladness" which the other disciples experienced (John 20:20). For a whole week he was in a state of gloom and unbelief while the other disciples were rejoicing.

God does not want believers to lose out on the blessings that He has for them by not assembling together. In Hebrews 10:25 we are told not to be "forsaking the _____ of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." When God's people come together, we need to be there lest we lose out and miss out! It is never wise to be absent without **very good** cause. How is your church attendance? Are you missing out on what God has for you?

What did the other disciples tell Thomas (John 20:25)?

_____ Were they lying to him? Were they trying to fool him or deceive him? _____ Were they telling the truth? _____ Did Thomas believe them?

_____ Thomas rejected the testimony of ten faithful brethren who were his true friends! He refused to take them at their word. He refused to believe their witness.

According to Thomas, what was the only thing that would convince him of the truth of the resurrection (John 20:25)?

Thomas refused to believe until he could see (and touch)!

Let's think about the words of Thomas here in John 20:25. Thomas must have seen Christ's dead body on the cross. He knew all about the nails and the wound that Christ received from the spear (see John 19:34). The picture of Christ's dead body must have burnt itself into his mind. In his gloom and unbelief all he could think about was the lifeless form of his Master as he had seen Him hanging on the cross. For Thomas it was as if the whole universe collapsed when Jesus was crucified. In Thomas's mind he had a picture of a dead Jesus, and not even the glad words of the

disciples could erase that picture. Even when the sun was shining brightly, Thomas still saw the dark clouds of gloom--clouds that were not really even there!

We should also note that the Lord's wound which He received from the spear must have been very large! It was large enough for a man to put his _____ right into it (John 20:25 and compare verse 27). Keep in mind that when the Lord received this piercing by the spear, He was already dead (John 19:33-34).

Thomas' sin of unbelief was very great, but the Lord was so very gracious to him. One week later ("after eight days") the disciples were again gathered together, again on a Sunday evening, and this time _____ was with them (John 20:26). Who came right through closed doors to appear to these men? _____

Who was the first individual whom Jesus spoke to (John 20:27)? _____ Notice how Jesus gave Thomas **just what he had asked for**:

The Demands of Thomas (John 20:25)	The Commands of Jesus (John 20:27)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unless I see in his hands the mark or the nails, 2. And put my finger into the place of the nails, 3. And put my hand into his side, 4. I definitely will not believe! 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. See (behold) my hands, 2. Bring here your finger, 3. And bring your hand, and put it into my side, 4. And no longer be unbelieving, but believing!

For each demand of Thomas there is a command of Christ, although the order in which the commands are uttered is not exactly the same as that in which the demands were made.

Something else quite amazing is that the Lord had perfect knowledge of everything Thomas had said even though the Lord was not physically (bodily) present at the time (see John 20:25). This is an important reminder to every believer. The Lord Jesus Christ is OMNISCIENT. He knows all things. He knows everything we say or even think. We may fool others, but never Him!

Notice what Thomas said: "My _____ and my _____" (John 20:28). Apparently Thomas did not even need to do any touching. Sight was enough. In an instant, DOUBTING THOMAS became CONVINCED THOMAS. He was FULLY PERSUADED! Never again did Thomas ever doubt the fact of the resurrection.

Thomas only said five words (John 20:28), but they were wonderful words. It was the language of amazement, delight, repentance, faith and adoration, all combined in one sentence! Was Thomas correct when he called Jesus "GOD"? There are many religious groups and cults today who do not believe that Jesus is truly God. Did Thomas believe this? _____ We should also notice that Jesus

did not correct Thomas. The Lord did not say, "Thomas, you should never call Me 'GOD.' I am not God, so please be sure to never call Me this again." The Lord did not say this because **He is** everything that Thomas said He was!

According to the words of Jesus, why did Thomas believe (John 20:29)?

_____ He should have accepted the word of his ten friends who told him the good news of the resurrection a week earlier (John 20:25), but he refused to believe. He believed only after he had **seen**.

Faith Not Based On Sight

We all need to learn a lesson from Thomas. Jesus said these important words for all of us: "Blessed (happy) are they that have _____ and yet have _____" (John 20:29).

Those of us living today will never be able to see what Thomas saw. Can people see the risen Christ today (compare John 16:10)? _____ Today if a person refuses to believe until he sees the Lord, then he will never believe! He will not see Jesus until it is too late, that is, in the next life! Jesus will not and does not appear to people today.

Even in New Testament times there were many people who never saw the risen Lord (see 1 Peter 1:8). Did these people love the Lord (1 Peter 1:8)? _____ Did they believe (1 Peter 1:8)? _____ Were they blessed with joy and gladness (1 Peter 1:8)? _____

Today what do we have to base our faith upon? Actually we have the same thing that Thomas had. Thomas had the word and the testimony of those men who actually saw the Lord (John 20:25). The sad thing is that Thomas refused to believe their word. Today we also have the testimony given to us by those men who saw the Lord. For example, the Apostle John was among those who saw the risen Christ. He has given to us the Gospel of John in which he tells us about the resurrection. Should we believe John's word? _____ Was John trying to fool us or deceive us? _____ Was John a liar? _____ Were the things which John wrote true or false (John 21:24)? _____

The Bible says, "We walk by _____ (taking God at His Word) not by _____" (2 Cor. 5:7). God has given us His written Word so that we might know about Christ and believe on Him: "But these are _____ that ye might _____ that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that _____ ye might have _____ through His name" (John 20:31). Blessed are they who BELIEVE! Blessed are those who simply take God at His Word! Blessed are those who say, "**GOD SAID IT! I BELIEVE IT! THAT SETTLES IT!**"

In Matthew 8:5-10, we learn about a centurion. Did this man need to *see* his servant healed before he would believe? _____ What did Jesus say about this man's faith (verse 10)? _____

_____ In John 4:46-54 we learn about a certain nobleman. Did this man need to see his son healed before he would believe? _____ Blessed are they that just believe the W _____ (verse 50)!

If people refuse to hear and believe God's Word, then it is doubtful that anything else will convince them. We learn this from reading Luke 16:19-31 (see especially the last verse).

Today people have the same problem. Here are some of the things that people might even say today. These may be discussed in class:

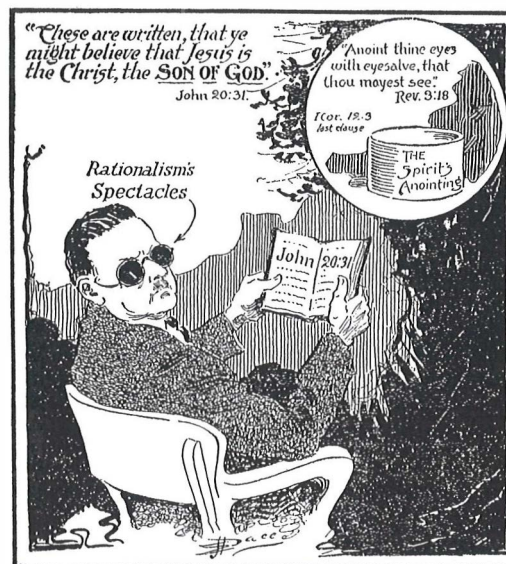
1. I refuse to believe the Bible unless someone discovers Noah's ark. If they discover Noah's ark, then I'll believe.
2. I refuse to believe in the resurrection unless I can see the "shroud" with my own eyes. (The shroud is an interesting piece of cloth that some believe was the actual cloth that Jesus was buried in.)
3. I do not believe the Bible, especially this nonsense about Christians being removed from the earth. My Christian friends call this "The Rapture." I will never become a Christian unless I see the rapture take place with my own eyes.
4. I do not believe that the miracles in the Bible ever really happened. I have lived a long time, and in all my life I have not even seen one miracle! Miracles must not be real because I have never seen them!

Can you think of other things modern day "unbelievers" might say? What does 1 John 5:9-12 tell us about believing and not believing?

The Later Life of Thomas

Not much is known about the later life of Thomas. We are sure that he served the Lord faithfully, but we are not sure where or how. Some say that he labored for Christ in Parthia, Persia and India. One tradition says that he suffered death as a martyr as his enemies used a lance or spear. We cannot be sure about these reports. We can be quite sure that Thomas was loyal and faithful to his Master until the very end (compare John 11:16).

Peter denied His Lord, and Thomas refused to believe in the resurrection. The Lord was gracious to both of these men and used them in a great way. Each of us has his own problems and sins, but God is bigger than these things. He wants to use your life also. By His transforming grace, He can help you to overcome whatever problems you may have.



He declares he cannot see it -- but is it any wonder?

CHAPTER 7

MATTHEW THE PUBLICAN AND SIMON THE ZEALOT

MATTHEW

The eighth disciple listed for us in Matthew 10:2-4 is named "Matthew, the _____" (verse 3). This man also has another name. In Mark 2:14 he is called L_____, and we also learn that he was the son of _____.

Most of the disciples we have studied so far were fishermen by occupation. Matthew was not a fisherman. The Bible tells us that he was a P_____ (Matthew 10:3). Instead of being a "gatherer of fish" he was a "gatherer of taxes." The word "publican" means "tax collector."

Tax collectors were not very popular in the land of Israel where the Jewish people lived. In fact, they were hated and looked down upon and considered one of the worst kinds of sinners. There are at least two reasons why the publicans were so disliked and hated by the Jewish people:

- 1) No one enjoys paying taxes, not even today, and the tax collector has never been a very popular person, but in New Testament times the Jews hated tax collectors for another reason. The tax collectors worked for Rome. The Roman government was the ruling power at that time, and the Jewish people did not enjoy being under Roman rule. They would rather live in a free country that was not controlled by any outside power. Thus, many of the Jews looked down on the publicans who helped Rome and worked for Rome. They considered such men as traitors, renegades, and turncoats.

- 2) The fact that they worked with and for Rome was bad enough, but the fact that certain publicans were dishonest made things even worse. Some tax collectors overcharged the Jews and pocketed the surplus or kept the extra for themselves. They took from the people to make themselves rich. Often they made money at the expense of their own Jewish countrymen. They not only helped Rome, but they helped themselves and sometimes in very dishonest ways. It was one thing to be a TRAITOR (supporter of Rome), and it was another thing to be a CROOK!

For these reasons the tax collectors were considered the lowest class of people. Publicans were grouped with the worst kinds of people. In the following three passages, notice what kinds of people the publicans are grouped with:

1. Matthew 9:11	"publicans and _____"
2. Matthew 18:17	"a _____ man and a publican"
3. Matthew 21:31	"publicans and _____ [wicked and immoral women]"

Who do you think wrote the Gospel of Matthew? _____ It is interesting to notice in Matthew 10:3 that Matthew himself calls his name "Matthew the _____." Matthew became a believer and a disciple of Christ, but he never forgot what a great sinner he was. In Matthew 10:3 he acknowledged that he was "Matthew, the publican (tax collector)." In the days of Jesus, tax collectors had a bad reputation for being dishonest sinners. The phrase

"publicans and sinners" is found eight times in the New Testament, these two terms being grouped together. When Matthew wrote about himself in Matthew 10:3, it was as if he were saying, "I am Matthew the publican! I know that I am a no good, rotten, wretched, dishonest sinner who has been saved by the grace of God. I am a great sinner, but I have a **greater** Saviour!" Matthew in many ways was like the publican described in Luke 18:10-14. He recognized how sinful he was!

How sinful are you? Have you ever grouped yourself among the worst kinds of sinners? Do you see yourself as a great sinner? Do you see Jesus Christ as a great Saviour? Why did Jesus come into this world (1 Timothy 1:15)? _____

Jesus Calls Matthew

What was Matthew doing when Jesus called him (Matthew 9:9)?

_____ This means that he was working as a tax collector. Jesus called Matthew by using only two words: " _____ " (Matthew 9:9). (These two words mean: "**become My disciple**"). Did Matthew quickly do what Jesus said (Matthew 9:9)? _____

Matthew was a man who was all wrapped up in himself and in his business of collecting taxes and making money. He was only interested in SELF. Many people today are just like Matthew. They are concerned only about ME, MYSELF and I! They are all wrapped up in themselves and have very little thought for God or for others.

As soon as Jesus called Matthew, everything changed. No longer was Matthew all wrapped up with Matthew. Suddenly he forgot Matthew and followed Christ. Not only did he begin thinking about the Lord, but he also began thinking about and being concerned for others. According to Luke 5:27-29, what did Levi (Matthew) do after he followed Christ (see verse 29)?

_____ Whom did he invite (Luke 5:29-30)? _____ and _____ Matthew was reaching out to others! He was concerned for others. He wanted others to know about the great Saviour whom he had found!

Matthew was happy to have found Christ. Matthew was also happy to help other sinful people find Christ, but there were some people who were not very happy about what went on in Matthew's house (see Luke 5:30). They thought, "If Jesus is supposed to be so good and righteous, then why does he eat and associate Himself with people who are so sinful?"

The Lord's answer for these people is found in Matthew 9:11-13. In verse 12, Jesus say, "They that be _____ (healthy) need not a _____ (doctor)." What did Jesus mean by this statement? What spiritual meaning do these words have? Remember, the doctor needs to be among his patients! The doctor cannot help his patient if he is 10 miles away. He needs to be with them so he can treat them. Were the Publicans and sinners sick? In what way? Who could cure them? Did the Pharisees think that they were sick? WHAT ABOUT YOU? Do you have a problem that only Christ can cure? What is your problem? What is the cure? Who is the GREAT PHYSICIAN who can heal the sin-sick soul? Matthew was healed. Have you been healed? What kind of people did Christ come to save (Matthew 9:13)? _____ Matthew was this kind of a person, and Jesus was just the FRIEND whom Matthew needed (see Matthew 9:12).

The Lord used His disciple Matthew in a great way. Matthew was given the great privilege to be the writer of the first Gospel. As a tax collector, Matthew probably knew how to keep very careful records. As a believer, Matthew kept a very careful and accurate record of the life and death and resurrection of Christ. Today we call this book the GOSPEL OF MATTHEW. Have you ever read Matthew's book all the way through?

SIMON

In Matthew 10:4 another disciple is named. He is called Simon the _____. Among the 12 disciples there were two men who had the name SIMON. The one Simon is mentioned in Matthew 10:2, and we know a great deal about this man whose more common name is PETER. The other Simon is mentioned in Matthew 10:4, and we know hardly anything about this Simon. He is never mentioned except when the names of the 12 disciples are listed. We do not know anything about him except his name!

It is very interesting that Simon was called "Simon the C _____" (Matthew 10:4). This word "CANAANITE" does not mean that Simon was from the city of Cana, and it does not mean that he was a descendant of the Canaanites. Actually this word means that Simon was a ZEALOT or an ENTHUSIAST. He was a member of a political party which later became known as the ZEALOTS.

Notice Luke 6:15 Simon called _____
Acts 1:13 Simon _____

From now on we shall call him SIMON THE ZEALOT.

THE ZEALOTS

Who were the "zealots," and what did they believe? The ZEALOTS were a very "zealous" (enthusiastic) patriotic party of Jews who were strongly opposed to Roman rule. They wanted Israel to be a free nation, and they did not want to be ruled by the Romans. Today we would probably call these people members of the "Israelite Liberation Army." They wanted their country to be liberated and set free from the Roman yoke or Roman control. They felt justified to use "force" to accomplish their goal of liberation. They would use violence, robbery, and even assassination to accomplish their goal of setting their nation free.

The philosophy of the ZEALOTS was that the end justifies the means. They believed that it is all right to do evil if good shall ultimately be accomplished. The end that they desired was LIBERATION FROM THE ROMANS. This end, in their view, justified their means of VIOLENCE, MURDER, FORCE, etc. They were willing to do anything (even sinful things) as long as it they could further their cause. Does God want us to follow this philosophy? Does God want us to do evil so that good may come (Romans 3:8)? _____ Do you think that God wants a father to steal bread so that he can feed his starving family? _____ What can a father do instead?

Remember, IT IS NEVER RIGHT TO DO WRONG TO DO RIGHT!

The Zealot movement probably began with the Judas uprising that we learn about in Acts 5:37. This uprising took place about the time of Christ's birth. During the time of Christ's public ministry there were many "zealots" who wanted to use force to liberate their country. Probably Barabbas and the other criminals who died next to Christ were zealots, and because they were zealots, they were enemies of Rome.

One of these zealots was named Simon. This man decided to follow Jesus Christ. He began to realize that Christ came primarily to liberate the **heart** not the **country**. Something that is much more terrible than Roman bondage is THE BONDAGE OF SIN (see John 8:32-36). Simon followed the Lord Jesus, the greatest LIBERATOR of all (John 8:36)!

The zealot movement never accomplished its purpose. In 70 A.D. the zealots so angered the Romans that the Roman army invaded Jerusalem and destroyed the city. The zealots did not succeed in setting their nation free.

God wants every believer to be a different kind of a "ZEALOT." He wants us to be "_____ of good works" (Titus 2:14), which means that we are to be "on fire for the Lord!" or enthusiastic and excited about the things of the Lord. Are you excited about attending a Bible-teaching church? Are you excited about reading your Bible? Are you excited about prayer? Are you excited about telling others about the Lord? Are you excited about going to prayer meeting? Are you excited about doing those good works that please the Lord? God is looking for zealous, excited and enthusiastic believers today! Compare Revelation 3:19 and the example of Jesus in John 2:17.

SIMON AND MATTHEW

The fact that Simon and Matthew were both disciples of Jesus is highly instructive. We cannot think of two men more opposite:

Notice the two extremes

Matthew was the TAX-GATHERER!
Simon was the TAX-HATER!

(How do you think a zealot would answer the question given in Matthew 22:17)?

Matthew was the UNPATRIOTIC TRAITOR!
Simon was the PATRIOTIC LOYALIST!

Apart from Christ, Simon and Matthew would have been great enemies! The fact that these two men could be together, work together, eat together, serve together, and learn together is one of the great miracles of Christ's transforming power. Apart from Christ, these two men probably would have been at each other's throats! Jesus Christ makes possible *the union of opposites!* Because of Jesus Christ, Matthew and Simon had a great deal in common. Can you think of some things which they had in common? IN CHRIST JESUS there are certain differences that do not really matter. Galatians 3:28 says that believers are "all _____ in Christ Jesus."

Think about your fellow classmates in your Sunday School class. Can you think of very real DIFFERENCES that exist between you? Can you think of some of the things that you have in common because of Jesus Christ? Is it possible for different and opposite people to get along with each other today? How?

The Bible says in Ephesians 4:2 that believers are to be "forbearing _____ in love," which means that we are to be putting up with one another in love! It is amazing that Matthew put up with Simon. It is even more amazing that Simon put up with Matthew. Even more amazing that Jesus Christ put up with both of these men! Are you thankful that Jesus Christ is willing to "put up" with you and that He came into this world to save you? Christ loves us even though we are not very lovable, and His love helps us to reach out to others and love them even though they, too, may not be very lovable. Let us not forget the lessons learned from Matthew and Simon!

CHAPTER 8

JAMES, THE SON OF ALPHEAUS, AND THADDAEUS

(The Little Known Disciples)

In this chapter we will consider two more of the Lord's disciples. Little is known about these two men. Hardly anything at all is said about these men except that their names are found in the lists of the 12 disciples. God has chosen not to tell us very much about these two men. We know them by their names, but that is about all that we know! Let us now go to the Bible and find out the little that we can about James and Thaddaeus.

James, the Son of Alphaeus

The name of this disciple is found in each of the four lists (see Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15 and Acts 1:13). According to these verses, what was his father's name?

_____. Who else had a father by this name (Mark 2:14)?
 _____. What was Levi's other name? _____ (If you forgot, review [Chapter 7](#).)

James had a father named Alphaeus, and Matthew (Levi) had a father named Alphaeus. It is possible that James and Matthew were brothers and had the same father, but it is also possible that there were two different men by the name of Alphaeus. We know that there were at least two sets of brothers among the 12 disciples (see Matthew 10:2). They were Simon Peter and his brother _____ and James and his brother _____, but the Bible does not say that Matthew and James were brothers.

James was a very common name in New Testament times. We need to be careful not to confuse James, the son of Alphaeus, with the other men in the New Testament who have this same name:

1. James, the son of Alphaeus, should not be confused with James, the son of Zebedee, and the brother of John (Matthew 10:2). These men had the same name and were both disciples of Jesus, but they were two different men and not the same person. Do you have two people in your Sunday School class or in your class at school who both the same name? Does this ever get confusing?
2. James, the son of Alphaeus, should not be confused with James, the brother of the Lord, and the author of the book of James (see Galatians 1:19; Matthew 13:55). James, the brother of the Lord, is mentioned often on the pages of the New Testament, and we will study this man in Chapter 11 of these notes.

(See also Chapter 3, page 1 where the different men named James are discussed.)

In Mark 15:40 a man is mentioned by the name of "James the _____" (see also Matthew 27:56). It is possible that James, the son of Alphaeus, and James the less were the same person. The words "JAMES THE LESS" actually mean "JAMES THE LITTLE ONE." Perhaps the disciples used this title to distinguish James, the son of Alphaeus, from James, the son of Zebedee. Perhaps James, the son of Alphaeus, was called the "little James" because he was younger than James, the son of Zebedee, or because he was shorter than James, the son of

Zebedee. But, all of these things are just possibilities. The Bible does not tell us for sure. If the Bible tells us something, we can be sure of it! If the Bible does not tell us something, then we need to be very cautious in what we say and in what conclusions we make. We should not be dogmatic about something if God is silent about it.

If James the less is the same person as James, the son of Alphaeus, then who is the mother of James (Mark 15:40)? _____

The Bible tells us nothing more about James, the son of Alphaeus. We are not told anything about what he did or about the things he said. We only know that he was "one of the twelve."

Thaddaeus

In Mark 3:18 we learn of a disciple by the name of THADDAEUS. What was another name that this disciple had (see Matthew 10:3)? _____ According to this verse in Matthew, the name THADDAEUS was a surname or a nickname that was given to him. There are some who believe this name means "one close to the breast" or "one beloved." Others think it means "courageous, lion-hearted."

When we come to the other two lists of the disciples (found in Luke 6:14-16 and Acts 1:13), we need to do some good detective work! Do you find the name THADDAEUS or the name LEBBAEUS in Luke 6:14-16 or Acts 1:13? _____ Since we know that he was one of the twelve, he must be listed under another name. As good detectives we need to find the other name for THADDAEUS. Look at Luke 6:14-16 and Acts 1:13, and eliminate all of the men that cannot be THADDAEUS:

1. Eliminate all of the disciples whom we have already studied in these notes.
2. In Luke 6:14–16, eliminate the name of Judas Iscariot, the traitor. Certainly THADDAEUS was not the disciple who betrayed the Lord.
3. What is the only name that is left? _____

Thaddaeus has thus been called "THE DISCIPLE WITH THREE NAMES." In Luke 6:14-16 and Acts 1:13, he is called J _____ *the brother* of James. Actually we are not sure if he was the brother of James (as the King James Version says) or if he was the son of James (as most of the modern versions say). Notice in Luke 6:16 that the words *brother of* are in italics and were not part of the original Greek text. All we really know is that Judas belonged to James in a certain way. That is, there is a connection between Judas and James. He either belonged to him as his brother or as his son. The same kind of wording is found in Luke 6:15:

Verse 15	"James of Alphaeus"
Verse 16	"Judas of James"

(See also the genealogy given in Luke 3:23 and following.) Probably these verses mean that James was the son of Alphaeus and that Judas was the son of James. James was Judas's father. If this is true, then this James would be yet another "JAMES" that the New Testament mentions!

Among the 12 disciples there were three pairs of men who each had the same name. Look at the list in Luke 6:14-16. Can you find two men with the name James? Can you find two men with the name Simon? Can you find two men with the name Judas?

There is only one other verse in the New Testament that tells us something about this man named Lebbaeus-Thaddaeus-Judas. This verse is found in John 14:22. Why do you think this verse says "not Iscariot"?

Judas did not understand why Jesus did not manifest Himself to the world (compare John 7:3-4). Judas did not understand certain things, but he was wise enough to bring his question to the right Person.

James and Thaddaeus

We have already discussed everything that the Bible tells us about these two men. They are among the "little known" disciples. They were not leaders among the disciples like Peter was. They did not stand out among the disciples like John did. Perhaps they were slow to speak and often very quiet. The four gospel writers pass them by in almost complete silence!

Actually when we think about it, most of the disciples were "little known disciples." We know a great deal about Peter and John, but we know much less about Andrew and James. Philip's name is mentioned only in a few places. We would know nothing about Bartholomew (Nathanael) and Thomas apart from the bits of information that we learn from the Gospel of John about these two men. Apart from the day that Christ called Matthew, we know nothing else about this man. We know nothing about Simon except that he was a Zealot. At least seven out of the 12 disciples were "little known men."

If someone today were to write a "Gospel," he would probably write at least a full chapter on each of the twelve disciples! This is not what the four gospel writers did as they were guided by the Holy Spirit. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John said very little about the disciples. The Apostles were not their theme. The Lord Jesus Christ was their theme and their main subject. Christ was their HERO! They gazed steadfastly at the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS who is the Lord Jesus (see Malachi 4:2). In His brightness these gospel writers lost sight of some of the attendant stars.

Not all men can be leaders. Some need to be followers. If the band of disciples were made up of twelve Peters, there might have been a real problem! "Little" men are needed as well as "great" men.

We should also remember that being "GREAT" does not always mean being "well known" or "noticed." The Lord had a lot to teach His disciples about GREATNESS. According to Matthew 20:26-27, who shall be GREAT? _____ The word "minister" means "servant." Usually servants are not especially recognized or noticed or appreciated. Others may get most of the attention, but servants just faithfully plod along doing their job and serving others! To find true greatness, what must a person do (Matthew 18:3-4)? _____ Usually little children are not especially recognized or noticed. How many little children do you read about in the headlines of the newspaper? The "little known disciples" should also remember what Jesus said in Matthew 19:30.

God is looking for faithfulness! God is looking for those men and women and boys and girls who are "faithful in that which is _____ [the little things of life, even the little things that no one else seems to notice]" (Luke 16:10). God is looking for those who are "great in the

_____ of the _____" (Luke 1:15), and not necessarily great in the eyes of men.

Men do not always see greatness the way God does. Men often look for people to be famous or to be long remembered or to be noticed for all their great accomplishments. God, however, sees greatness even in the little things that others may never see or may never notice. There are many things that you may do that others will not see and will not notice, but you can be sure that God sees and God notices! Will God forget those things that are done in His Name (see Hebrews 6:10)? _____

After the death and resurrection of Christ, where were these "little known disciples"? In Acts 1:13 we learn that they were right where they should have been and doing just what they should have been doing! They were faithful. They were praying (verse 14). They were waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit. They did not make a BIG NOISE, but they were doing just what God wanted them to do.

God rewards faithfulness. We may not know very much about the 12 disciples, but God knows all about them. Did God promise to reward each of the 12 disciples in the future (Matthew 19:28)? _____ Does this include James and Thaddaeus? _____ In Revelation 21:14 we learn that the names of the "twelve apostles" will be engraved forever in the heavenly city! Will the names of James and Thaddaeus be included? _____ God does not forget those who are faithful in serving Him!

Think of the twelve sons of Jacob. We know a great deal about some of these sons such as Joseph and Judah; on the other hand, we know very little about sons such as Naphtali and Issachar. Nevertheless, whether a lot or a little was said about them, each of the 12 sons played an important part in the history of Israel (see Revelation 7:4-8 and Revelation 21:12).

Think of some of the great Christians of church history such as Martin Luther, Calvin, George Whitefield, John Wesley, William Carey, and D. L. Moody. These men are long remembered. These men made a mark on history and have not been forgotten, but there have also been many other men throughout the centuries of church history who have not been so well remembered. Even though history books have not recorded their names, these unnoticed men were faithful to the Lord in the little things. They may not have been **famous**, but they were **faithful**. Do you think the Lord will forget them? Did God notice what they did and what they said? Do you think that when we someday get to heaven there might be some surprises as far as who is really great and who is really not as great as we thought? Who really is the only One that can measure true GREATNESS in a man or a woman? _____

The same is true today. In the Church there may be people who are little seen and little noticed. Are these people important (see 1 Corinthians 12:22-24)? Are there parts of your physical body that are not seen and are not given much attention but that are very, very important to you? Why is every believer important to the Lord and to the Church?

What are some ways that you can be FAITHFUL in the LITTLE THINGS this week? At home? At church? Elsewhere?

May God help us to be faithful like James and Thaddaeus and the other "little known disciples." The important thing is not to be recognized or noticed or famous. The important thing is to please _____ even in the little things that we do every day!

CHAPTER 9

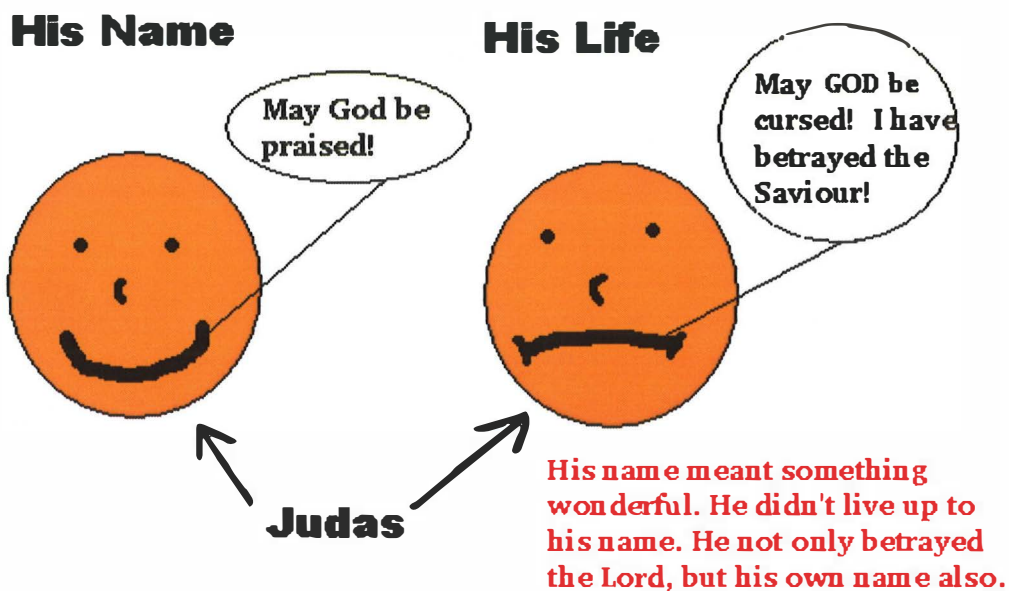
JUDAS

We are now ready to study the last of the twelve disciples. Whose name is placed last on every list (see Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19 and Luke 6:14-16)? _____ The Bible tells us a great deal about this man. We know more about this man than we do about the other disciples except for Peter and John. This man was guilty of a terrible and malicious act which has been associated with his name throughout history. What was this act for which he is always remembered (Matthew 10:4)?

1. Judas Iscariot

Do you know anyone with the name "PETER"? _____ Do you know anyone with the name "JOHN"? _____ Do you know anyone with the name "MATTHEW"? _____ Do you know anyone with the name "JAMES"? _____ Do you know anyone with the name "THOMAS"? _____

Do you know anyone with the name "JUDAS"? _____ Not too many people choose this name for their little baby boy. The name Judas reminds people of Judas Iscariot and the wicked thing which he did, and they usually do not want their son to bear his name. Actually the name "JUDAS" is a very good name. The parents of Judas gave their baby boy a very fine name. The name "JUDAS" is a Greek name which means "JUDAH," the name of one of the twelve sons of Jacob (see Genesis 29:35). In fact, the Messiah would come through the line of Judah. The name "Judah" means "may He [God] be praised" (see also Genesis 29:35). It was a very good name, but how sad that a man who was given this name became such a wicked man who betrayed his Lord. As we study the life of Judas we learn that *his life did not match his name*:



What about you? Does your life match your name? Are you called by the name “Christian”? Does your life match the name “Christian”? If someone did not know you were a Christian and they watched the way you live and act and talk, would they call you a Christian?

Do you call yourself a believer? Do others think of you as a believer in Christ? Does your life match this name? Do you live and act as a believer?

The name of Judas gave praise to God, but this wonderful name was polluted by a life that was ugly and sinful and which did not glorify and did not praise God at all.

The word “Iscariot” tells where Judas was from. It identifies Judas as a “man of Kerioth,” a small town located in Judea (see Joshua 15:25). Judas was probably the only one of the twelve disciples who was from Judea. The others were probably from Galilee. See Mark 14:70 where the disciples are identified as Galileans by their speech and see a Bible map of New Testament Palestine.

2. The Traitor

Judas was called “the _____” (Luke 6:16). A **traitor** is a person who betrays his country or his ruler or his friend or his master. A famous example of a traitor in American history is Benedict Arnold. During the Revolutionary War he was an honored American general until he betrayed his country and sided with the British. In the case of Judas, he joined Jesus' band of disciples as a friend and appeared to be a follower of Christ, but he turned out to be an enemy! Instead of working for God and for God's cause, Judas ended up working for whom (John 13:2,27)? _____ Read John 13:18, a verse that describes Judas. Judas ate with Christ as a friend, but was he really a friend? _____ Was he for Christ or against Christ (John 13:18)? _____

It is one thing if an enemy soldier is with his fellow enemy soldiers on the battlefield and wears an enemy uniform. It is quite another thing if an enemy soldier dresses like his foes, sits among a company of his enemy's loyal soldiers, and pretends to be a friend. Such a man is a dangerous **traitor**! Jesus had eleven loyal disciples; we have studied all eleven of these men. They sometimes failed the Lord, as did Peter and Thomas, but they never betrayed the Lord. At times they were very poor soldiers, but they never took sides with the enemy. Judas did.

Every person must decide whose side he is on! Jesus once said, “He that is not _____ me is _____ me” (Matthew 12:30). A person is either with Christ or against Christ. Are you **for Him or against Him**? You cannot be neutral. You cannot sit on the fence. You cannot be half for the devil and half for the Lord.

3. The Betrayer

The word “betray” means “to hand over, to deliver over, to give over.” Judas was the traitor who handed over the Lord Jesus to the large group of men who had come to arrest Him (Matthew 26:47-56).

How did Judas betray the Lord (Matthew 26:48,49)?

- a. He slapped the Lord in the face.
- b. He spit in the Lord's face.
- c. He pointed right at the Lord with his finger.
- d. He kissed him.

Judas came up to Jesus “like a poisonous viper [snake] hissing forth from a rose-bush to pollute the Son of man with his treacherous kiss” (F.W.Krummacker). It was a kiss of love from a heart of hate. If we had been present to view this scene of betrayal and had not known what was really taking place, we probably would have thought that Judas was a real friend of Jesus. His outward actions certainly appeared to be that of a friend. People do not usually kiss their enemies!

Judas was a good actor. He wore a good mask. He was a good pretender. He was able to hide what was really in his heart. He tried to keep the “real Judas” from being seen. Who was able to see the “real Judas” and who was able to see under the mask? _____

Earlier that same evening when the twelve disciples were with Jesus at the table, Jesus said, “Verily I say unto you, that _____ of you shall _____ me” (Matthew 26:21). Did the other 11 disciples think that Jesus was talking about Judas? Did they exclaim, “It must be that rascal Judas!” (See Matthew 26:22) _____ Were they fooled by Judas? _____ Could they see the “real Judas”? _____ Could they see through the mask? _____

Jesus had a reason for saying what He did in Matthew 26:21. He was giving Judas an opportunity to remove his mask. “One of you is going to betray Me, and the man who is going to do this knows who I’m talking about. Reveal yourself Judas!” What do you think Judas should have done? What do you think Judas should have said? Judas should have immediately risen to his feet and said something like this:

LORD, I’M THE ONE YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT! I AM THE ONE WHO HAS
PLOTTED TO BETRAY YOU AND TURN YOU OVER TO THE ENEMY. I’M
GUILTY. LORD, HAVE MERCY UPON ME. I AM YOUR UNFAITHFUL AND
DISLOYAL DISCIPLE. FORGIVE MY SIN AND SAVE MY SOUL THAT I MAY
SERVE YOU AND LOVE YOU FOR REAL. I WANT TO STOP PRETENDING AND
I WANT TO BE YOUR DISCIPLE FOR REAL.

Is this what Judas did and said (Matthew 26:25)? _____ He refused to rip off his mask. He refused to let the “true Judas” be seen. In Matthew 26:25 Judas said, “Master, is it I?” which can be interpreted, “Certainly it is not me, is it Master?” as if Judas expected Him to answer, “Of course not, Judas; it is not you!” These words spoken by Judas were just part of his mask. Did Judas really know that he was the one (see Matthew 26:14-16)? _____

We need to remember that while we may fool others, we will never fool God. God’s eyes look right through the mask right into the heart. Don’t be a pretender!

4. The One Who Was Chosen

How many disciples did Jesus choose (Luke 6:13)? _____ What did Jesus do the night before He made this selection (Luke 6:12)? _____ Was Judas among those who were chosen (Luke 6:16)? _____ Why was Judas Iscariot chosen to be one of the twelve disciples? Did the Lord make a mistake? Did He choose the wrong man? Was Jesus aware of what this man was really like? Was Jesus aware of what this man would do someday?

Did Jesus know all about Judas *even from the beginning* (John 6:64)? _____ Did Jesus choose Judas even though He knew what Judas was really like (John 6:70)? _____ The Lord knew exactly what He was doing. He made no mistake. God wants us to learn something from this man Judas. The tragic life of Judas has some very important lessons for each of us.

Does God know all about YOU even from the beginning (John 6:64)? _____ Does God know what you will be like 10 years from now? 50 years from now? God knows everything that there is to know about you!

5. The “Not Clean” Disciple

Jesus once said to His 12 disciples, “Ye are CLEAN, but not all [of you]” (John 13:10). Who was the one disciple who was not clean (John 13:11)? _____

Does Jesus' statement mean that Judas never washed himself and never took a bath? No, as far as we know Judas had no problem with outward cleanliness. Jesus was not talking about clean skin; He was talking about a clean heart (see John 15:3). He was talking about a heart which was cleansed and forgiven.

If you had been able to observe the life of Judas outwardly, you may have judged him to be quite clean. He lived, traveled, ate, and associated with good men. He read the Scriptures. He probably prayed before his meals. He did many things which outwardly seemed very good and clean, but his heart was **filthy**! Judas was an unsaved man.

When Jesus said, “NOT ALL OF YOU ARE CLEAN” (compare John 13:10), Judas should have ripped off his mask and said something like this:

LORD, I AM THE ONE YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT! I AM UNCLEAR! I KNOW THAT MY HEART IS NOT RIGHT WITH YOU. I WANT YOU TO SAVE ME AND FORGIVE ME SO THAT I MIGHT BE CLEAN ON THE INSIDE, TOO. I WANT TO STOP PRETENDING TO BE WHAT I AM NOT!

Judas refused to take off his mask!

6. “One of the Twelve”

There are seven times in the gospels that Judas is described as “ONE OF THE _____” (see Matthew 26:14,47; Mark 14:10,20,43; Luke 22:47; John 6:71). These verses show the wonderful privileges that Judas had. He was a part of that special band of men who were with Jesus in a special way. No one was closer to Jesus than Judas and the other disciples. He traveled with the Lord, ate with Him, talked with Him, listened to Him preach, and even heard the way of salvation from the Saviour's lips again and again. He had every advantage and every opportunity. He saw all of the miracles of Christ, and he may have even performed some miracles himself (see Matthew 10:1, 4, 5-8). What blessings this man had! Like Esau, Judas was offered rich spiritual blessings that he disregarded for the sake of earthly goods that were of very little value. Jesus said, “_____ unto that man” (Matthew 26:24). Judas was not blessed, he was cursed!

It is a wonderful thing to have opportunities and privileges, but it is a terrible thing when we do not take advantage of these things. What about you? Do you have parents that teach you the truth as it is found in the Bible? Do you have a Bible? Do you have a good, Bible-teaching church to attend? Do you have a Sunday school teacher and a pastor who teach you the way of salvation? WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH ALL OF THESE THINGS? Are you making the most of them? Or, are you casting them all aside as if they were not really very important? WOE UNTO YOU if you reject all that God is doing for you and around you.

7. A Devil

In John 6:70 the Lord Jesus used very strong words to describe Judas. He said, "Have not I chosen you _____, and _____ of you is a _____." One of His twelve disciples was on the side of the devil! One of them was the devil's man. There was coming a day when the devil would actually enter this disciple and work through him to commit the terrible crime of betraying his own Master, his own Creator (John 13:2, 27).

A person cannot be neutral. If a person is not on God's side, then he is on Satan's side. Although Judas pretended to be a servant of Christ, he was really a servant of Satan.

Where can we find the devil's man today? Is it possible to go to church and still be on the devil's side? Is it possible to read the Bible and sing hymns and say prayers and still be on the devil's side? Is it possible to tell someone about the Saviour and about how He can save sinners and still be on the devil's side (remember, even Judas was a preacher--see Matthew 10:5-7)? Is it possible to be very close to the things of the Lord (such as the Bible, the church, Christian parents, etc.) and still end up lost forever? Let's learn a lesson from Judas. Let's not have a fake Christianity. Instead of having a make-believe Christianity, let's choose to have a real Christianity (a right and honest relationship with Jesus Christ).

8. The Thief

Mary once took some very costly perfume and anointed the feet of Jesus (John 12:1-3). Was Judas pleased that Mary had shown her love to Jesus in this way (John 12:4-5)? _____ What was the good looking and attractive mask that Judas wore (John 12:4-5)?

_____ What was the filth and ugliness that was under his mask (John 12:6)?

_____ Since Judas was the "treasurer" of the disciples, the other disciples must have trusted him. Not only was Judas a TRAITOR; he was also a _____ (John 12:6)!

Did the other disciples know that Judas was a thief and that he did not really care about the poor? _____ Did Jesus know this? _____ Are you honest when it comes to money matters? Have you ever taken pennies or nickels or dimes or even dollars that did not really belong to you? You may not have been caught and no one may ever find out what you did. You may have fooled everyone in the world, but remember that there is a God in heaven who sees all and knows all. He knows whether you are a thief hiding under a mask or not!

9. "Friend"

When Judas came up to Jesus and betrayed the Master, what was the first word that Jesus said to him (Matthew 26:50)? _____ If we had been the Lord, we probably would have said something like this: "YOU WICKED ENEMY! YOU ARE NOTHING BUT A NO GOOD, ROTTEN TRAITOR. YOU ARE GOING TO SPEND ETERNITY IN HELL!"

Jesus did not say anything like that. He allowed Judas to kiss Him, and then he called him "FRIEND." Judas had no heart for God, but God had a heart for him. The Lord loved His enemies, even Judas. He returned good for evil (see Romans 12:19-21). Probably nothing ever hurt Judas so much as that little word "Friend."

If you are not saved, why are you not saved? It is not that God does not want you; it must be that you do not want God (see John 5:40). Judas will never be able to say, “Jesus never loved me; He never wanted to save me, and I never had any opportunity to be saved and have my sins forgiven.” Judas had as many opportunities as any man who has ever lived, but he took each opportunity and threw it away and lost everything. After the “kiss,” Judas and Jesus were separated forever. What are you doing with the opportunities God has given you?

Read John 18:3-6. When all these men fell down, who fell down with them (see verse 5)?

_____ Judas was standing right with the Lord’s enemies. Everyone could now see the traitor was Judas. His mask was now off, and the “REAL JUDAS” could be clearly seen.

Where are you going to be ten years from now? What crowd are you going to be with? What kind of people are you going to enjoy standing with? Will you be with God’s people, or will you be with Satan’s crowd? Will you be with those who love the Lord and believe His Word, or will you be with the enemies of Christ? What kind of companions does God want us to have (Psalm 119:63)?

10. “Son of Perdition”

Judas was of all men most miserable! Jesus said, “WOE unto that man...it had been good for that man if he had not been _____” (Matthew 26:24). In John 17:12 Judas is called “the S_____ of _____.” There is only one other person who is ever called by this title. Do you know who this is (see 2 Thess. 2:3-4)?

_____ When you think of the word “PERDITION,” you should think of the word “PERISH” (see John 3:16 and 1 Cor. 1:18). Judas, the son of perdition, will perish forever. He is a man who is utterly and eternally lost. If we had to pick one word to describe Judas, it would be the little word “LOST.”

If you have come to Jesus Christ in simple faith and if you believe in Him, do you need to fear being LOST or PERISHING (John 6:39; 10:28; 17:12)? _____ God is able to keep those who come to Him. Judas came to Jesus outwardly, but not inwardly. Judas did not LOSE his salvation; Judas never had salvation. A PERSON CANNOT LOSE WHAT HE DOES NOT HAVE!

The life of Judas came to a tragic end (see Matthew 27:3-5 and Acts 1:18). As Judas left his *earthly existence*, he began an *eternal existence* separated from God and lost forever. May the life of Judas be a powerful warning to each one of us. A GOOD MASK will never get a person to heaven. Only a CLEAN HEART will get a person to heaven, and only Jesus Christ can clean the heart! See Isaiah 1:18. Does your heart need to be cleansed and forgiven?

For further study on the life of Judas, see chapter 12 in our course entitled, 13 Bible Characters.

CHAPTER 10

A REVIEW OF THE TWELVE AND MATTHIAS

Review

We have studied all twelve of the disciples. You will now be given 35 review questions. See how well you can do!

1. Which disciple was called "the zealot"? _____
2. Which disciple brought Peter to the Lord? _____
3. Who was the disciple who was very loyal to Jesus but who always seemed to look at the darker side of things? _____
4. Which disciple walked on water? _____
5. Which two disciples were called "the sons of thunder"? _____
6. Which disciple wrote one New Testament book? _____
7. Give the names of three disciples who were fishermen? _____

8. Who was "the disciple whom Jesus loved"? _____
9. Which disciple was "the doubter"? _____
10. Which disciple was a tax collector? _____
11. Who were the three "inner circle disciples"? _____
12. Which disciple seemed to stay the closest to Jesus? _____
13. Which disciple sliced off the ear of Malchus? _____
14. Which disciple wrote five New Testament books? _____
15. Who was the disciple who told Nathanael about the Lord? _____
16. Who were the sons of Zebedee? _____
17. In the band of 12 disciples there were two sets of brothers. Write down their names:
_____ and _____
and _____
18. What was Bartholomew's other name? _____
19. Which disciple wrote two New Testament books? _____
20. Which disciple became known as "the traitor"? _____
21. There were three pairs of disciples who shared the same name. Write down these three names:
There were two disciples named _____
There were two disciples named _____
There were two disciples named _____
22. Which disciple denied his Lord three times? _____
23. Which disciple was called "the son of perdition"? _____
24. Give the names of two disciples who were opposites and who probably would have been enemies if the Lord Jesus had not brought them together: _____
25. Which disciple was the first to be martyred? _____
26. Which two disciples were absent from the group of disciples as they met together on that first Easter Sunday evening? _____
27. Give the names of two "little known" disciples: _____
28. Which disciple has a name which means "May God be praised! "? _____

29. Give the name of the one disciple who was "not clean": _____
30. Which disciple was present at the very foot of the cross? _____
31. Which disciple pretended to be concerned about the poor? _____
32. Which disciple usually spoke first and acted first? _____
33. Can you think of another name for Thaddaeus? _____
34. Who preached on the Day of Pentecost? _____
35. Who was the "treasurer" of the disciples (the man who held the money bag)? _____

The Death Of Judas

There are only two places in the Bible which tell us about the death of Judas, the man who betrayed the Lord. We will look at both of these passages to see what we can learn.

Passage Number 1—Matthew 27:3-5.

Did Judas know that he had done wrong (Matthew 27:3-4)? _____ Did he recognize the fact that he had sinned? _____ Were the Jewish leaders very interested in what Judas told them (Matthew 27:4)? _____ Judas SAID THE RIGHT THING ("I have _____" (Matthew 27:4) but he DID NOT GO TO THE RIGHT PERSON (Matt. 27:3). The chief priests and elders were the wrong people to go to. They were also guilty of putting Christ on the cross. Judas cried out to a group of men who could care less about Judas and his problems. They were great sinners also, and they were unable to help Judas.

When we have a problem, we need to make sure that we go to the right person with our problem. If you have difficulty with a math assignment, who should you go to for help? Would it be wise to go to a friend who always gets poor grades in math? _____ Your math teacher is probably the best person to call upon for help. When it comes to the problem of sin, who is really the only Person who can help (Hebrews 7:25; Acts 4:10-12)? _____ Judas made a fatal mistake by never going to God. He should have cried out to God: "LORD, I HAVE SINNED! HAVE MERCY ON ME AND SAVE ME!" What promise does God give to every person who calls upon the name of the Lord for salvation (Romans 10:13)?

Did Judas ever do this? _____ Instead, he departed and went and _____ (Matthew 27:5).

According to this verse, how would you describe the death of Judas (circle the correct answer):

- a. The death of Judas was murder.
- b. The death of Judas was accidental.
- c. The death of Judas was suicide.
- d. Judas died a natural death as an old man.

What is involved in death by HANGING? Usually we think of some kind of rope tied around the neck. For example, a person could hang himself on a tree by tying one end of the rope to a branch, the other end to his neck, and then letting himself hang. Exactly how Judas hanged himself we are not told. We are simply told that this is what he did.

Passage Number 2—Acts 1:15-18.

Read Acts 1:18 carefully. Does this verse also talk about the death of Judas? _____ Does this passage mention anything about hanging? _____ This verse tells us that Judas suffered a very serious FALL, and it also tells us that this fall resulted in a terrible injury. Another translation of this verse says it this way: "And falling headlong [head first], he burst open in the middle and all his entrails [guts, inner parts, intestines] gushed out." In other words, because of this fall his body was broken open in the middle.

Usually when a person hangs himself (or when he is put to death by hanging) his body does not break open in the middle and all his insides do not come out. Death by hanging does not usually cause the body to be broken open anywhere. What happened to Judas seems to have been very unusual.

Think of a person who does not believe the Bible. Suppose he were to read Matthew 27:5 and Acts 1:18. As he compares these two verses, he might say something like this: "These verses prove that the Bible is not true. In Matthew we are told that Judas died one way, and in Acts we are told that he died another way. These verses contradict each other. They cannot both be true. If Judas really hanged himself, then the verse in Acts must not be true. If Judas really fell to his death, then the verse in Matthew must not be true."

What is wrong with this thinking? Does the Bible really have contradictions in it (John 17:17)? Is Matthew 27:5 true? _____ Is Acts 1:18 true? _____ The problem is not with the Bible. The problem is that our knowledge of the event is limited. We were not there when it happened, so we do not know all of the details. All we know for sure is what these two verses tell us. If we had been present to witness the tragic death of Judas, then we could easily see how both of these verses are true. Judas did hang himself, and Judas did suffer a serious fall which resulted in his body being broken open.

It is possible for us to imagine what *might* have happened. It is possible that as Judas tried to hang himself, the rope or branch from which he was suspended broke and he was violently thrown and fell down, perhaps landing on some sharp object such as a jagged stone. If this is what really happened, then it would be easy to see how the verse in Matthew and the verse in Acts are both telling the truth.

We know from Matthew 27:5 that Judas hanged himself, but apparently what Judas thought would be a simple hanging turned out quite differently. Judas probably did not intend to fall in such a way as to break open his body in the middle. It seems as if God's hand was at work in the death of Judas. It seems as if God did not allow Judas to get away with a simple hanging. It turned out much differently than Judas had thought. God made sure that this terrible life ended with a terrible death.

We should also remember that the terrible death of Judas was only a picture of something far worse. The "physical" death of Judas was really not that terrible. Judas must have only suffered pain for a few moments and then it was all over. But the physical death of Judas was only a doorway which led into AN ETERNITY OF SUFFERING. Judas will be separated from God and punished by God forever in the _____ of _____ (Revelation 20:14-15). May the life and death of Judas be a serious warning to each one of us. If you are unsaved today you will experience AN ETERNITY OF SUFFERING just like Judas, UNLESS you come to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation before it is too late.

Which of these two men had God chosen to be the replacement for Judas?

_____ How could they determine which man was God's choice? What was the very *first* thing they did (Acts 1:2-24)? _____ Why is God the One who is best qualified to make the right choice (Acts 1:24)? _____

The next thing they did was to give forth their lots. Using lots is something like flipping a coin or throwing dice or drawing straws. This way of making a choice seems like a method that depends on **luck** or **chance**, but often in the days of the Old Testament, God stepped in and the lots would fall just as God wanted them to (see Jonah 1:7 and 1 Samuel 14:42). See Proverbs 16:33 that explains this method: "The _____ is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the _____." Men may throw dice and flip coins, but God supervises it all and decides how the dice and coins will fall. Peter and the other disciples were not being guided by LUCK; they were being guided by the LORD.

Upon which man did the lot fall (Acts 1:26)? _____ This man became the 12th Apostle, the replacement for Judas. This man is only mentioned here in Acts chapter 1 and we know nothing about this man except for what we learn here in this chapter.

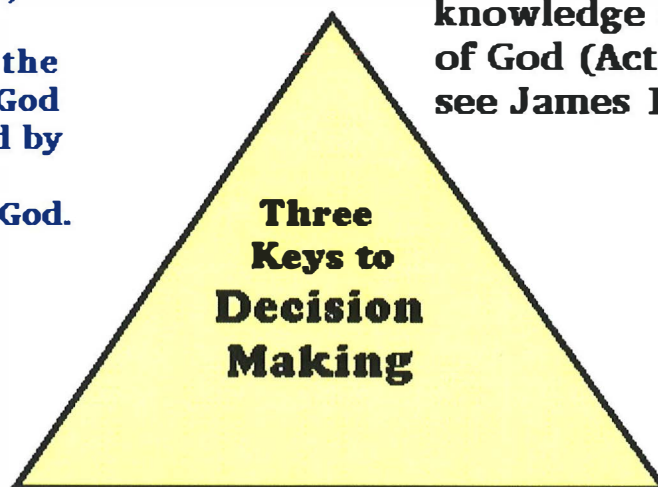
After the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, we never read about believers using lots to make decisions because New Testament believers enjoy the very special and very personal guidance of the Holy Spirit of God (compare Romans 8:14).

There are important decisions that each of us must make every day. Remember, that when we do not know what to decide, God does! When we can't see into the future, God can. When we do not know what to do, God does. In making decisions, let's always remember this important triangle:

**The believer
in prayerful
dependence
upon God,
rightly
applying the
Word of God
as guided by
the Holy
Spirit of God.**

1. Prayer

**Drawing upon the
knowledge and wisdom
of God (Acts 1:14 and
see James 1:5-6)**



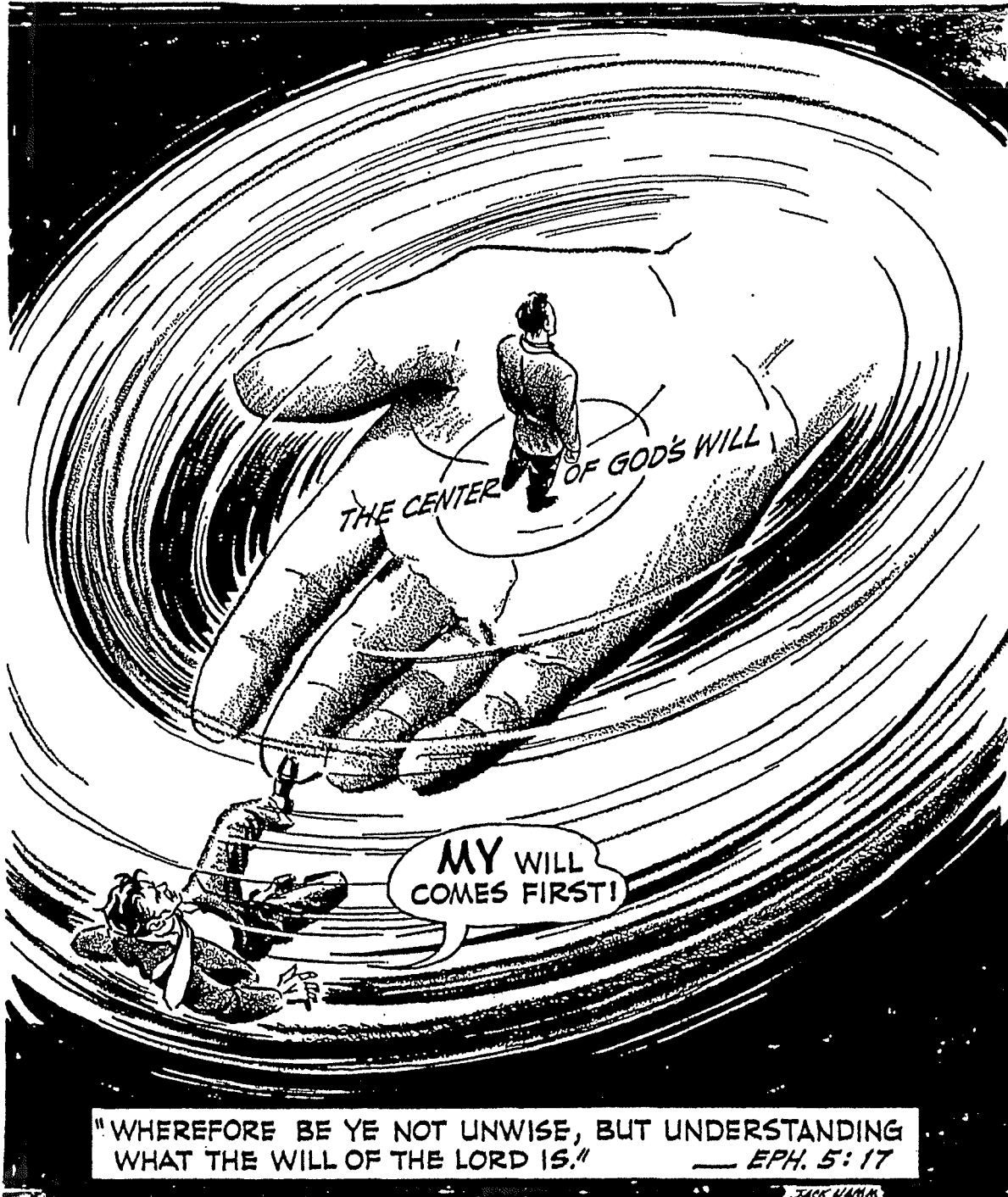
2. The Word of God

**Letting the Bible guide
you in your decision
making (notice how
Peter used the Bible in
Acts 1:16-20).**

3. The Holy Spirit

**Staying in a right relation-
ship with the Lord so that
He might continually steer
you in the right direction
(Gal. 5:16 and Eph. 5:18).**

Peace And Unrest



CHAPTER 11

JAMES AND THE OTHER BROTHERS OF THE LORD

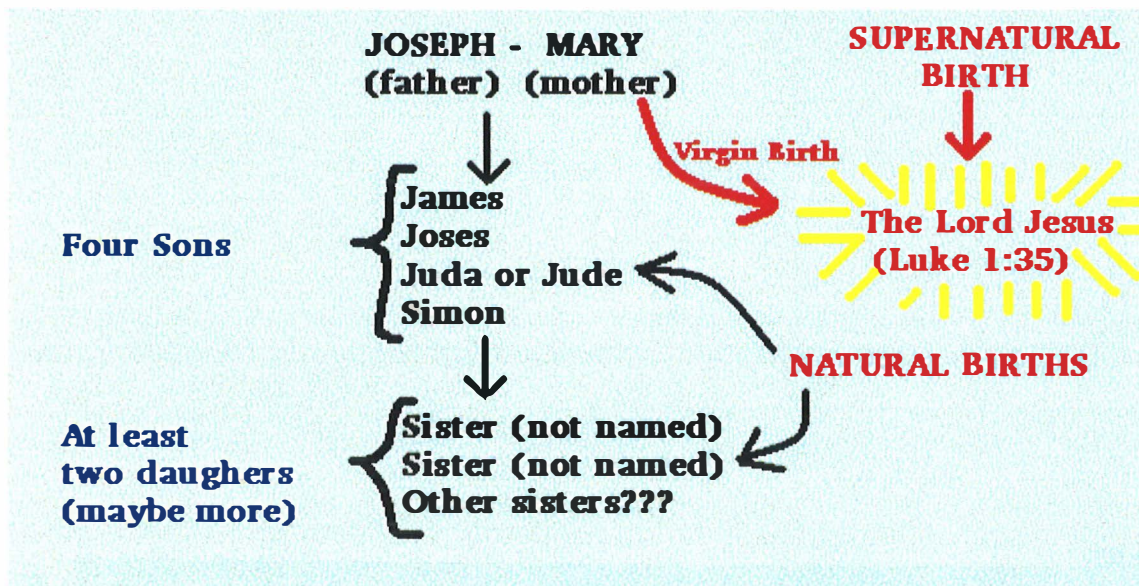
The family unit is very important to God. Having a father and mother and brothers and sisters living together in one home is something that is very pleasing and precious to God. Men did not decide long ago to start living together in families instead of living some other way. God planned family units from the very beginning. Who were the members of the very first human family (see Genesis 2:21-24; 4:1-2; 5:3-4)?

When God sent His Son into the world, He did not have Him grow up in a lonely cave. He did not have Him grow up in a special palace room all by Himself. No, when God sent His Son into the world, He placed Him into a human family with a father, a mother, and with brothers and sisters.

We know, of course, that Joseph was not the real father of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus Christ was born of a virgin named Mary, and Joseph had nothing to do with this birth (Matthew 1:18-23). The conception of Jesus was SUPERNATURAL; it was a **miracle!** God did something very special in the womb of the virgin Mary which we read about in Luke 1:35: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the _____ of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that _____ thing which shall be _____ of thee shall be called the _____ of _____." This is the MIRACLE OF THE INCARNATION. God became flesh and dwelt among men (John 1:14 and 1 Timothy 3:16), and the God-Man was part of a human family.

The Lord Jesus was not the **only son** that Mary had. He was "her _____ son" (Matthew 1:25). Later other sons were born to her and daughters were born also. After the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph came together as husband and wife and God blessed them with many children (compare Matthew 1:25).

We learn about the children of Mary and Joseph in Matthew 13:55-56 and Mark 6:3:



The family of Joseph and Mary was quite a large family with four sons and at least two daughters, not including the Lord Jesus. Is your family this large? In His earthly family, the Lord Jesus had four brothers and at least two sisters. Sometimes we refer to these brothers and sisters as the Lord's "half-brothers" or "half-sisters" to remind us that Joseph was not the Lord's real father. We can also say that these brothers and sisters were the "uterine brothers" and the "uterine sisters" of Jesus. The word "uterine" refers to children born of the same mother (they all came from the **uterus** or womb of Mary).

The Unbelieving Brothers of Jesus

What must it have been like to grow up in the same home as the Lord Jesus? Do you think that His brothers and sisters noticed that He was different? What differences do you think they might have noticed? Remember, the Lord Jesus did not perform miracles until He was about 30 years old (compare John 2:11; Luke 3:23). Actually the Bible tells us very little about those first 30 years. Most of the information we have about those years is found in Luke 2:40-52 (see especially verses 40,46,47,49,51,52). What did the brothers and sisters of Jesus have which Jesus did not have (see Hebrews 4:15)? _____ What do you think it would have been like to have a brother who was sinless?

None of us have ever had the experience of growing up with a sinless sibling. Think of it! What if you had a brother who never loses his temper, who never has a selfish moment, who is always kind, who never disobeys his parents but always submits to them, and who never is guilty of saying the wrong things? What if you had a brother who is never worried, never upset in the wrong way, always honoring and loving God, always following God's Word, never lazy, never jealous, speaking only the truth, and being the perfect example in everything he did? James and his other brothers and sisters grew up right next to sinless perfection! It must have been amazing to witness that.

Read Mark 3:19-20. Here we see the Lord Jesus packed into a crowded house. There were so many people who wanted and needed Jesus that it was impossible for the Lord to relax or even to eat. The Lord was serving these people in such a way that it seemed that He was neglecting His own personal needs such as eating and resting.

Who heard about the ceaseless and strenuous activity of Jesus (Mark 3:21)? His _____ This word "friends" actually means "those belonging to Him, those closely connected with Him," and thus the word probably refers to His family members. They were concerned for Jesus, and they wanted to "lay _____ on Him" (Mark 3:21) and take Him out of that house so that He could receive the rest and relaxation and physical nourishment that they thought He needed.

What did they think of Jesus? They said, "He is _____ Himself" (Mark 3:21). Today we would probably say it like this: "He has lost His mind! He is mad!" They simply did not understand the Lord and His ministry. His own family thought He had lost His mind!

When a believer follows the Lord and serves Him with all his heart, there may be many people who will not understand his conduct. They will not understand why he bows his head before meals, spends time in prayer, reads his Bible, and goes to Church every Sunday and Wednesday, and gives out tracts, etc. "What has happened to this person? Is he mad?" The Apostle Paul spoke of those who were "_____ for Christ's sake" (1 Cor. 4:10). People may not understand, but God understands. People may think that such a Christian has lost his senses, but God knows that he has lost nothing but has indeed found and gained a wonderful Saviour and God.

There was another time when Jesus was surrounded by people. There were some people outside who really wanted to talk to Jesus. Who were these people (Matthew 12:46-47)?

_____ (Note: the word "brethren" simply means "brothers.") What did the Lord say? Did He say: "Tell my mother and brothers to come in so that I may talk to them"? _____ Instead He asked the question, "WHO IS MY _____? AND WHO ARE MY _____?" (Matthew 12:48). To be someone's brother means to be very close to someone. Jesus was asking a question like this: "Who are those who have a very close relationship with Me?" The Lord then answered His own question. Instead of pointing to Mary and his four brothers, who did He point to (Matthew 12:49)? _____ Notice carefully what He said about this matter:

MATTHEW 12:50-"For whosoever shall _____ the _____ of my _____ which is in heaven, the same is my _____ and _____ and _____."

LUKE 8:21-"My _____ and My _____ are these which _____ the Word of _____ and _____ it."

According to these two verses, ***are you closely related to the Lord Jesus?*** Are you His brother or sister? Are you a member of His family? The important thing is not whether you grew up in the same house with Jesus. The important thing is not whether you were part of Mary and Joseph's family. The important thing is whether you do His will and obey His Word!

We learn more about the brothers of Jesus in John 7:3-14. Read these verses and circle the statements that are true:

- Jesus' brothers wanted Jesus to stay in Galilee because they were afraid that if He were to go to Jerusalem He might be killed.
- Jesus' brothers wanted Jesus to go into Judaea.
- Jesus' brothers wanted Jesus to perform great works and miracles before the crowds that would be gathered in Jerusalem.
- Jesus' brothers wanted Jesus to do his works "secretly" so that not too many people would know about it.
- Jesus' brothers wanted Jesus to make Himself known to the public and to show Himself to the world.

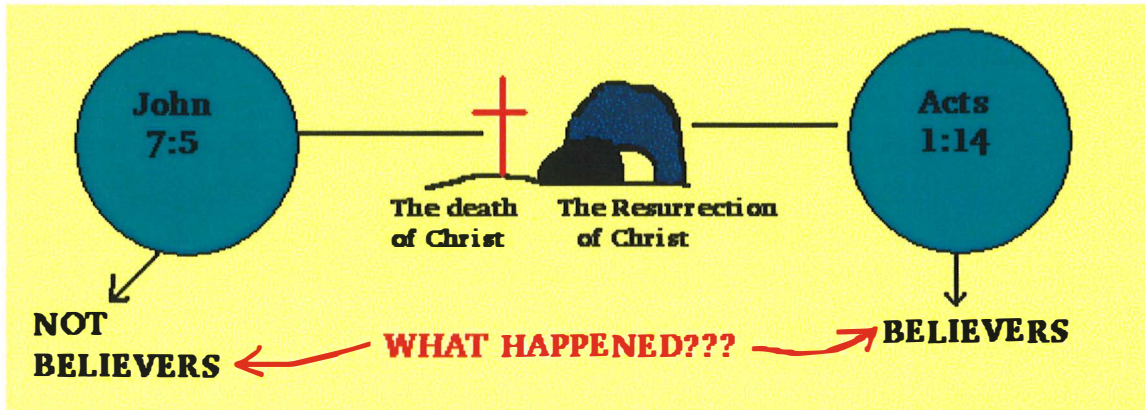
The brothers of Jesus wanted Him to be in the limelight. They wanted Him to be in the public view. They wanted Him to act as a SHOWMAN, performing His mighty works before men.

Did these brothers really believe in Jesus as their LORD and SAVIOUR (John 7:5)? _____ Perhaps they were like the Jews we read about in John chapter 6 who wanted Jesus to be King so that He could feed their stomachs, heal their bodies, and set them free from Roman rule (see John 6:15,24-27). They did not understand that Jesus had come into the world to do something on the INSIDE of a man (see John 7:38), not just to take care of the needs that men have on the OUTSIDE. The Lord's brothers were UNBELIEVERS. Each of them needed a NEW HEART and a NEW LIFE. They needed to be born again (John 3:7).

Something Happened!

Read Acts 1:13-15. These verses describe a gathering of believers (disciples) after the death and resurrection of Christ. Who do we find gathered together and praying with the disciples of the Lord

Jesus (Acts 1:14)? _____ The brothers of Jesus are now believers. Something has happened to these men:



Jesus' brothers are now CHANGED men who were once unbelievers but who became believers. What brought about such a change? What happened? The Bible gives us a clue as to what happened to these men. One of the Lord's brothers was named JAMES. What happened to JAMES one day that made such a big difference in his life (see 1 Cor. 15:4,5,7)? _____ This man saw the risen Lord Jesus Christ. The same thing that changed "DOUBTING THOMAS" into "CONVINCED THOMAS" also changed "UNBELIEVING JAMES" into "BELIEVING JAMES." It was the resurrection of Christ that made such a big difference in the lives of these brothers. In the next chapter we will learn about another man whose life was completely changed because he saw the risen Lord! (Can you guess who that might be?)

BROTHER JAMES

James was probably the oldest son of Joseph and Mary (not counting Jesus), because his name is listed first (see Matthew 13:55). In Galatians 1:19 he is called "James the _____."

We have already studied two other men by the name of James: James the son of _____ (Matthew 10:2) and James the son of _____ (Matthew 10:3). See also [Chapter 3](#) and [Chapter 8](#) where the different men in the New Testament who have the name "JAMES" are discussed. The JAMES who was the brother of the Lord was not one of the 12 disciples, but after the resurrection he did become a very important leader in the church.

James became the important leader of the large church located in the city of Jerusalem, the city where the church first began (Acts 2). We read about him in Acts 15:13; 21:18 and Galatians 1:19; 2:9. In Galatians 2:9 James is said to be a "P _____" along with Cephas (Peter) and J _____. A PILLAR is a very important part of a building. The PILLAR holds up the building and without the pillars the building will fall (as the story of Samson illustrates). This comparison shows how important Peter, John and James were in the days of the early church.

Why was James so strong? Why was he so important to the church? Why was this man such a fine leader? The answer is found in the kind of man he was and the kind of life that he lived. Historical tradition tells us that James was called "JAMES THE JUST" or "JAMES THE RIGHTEOUS ONE." James lived such a holy, righteous, and godly life that he was given this nickname. James was also a man of prayer. His knees were said to be hard as a camel's knees because of the time he spent in prayer, pouring out his heart to God and praying especially for the Jewish people whom he loved so

dearly. James had a special ministry to the Jewish people (see James 1:1).

If people really knew how you lived your life every day of the week, what nickname might they give you? Do you spend any time on your knees? Do you spend any time before an open Bible or do you only open your Bible when you come to church or in family worship? Would you be called _____ (write your own name) THE JUST? Would, you be called "A PILLAR"?

Two Authors

The Lord God used two of the brothers of Jesus to be the human authors of His holy Word. James wrote the book of James. Jude wrote the book of Jude. Jude is the same man who is mentioned in Mark 6:3 ("Juda"). Jude calls himself "the servant of the _____," and "the brother of _____" (Jude 1:1).

It is interesting how both of these men begin their books (see James 1:1 and Jude 1:1). They do not say, "I am the brother of Jesus Christ. I grew up with Jesus in the same house. I lived under the same roof. Very few people have ever had this special privilege." In these opening verses did James or Jude say anything about being the brother of the Lord? _____ These men were humble men. These men knew who Jesus Christ really was: HE WAS THE LORD OF LORDS AND THE KING OF KINGS. They both began their books by saying, "I AM A SERVANT (SLAVE) OF JESUS CHRIST!" They did **not** say, "He is my brother"; instead they said, "He is my Lord and Master, and I am His slave! I must do His will and obey His word!" They learned the lesson of Matthew 12:50 and Luke 8:21!

Is it possible for you to be a child of Mary and Joseph and, grow up in the same home as Jesus?
 _____ Is it possible for you to be a SLAVE of Jesus Christ and to obey His Word and do His will?
 _____ Are you His SLAVE? Are you His true brother or sister (Matthew 12:50)? _____

The Death of James

Do not confuse James the brother of the Lord with the James the son of Zebedee, who was killed in Acts 12:2. James the brother of the Lord lived longer, but finally he too suffered death as a martyr. He was put to death by the Jewish High Priest about 62 A.D. (about eight years before the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans). The historian Josephus tells us that James was either stoned or thrown from the pinnacle (wing) of the temple and then stoned. We know that James the Just went into the presence of the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8) and will be blessed forever because Jesus was his heavenly Lord and Saviour and King and not because he was Jesus' earthly brother. Will you go into the presence of the Lord when you die? Will you be blessed forever and ever? Do you have to fear death? Why or why not?

For further study, see our study called [Plain Talk on Death](#).

WHO'S FOOLING WHO ?

"... SIN, WHEN IT IS FINISHED,
BRINGETH FORTH DEATH "
— JAMES 1:15



EVERBODY IS ENTITLED TO A
LITTLE WRONG-DOING, AND I
HAVEN'T GOT MY SHARE OF
IT YET

" FOOLS MAKE A MOCK AT SIN " — PROVERBS 14:9

CHAPTER 12

THE APOSTLE PAUL

We have studied all twelve of the Apostles including the man who took the place of Judas (see Chapter 11 on Matthias). In this chapter we want to study a man who was not one of the original twelve apostles but who was called of God to be a very special Apostle. He is a man whom we have all heard of and know of: THE APOSTLE PAUL. The New Testament tells us more about the Apostle Paul than it does about all of the other 12 disciples put together! To study this man's life in detail would require a book, not just a brief chapter. What we want to do is to remind ourselves about this remarkable man and take a look at his life through seven very interesting windows. First let's take a look at...

1) His Jewish Religion

Paul actually had two names. He is called SAUL, and he is also called PAUL. Before he was saved, we find that he was usually called SAUL. After he was saved, we find that he was usually called PAUL. We will do the same thing in these notes. *Note: Prior to Acts 13 he is called "Saul." Starting in Acts 13:9 and following this he is always called "Paul."*

Saul of Tarsus was a very religious Jew. Are you a religious person? Do you go to church more than once a week? Do you give thanks before eating meals? Do you read the Bible? Do you pray?

Saul was a very religious Jew. He describes his religious life in Philippians 3:4-6. He came from a religious Jewish home; he was circumcised as a little baby; he did everything that a religious Jew was supposed to do; and he did so well at keeping the Ten Commandments that no one could accuse him of breaking any of them (see Phil. 3:6). We also know that Saul was a _____ (see the last word in Philippians 3:5). If you want to know what most Pharisees were like, read Luke 18:10-12. They were very religious men who thought they were very righteous! Saul was this kind of man. Did Saul think of himself as less religious or more religious than most of the Jews of his day (Galatians 1:14)? _____

Is it possible to be RELIGIOUS but not RIGHT? Is it possible to be RELIGIOUS but not SAVED? Is it possible to do all kinds of religious things **outwardly**, but **inwardly** have a heart that is polluted by sin and not right with God? Saul was such a man. He thought that he was pleasing and serving God, but he was actually **fighting against God!**

2) His Monstrous Acts

According to his own words, what did Saul do when he was a religious but unsaved man (see Galatians 1:13; Phil. 3:6 and 1 Corinthians 15:9)? _____ Saul was a great enemy of the Church. Saul wanted to prevent the spread of Christianity by imprisoning and sometimes killing Christians (Acts 26:10-11). At this point in his life, Saul did not believe that Jesus was God.

Courageous Stephen was the first Christian martyr (Acts 7:54-60). On the day that Stephen was stoned to death, who was standing by giving his approval (Acts 7:57-58)? _____ Soon this young man

became a leader in the persecution of believers (Acts 8:1). He would search houses for Christians whom he would drag away to _____ (Acts 8:3). When it came to hurting and harming the disciples of the Lord, Saul was like a fire-breathing dragon (see Acts 9:1).

In 1 Timothy 1:13 Paul describes the kind of man he was in those days before he was saved. Notice the three words that he uses:

1. A Blasphemer.

To "blaspheme" means to speak against someone with hateful and hurtful language. What wonderful Name do you think Saul spoke against (Acts 26:9)? _____ He not only blasphemed Christ, but he **forced** others to do the same thing (Acts 26:11). Do you know people who speak with evil and hateful language against the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you know people who curse by using the name of the Lord Jesus?

2. A Persecutor.

The basic meaning of the word "persecute" is the word "pursue" which means to run after or to chase after as a hunter chases a fox. To persecute means to run after someone with the intention of **harming** that person. Saul persecuted and chased after every believer he could find (Acts 26:11). When he was saved, Saul discovered who it was that he was really persecuting. Who was He persecuting (Acts 26:14-15)? _____ When you harm the body (**the Church**) you harm the Head (**the Lord Jesus, the Head of the Church**).

3. Injurious.

Saul was injurious. This word means he was violent and "mad" (Acts 26:11) and aggressive, seeking only to harm and to injure. He was glad to see them put to death (Acts 26:10), and he was glad to punish them whenever he could (Acts 26:11). If you had been a Christian living back then, it would not have been very safe to be around the fire-breathing dragon named Saul.

If you had been a believer living back in those days, you probably would have thought of Saul as the very **last** person who would ever be saved. You would have probably said something like this: "God is able to save sinners, but there is no way that this man will ever get saved. He is the church's greatest enemy. He has made up his mind to destroy us all, and nothing or no one will ever change his mind. There is no hope for this man." The possibility of Saul being saved is like the possibility of the big bad wolf being friendly to Little Red Riding Hood! It seemed impossible.

Are there people you know whom you have given up on? Have you said, "That person will never change. That person will never be saved." Are there people at your school whom you think will *never ever* become Christians? The same God who wonderfully changed Saul and turned his life completely around is the same God who can change lives today. Why not begin praying for some of these people you had "given up" on. With God all things are possible. Don't ever doubt the saving ability of God. He's the One who mercifully saved Saul and who because of His mercy is able to save great sinners today (see 1 Timothy 1:15-16)!

3) His Amazing Conversion

Saul was **converted**! He **turned** about and changed his direction. He had been going the wrong way, but suddenly something happened that made this man do a complete turn around! The conversion of Saul is described in three places in the book of Acts: Acts 9:1-9; Acts 22:1-11 and Acts 26:1-18. What happened on this important day? What did Saul see? What did Saul suddenly realize that he had not realized before? Was Saul willing to follow and obey Jesus as LORD (Acts 9:6)? _____ What did Saul do soon after he was saved (Acts 9:18)? _____ Have you done this? Have you been converted? Have you changed your direction? Has God saved you and "turned you about"? What direction were you going? What direction are you going now? Saul was a changed man. Are you a changed person?

4) His Remarkable Ministry

Soon after Saul was saved, what did he do (Acts 9:20)? _____
 _____ Why were the people so amazed when they heard this man preach the gospel (Acts 9:21)? _____
 _____ Saul the great enemy of the church had become Paul the great Apostle of the Church. Paul's life was completely changed. He was a "new _____" (2 Cor. 5:17). He had a wonderful testimony of what Christ had done for his soul. Here is what the believers said about him: "that he which _____ us in times past now _____ the faith which once he _____" (Galatians 1:23). What made such a big difference in this man's life? He had met the Lord Jesus Christ! Have you?

The Lord had a very special ministry for the Apostle Paul. Although Paul was not one of the original twelve apostles, God made him a special apostle (see Galatians 1:1; Romans 1:1). The risen Christ made a special appearance unto him (Acts 9:5; 1 Cor. 9:1; and 1 Cor. 15:8 says, "And _____ of all He was _____ of me also"). Christ also taught Paul in a very special way (Gal. 1:11-12; Eph. 3:3-5,7-9). The word "APOSTLE" means "one who is SENT." God sent Paul on a very special mission, and Paul has been called "the _____ of the G_____ " (Romans 11:13). Throughout the Roman empire Paul preached to the Gentiles (those who were not Jews; see Ephesians 3:8) and told them about the Christ who could save them and make them members in His body, the Church. Saul the Persecutor hated any who would boldly preach Christ. After he came to know Christ, he became a bold preacher himself, perhaps the greatest preacher the church has ever known.

Paul's ministry was truly remarkable. As we read the New Testament, we discover that Paul becomes the main figure and the main character. For example, the first 12 chapters of the book of Acts are mostly about Peter, but the last 16 chapters of Acts (from chapter 13 on) are all about the Apostle Paul and his missionary journeys. You can look at a Bible map which shows the three missionary journeys of Paul to get an idea of all the places where this man went. Also we should remember that almost half of the books in the New Testament were written by Paul. The history of the Church would have been quite different if it had not been for the ministry and labors of this dedicated servant of Christ.

God had a purpose in saving Paul (or Saul). God did not save him for nothing, He saved him for something very important and very wonderful. According to Acts 9:15, why did God save Saul?

 According to Acts 26:16-18, why did God save Saul?

Are you saved by God's grace? _____ If you are, God has saved you *for something*. God has a special purpose for you. God has a special way in which He wants you to serve Him. God wants to use your life in a special way, even as He used the life of Paul in a special way. The question is this: Are you willing to let the Lord use your life in any way that He chooses? Have you given your whole life to Him and said "I'll do what You want me to do and I'll be what You want me to be and I'll go where You want me to go"? Have you ever said what Paul once said in Acts 9:6, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to _____"? Are you a CLEAN vessel for the Lord to use (Acts 9:15)?

Remember, Paul was not some kind of a "SUPER CHRISTIAN." He was a person just like you. He had a sinful old nature just like you (see what Paul said in Romans 7:14,18,24,25). Paul became the great man that he was, not because he was intelligent or wise, but because he had a great God whom he trusted. Is this same great God available to you today? _____ Can you trust Paul's God today? _____ Can Paul's God make you a great servant of Christ? _____

5) His Great Suffering

Soon after Paul was saved, God told him what to expect in his lifetime: "For I will show him how _____ he must _____ for my Name's sake" (Acts 9:16). Many believers had suffered and even died by the cruel hands of Saul the Persecutor. When Saul became Paul, he too had to learn that the life of a believer will sometimes involve suffering. In Paul's case it involved **much** suffering.

In 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 Paul tells us about the different ways in which he suffered. It is almost hard to believe that any man could have gone through all of these things. Let's consider this list:

2 Corinthians 11:23

labours— Paul knew what it was to labor and work hard for his Lord.

stripes— A zebra has stripes. Paul had red stripes which came to his body as a result of being whipped.

prisons— Paul knew what it was like being on the inside of a prison (see Acts 16:19-24). His only crime was that of preaching Christ. He was imprisoned more than once.

deaths— Paul came close to death frequently. He faced the possibility of death many times.

2 Corinthians 11:24

How many times did Paul receive 39 lashes of the whip from the Jews? _____ Once would be bad enough!

2 Corinthians 11:25

How many times was Paul beaten with rods? _____ How many times was he stoned? _____ Most people never live to tell about being stoned! Read Acts 14:19 which tells about the time Paul was stoned. How many times did Paul suffer shipwreck (2 Cor. 11:25)? _____ On one of these occasions he spent a day and a night swimming in the Mediterranean Sea!

2 Corinthians 11:26

The word "perils" means "DANGER." How many times do you find this word in this verse? _____ Paul's life was in constant danger, but Paul had a great God who delivered him from all of these things. Paul could say with David, "The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their _____" (Psalm 34:17).

2 Corinthians 11:27

Paul knew what it was like to be weary, to suffer pain, to be hungry and thirsty, to stay awake at night, to go without food, to be cold, and to be without clothing.

This list that Paul gives is truly amazing. We should remember also that Paul wrote this list during the early part of his ministry (about 55 A.D.). Paul still had about 10 more years of suffering ahead of him, and thus there are many things that he later suffered that are not found in this list in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27. (A later list would include three more imprisonments and one more shipwreck and many other things).

After thinking about such a list of sufferings, you might think something like this: "Paul must have been one miserable person! He must have felt like quitting and giving up. He must have felt that being a Christian and being an apostle was not worth all the pain and suffering." Actually we find that the very opposite was true. When Paul was suffering in a prison in Philippi, do we find him complaining about his pain and sufferings (Acts 16:2-25)? _____ Did Paul experience the things mentioned in Romans 8:35? _____ Could these things separate him from his Saviour? _____ Paul triumphantly said: "Nay, in _____ these things we are _____ than _____ through Him that loved us" (Romans 8:37). In the middle of his countless sufferings, Paul was a "super conqueror"! He was so thankful for what the Lord Jesus Christ had done for him that he was willing to go through anything for His Saviour.

The Christian life is not always an easy life. If you are really saved, there could be some real difficulties ahead for you. The devil's world does not always make it easy for God's child. The path of suffering has been the path for many believers down through the years. Is it possible to rejoice in the midst of suffering and persecution (Acts 5:40-41)? _____ What did the Lord Jesus teach us about those who are persecuted and abused (Matthew 5:10-12)?

Not only did Christ give Paul many opportunities to rejoice in sufferings, He also gave Paul some amazing privileges. For example, did you know that Paul actually took a trip to heaven? You can read about this amazing trip in 2 Corinthians 12:1-10. Is it possible that someday you will take a trip to heaven (John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18)? _____

6) His Courageous Death

The last book in the New Testament which Paul wrote was 2 Timothy. It was written shortly before his death. Was Paul ready to die (2 Tim. 4:6)? _____ Was Paul afraid to die (2 Tim. 4:7-8)? _____ According to Philippians 1:21,23 and 2 Corinthians 5:8, what did physical death mean to Paul?

Did Paul look forward to being with the One who had saved him? _____ Those who live well are those who are ready to die well (see 2 Tim. 4:7).

The man responsible for the death of Paul was the Roman emperor by the name of Nero. In the year 64 A.D. during the reign of Nero, fire broke out in Rome. For six days and nights the fire burned. The greater part of the city was laid in ashes. The rumor that Nero himself had caused the city to be set on fire aroused great hatred in the people of Rome against their emperor. To turn the Roman citizens' hatred away from himself, Nero accused the Christians of having set fire to Rome. The accusation certainly was not true, but large numbers of Christians were arrested and a terrible persecution followed.

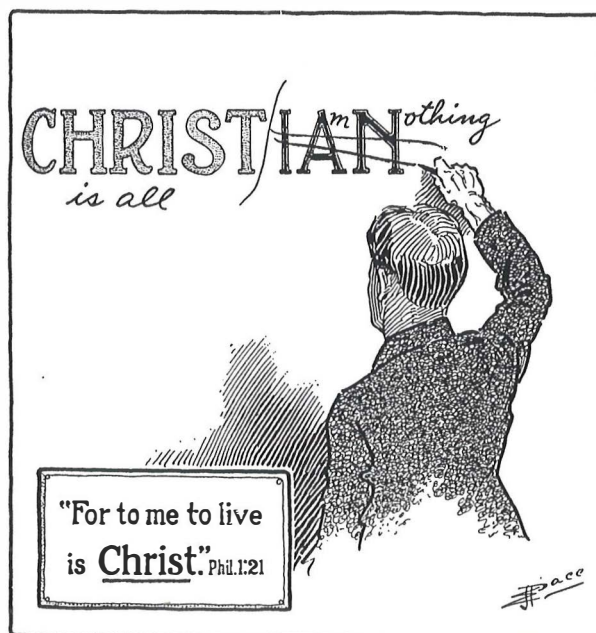
Many Christians were crucified. Some were sewn up in the skins of wild animals and then big dogs were let loose upon them so that they were torn to pieces. Women were tied to mad bulls and dragged to death. After nightfall Christians were burned at the stake in Nero's garden (human lampstands). It was during the reign of this man that Paul and Peter were put to death. Paul was a Roman citizen and thus he could not be crucified as Peter was. Instead, he was executed with a sword (perhaps his head was cut off like John the Baptist).

If you were to die today, would you go to be with Christ? Are you sure? How do you know this?

7) His Eternal Reward

What did faithful Paul expect to receive from his Lord (2 Timothy 4:8)?

Paul tells us about his future hope in Romans 8:18. The word "worthy" is a word that is used in **weighing** things and shows that the scale is balanced and that the scales are even. Here we are told that the sufferings are **not worthy** of the glory, a phrase that indicates an unbalanced condition. On the one side of the scale you have a very tiny and insignificant particle of dust which represents all the sufferings of this life (and Paul had quite a list of sufferings which we have already studied). On the other side of the scale you have a huge piece of cast iron weighing a billion tons. The sufferings become like nothing in comparison! Compare what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:17. The sufferings are **light** and **temporary**. The glory which will be ours in the future is **heavy** and **eternal**. *We need to learn to see things from the viewpoint of eternity!*



CHAPTER 13

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

We have studied the twelve Apostles. We have also studied Matthias, James and Paul. What was it that made these men special? What was it that made these men different? What was it that made these men succeed?

What about you? Is it possible for you to be like these men we have studied? Can you be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ? Even today the Lord Jesus calls out to men and women, boys and girls with the words, "FOLLOW ME!" (compare Luke 5:27). Have you decided to do this? What does it mean to follow Christ?

Common and Ordinary Men

The men whom we have studied in these pages were ordinary people just like you. They did not possess special and unusual powers. They were not born into noble or wealthy families. They were not highly educated. They were just common people, and yet these men became great in God's sight and great in the sight of men.

Here is an example of the greatness of these men. In Luke 3:1 we are told the name of the Roman emperor who ruled the world during the days when the Lord Jesus Christ walked this earth. His name is T_____ Caesar (Luke 3:1). This man ruled the Roman empire for more than 20 years. He was probably the most powerful man on earth for all these years.

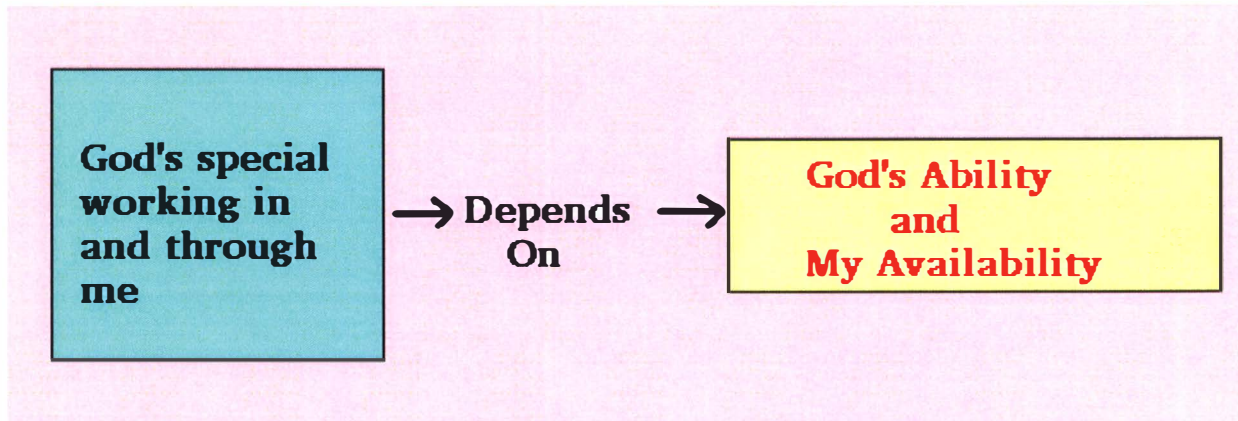
How much do you know about Tiberias? Do you know what he did and what he said? Do you know anything about his life; do you know anything about his death? How much do you know about Peter and Paul? Do you know more about these two men than you know about the emperor Tiberias? Even people who are not Christians usually know certain things about Peter and Paul, but they probably know very little about Tiberias. Do you know boys or men who are named Peter or Paul or John or Thomas or James (Jim)? How many people do you know with the name Tiberias?

There was a special kind of greatness that the disciples had. They were common and ordinary men, but God made them great. What was their secret? What made these men so very special and different?

Read Acts 4:13. Peter and John were in the presence of their enemies. They had been arrested for preaching the gospel (see verses 2-3). The Jewish leaders who had arrested them knew that Peter and John were "unlearned and _____ men" (Acts 4:13). This means that Peter and John were just common, ordinary men. They had never been educated in the great schools of that day, but even their enemies knew that there was something very special about Peter and John. These men had "been with _____" (see the end of Acts 4:13)! Jesus made the difference. Jesus made these two men very special. If you take two **ordinary** men (Peter and John) and put them with Jesus, then you end up with two very **extraordinary** men!

Did you know that the Lord Jesus can make the difference in your life too? You may not be a very special person. You may not have great abilities. You may not be the most intelligent person in your class at school. You may be a very ordinary person, but there is a very special and extraordinary Saviour who wants to make a difference in your life.

Are you letting the Lord do a work in your life? When God looks for people through whom He can do a great work, He is not looking for your **ability**. The **ability** belongs to God, not man. God is looking for your **availability**. God is looking for the person who is **usable**. He wants you to be **accessible** so that He can have **access** to you and do a work in your life and in your heart. The man who is available says, "Lord, here I am. I love You and I want to serve You, and I want to do whatever You want me to do. I cannot do it on my own, but with Your help and power, I can be a Your useful servant."



Think of a surgeon's glove. Does the glove have the **ability** to perform the operation by itself? ____ Is the surgeon able to **use** a glove and work through a glove if the glove is **available** to him? ____ Do you think the surgeon would want to use a glove that is all dirty? ____ Does the Saviour want His disciples to keep themselves **clean** so that He can use them (John 13:8)? ____

When God looks for men, He does not look for those who are wealthy and powerful and special and well educated. These are not the things that God is most concerned about. When God looks for men, He looks for those who are **available**. When the Lord Jesus chose His disciples, He selected several fishermen, one tax collector, and one zealot! These were just common, ordinary men who made themselves **available** to a very wonderful and extraordinary Saviour!

Read 1 Corinthians 1:26. God does not call many _____ men or many _____ men or many _____ men. He calls very **ordinary** men: "But God hath _____ the _____ things of the world [men like Peter and John and Matthew] to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the _____ things of the world to confound the things which are _____ (1 Cor. 1:27). It is not man's wisdom and might that count. God can take foolish and weak men and make them very **wise and powerful**! And, who gets all the glory for doing this (1 Cor. 1:28-31)? _____

The Cost of Being a Disciple

Anything that is worth something usually costs something. That which costs very little is usually worth very little. You can buy a ring for your finger by putting coins in the "gum machines" at a supermarket, or you can buy a ring at a good jewelry store. Which ring is more valuable? Which ring would you rather have? Which ring costs more?

The saying, "You get what you pay for!" is usually true. If you buy a bicycle for only \$25.00, this will probably not be a very good bicycle. It will certainly not be brand new! Being a disciple of the Lord

Jesus costs something, and it is worth a great deal. It is worth paying a price for.

Think of the twelve disciples that we have studied in this set of notes. These men paid a price. They left their families; they left their occupations; they left their possessions; and they followed Christ. Many of these men even paid the price of martyrdom. As Peter once said, "Lo, we have _____ and have _____ thee" (Mark 10:28).

Was following Christ worth leaving all things? Peter and the other disciples paid a price, but did they end up losers or gainers (see Matthew 10:39)? _____ Remember, anything valuable costs something. Those who give nothing usually gain nothing. Those who give a large amount usually gain much.

Consider carefully the words of the Lord Jesus in Mark 10:29-30. Did Jesus promise the disciples that they would receive or gain anything? _____ What would they gain **now**, in this life? What would they gain **in the future**, in the life to come?

Think about being a believer today. Does it cost anything to be a faithful believer today? Are there some things that a believer should "leave" or give up? Is the loss worth the gain? What are some things that a believer gains in this life? Why is it worth being a believer in this life? What do believers have in this life that unsaved people do not have? Why is it worth being a believer in the next life? What will believers have in the next life that unsaved people will not have?

Earthly Possessions

The disciples whom we have studied were not men of great wealth. They did not hang on to earthly possessions. Several of them left their fishing business so that they could follow the Lord. Later Peter did not even have enough money to pay his taxes (Matthew 17:24-27). Paul had to make tents to help support himself (Acts 18:3). According to Acts 3:6, did Peter have much money? _____

Paul once gave this amazing description of the followers of Christ: "as _____, yet making many _____" (2 Cor. 6:10). These men were **poor**, but they were able to make many people **rich**. How can this be? How can a poor person make other people rich? What did these disciples have and what were they able to share with others that was more valuable than anything money could ever buy (Romans 6:23)

Notice the second thing we learn in 2 Corinthians 6:10, Disciples are described as "as having _____, and yet _____ all things." How can this be? How can a person have nothing and yet possess everything? How can a person's hands be empty and yet full? The answer is very simple. As far as material possessions were concerned, the disciples were not rich, but **they had everything that they needed**. God met their **every** need (see Matthew 6:28-33), but as far as their spiritual possessions (eternal possessions) were concerned, they were spiritual billionaires! They possessed "_____ **spiritual blessings**" (Eph. 1:3). What are some of the things which believers have which the unsaved people do not have and which money can never buy? (Some of these things are listed in Ephesians chapter one)

When a person dies, how much money can he take with him? How many possessions? How many houses or boats or cars or swimming pools or television sets? When a believer dies, is there anything that will remain in his possessions even into the next life? Is there a big difference between **temporal possessions** (those things that only last a lifetime) and **eternal possessions** (those things that last

forever)?

A true disciple must forsake and say goodbye to all that he has and all that he possesses (Luke 14:33). His farewell does not mean that he must give away all his possessions and all his money and all his clothes. It does mean though, that the believer should be able to say, "I do not have any possessions. All that I have belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. I belong to Him, and all that I have belongs to Him (1 Cor. 6:19-20); therefore, I want to be very careful how I use my possessions and my money because all that I have really belongs to Him!" Can you say this? If Christ does not have your possessions, it is probably because He does not have **you**!

The Lord Must Come First

Suppose someone had come up to Peter or John or Paul and said, "Who is the MOST IMPORTANT PERSON to you?" What answer do you think these men would have given? Would they have said, "My wife" or "My brother" or "My Dad" or "My Mom" or "my best friend"? No, everyone of these men would have answered in the same way: *The most important person to me is the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Carefully read Matthew 10:37. Is the Lord saying that it is wrong to love your father and your mother? _____ He is saying that it is wrong to love anyone _____ than Him! He must come first! He must have our first and greatest devotion. Have you ever heard of a V.I.P.? This means **VERY IMPORTANT PERSON**. The Lord Jesus is not a V.I.P. He is much more than that. He should be called the M.I.P.— **THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON**. Is He **your** most important Person?

If the Lord has **first place** in our hearts, then we will be able to reach out and love other people as we really should. The Lord will help us to be the son or daughter, brother or sister, friend that we should be our loved ones.

Hated by the World

According to John 15:18-20, what did the Lord teach His disciples to expect from the world?

Being a disciple means being God's man in the devil's world. The unsaved world does not appreciate those people who really follow the Lord and serve Him. Think about the disciples whom we studied in these chapters. All of them were persecuted, and most of them were martyred for their faith in Christ. They were not popular with the world. Instead they were hated and persecuted, just as Christ had predicted.

In 1 Corinthians 4:13 Paul described how the world thinks of true believers: "We are made as the _____ of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." His meaning is, "The world considers us as the worst kind of people. They think of us like the scum or garbage or rubbish of humanity. People like to get rid of trash because it is filthy and of no use, and this is how the world thinks of us!"

These brave and courageous disciples were hated by the world but loved by Christ. What about you? What is more important to you--what the world thinks of you or what the Lord thinks of you? Do you want to be a part of Satan's world system, or Christ's glorious kingdom? Do you want the world's

applause, or do you want the Lord's applause? Do you want to follow the Saviour down the straight path of blessedness, or do you want to follow the world down the crooked path which leads to misery and destruction? The choice is yours.

Being A Student

To be a true disciple, a person must "continue in My _____" (John 8:31). So said the Lord Jesus. The word "**disciple**" means "student, pupil." Are you a student of Christ? Is He your Teacher? Is the Bible your textbook? Do you carry your Bible to church with you? Why? Why not? Do you open your Bible during the week? When? Why? What does the Book of Books mean to you? Has the Lord taught you anything from His Word this past week?

Obedience

Jesus once said, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do _____ the things which I say" (Luke 6:46). A person who says that he is following the Lord but who does not obey the Lord is only fooling himself. How can a disciple show his love for the Lord (John 14:15,21,23)?

It is one thing to **say** that you believe or that you are a disciple. It is quite another thing to **show** that you believe by your **obedience**. Obedience is faith in action! It is a wonderful thing to **obey** the Lord. Are you enjoying the blessings of obedience? How can you obey the Lord at home? At school? In church? In the neighborhood?

Surrender

If any one desires to come after Christ and follow Him, then he must _____ himself (Luke 9:23). This means he must say "NO" to self, and he must say "YES" to Christ. He must say, "Not what I want but only what my Saviour wants!" The surgeon cannot use the glove that is hanging onto the door knob and refusing to let the surgeon get his hand in. Of course, gloves do not really resist like this, but people do. He can only use the glove that says, "Surgeon, fill me and use me. I'll do whatever you want me to do."

Have you ever seen a wild horse that is bucking wildly and insisting on having its own way? Such a horse must be broken and tamed so that it is controlled by its master. The wild horse is not **usable**; it does not have a working relationship with its master. It must be broken and brought to the place where it yields to its master and begins to enjoy a working relationship with him. The horse can then enjoy all of the benefits that come from such a relationship (such as daily care, food, shelter). In the same way we must yield to the Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, and be usable to Him. The believer's will must be broken so that he is able to say "**Not I, but Christ**" (see Galatians 2:20). Having this kind of relationship with the Lord, the believer can then enjoy all the blessings and benefits of the love and care of God.

A Message of Good News

All the men whom we studied in this set of notes have one thing in common. They all had a message of good news and went forth preaching the gospel of Christ.

Do you have a message of good news to share with others? What is this message? Why is it good news? Do people whom you know need to hear this message? Why? Can God use an ordinary, common person like you to share this good news with others? How can He use you? When can He use you?

As one person has said, "I'm just a *NOBODY* telling *ANYBODY* about *SOMEBODY* who can save *ANYBODY*!"

The first disciples of the Lord loved this good news, and nothing could stop them from preaching it and sharing it with others. Many of them died because of their love for the gospel message and their refusal to keep silent.

The world has little good news to talk about. The news media report a lot of bad news but little good news. God has wonderful good news for this world (John 3:16). Have you believed this good news? Will you join the others who are proclaiming this good news. Remember, God is not looking for your **ability**. What is He looking for? _____

Which One Breaks Through ?

