

THE TWELVE (11)

Give Up Everything to Follow Jesus

A. Introduction

1. Who were the Twelve?

The Twelve were men who were called to believe in Jesus and to follow Him.

The Twelve were men who were chosen from a larger group of disciples to be apostles and were given what they needed to do this role.

There are four lists of the men Jesus called and chose in the New Testament.

<u>Matthew 10:2-4</u>	<u>Mark 3:16-19</u>	<u>Luke 6:14-16</u>	<u>Acts 1:13</u>
Peter	Peter	Peter	Peter
Andrew	James	Andrew	John
James	John	James	James
John	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James (son of Alphaeus)			
Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon	Simon
Simon	Simon	Judas (son of James)	Judas (son of James)
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	

In all four lists the same twelve men are named (Judas Iscariot is absent from the list in Acts).

Peter is always first – he was the leader and spokesman for the Twelve.

The Twelve are arranged in three groups of four:

Group 1 – Peter, Andrew, James and John.

Group 2 – Philip, Bartholomew (also known as Nathanael), Matthew and Thomas.

Group 3 – James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas the son of James and Judas Iscariot.

2. What do we learn from The Twelve about what it means to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Andrew taught us that disciples of Jesus introduce people to Jesus.

Simon Peter taught us that disciples of Jesus are changed by Jesus to be like Jesus.

John taught us that disciples of Jesus love the truth about Jesus.

James taught us that disciples of Jesus learn to suffer for Jesus.

Philip taught us that disciples of Jesus never stop learning about Jesus.

Nathanael Bartholomew taught us that disciples of Jesus are waiting for Jesus.

Matthew Levi taught us that disciples of Jesus show the welcome of Jesus.

Thomas taught us that disciples of Jesus want to be with Jesus.

3. In the final group of 4 we have three apostles that we know virtually nothing about.

B. Meet James, Simon, and Judas

1. The first apostle that we know virtually nothing about is James.

The only thing we know about James is his name and his father's name.

"These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus." (Matthew 10:2-3)

"These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder); Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus." (Mark 3:16-18)

"When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus." (Luke 6:13-15)

He was the son of Alphaeus.

It is probable that he was Matthew Levi's brother.

"Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth." (Mark 2:13-14)

It is also probable that his mother was Mary, one of the women to witness Jesus' crucifixion.

"Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons." (Matthew 27:56)

"Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome." (Mark 15:40)

2. The second apostle that we know virtually nothing about is Simon.

The only thing we know about Simon is his name and what he was before he became an apostle of Jesus.

"James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him." (Matthew 10:3-4)

"James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him." (Mark 3:18)

"James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor." (Luke 6:15-16)

He was a Zealot.

Josephus the Jewish historian described four basic groups among the Jews at the time of Jesus: Pharisees (the religious fundamentalists), Sadducees (the religious elite in charge of the temple), Essenes (ascetics and celibates who lived in the desert studying God's law), and the Zealots.

The Zealots were a nationalistic political party that hated the Romans, and their goal was for Israel to become free from Roman rule.

They were assassins and terrorists that carried deadly curved daggers in their cloaks, and were known for sneaking up behind Roman soldiers and politicians and stabbing them in the back.

3. The final apostle that we know virtually nothing about is Judas.

The only thing we know about Judas is his name, his father's name, and one thing that he said.

Judas was also known as Thaddaeus.

"James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him." (Matthew 10:3-4)

"James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him." (Mark 3:18)

His father's name was James.

"James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor." (Luke 6:15-16)

The only thing Judas is recorded as saying is found in John's Gospel when he asks Jesus a question.

[Jesus said,] "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" (John 14:21-22)

4. What do we learn from them about what it means to be disciples of the Lord Jesus?

Disciples of Jesus give up everything to follow Jesus.

"Peter said to him, "We have left everything to follow you!" "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no-one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields – and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life." (Mark 10:28-30)

And these three men remind us of this.

C. James, Simon and Judas Thaddaeus gave up everything to follow Jesus

1. James gave up his family background to follow Jesus.

The one family detail that is majored on is the least significant one.

He doesn't make a big fuss about who his brother was – Matthew Levi.

He doesn't make a big fuss about who his mother was – one of the famous women who had followed Jesus.

He wanted to be known for his relationship to Jesus.

2. Simon gave up his past allegiances to follow Jesus.

He gave up being a Zealot.

He started associating with someone who once would have been his enemy.

"Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot." (Matthew 10:3-4)

3. Judas gave up his way of living to follow Jesus.

The question Judas asked Jesus was why he was making himself known to the disciples and not to whole world (Not knowledge about him that leads to initial faith, but knowing him better by His Word and Spirit).

The answer Jesus gave, was because they loved Him and showed this by obeying Him.

“Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” (John 14:23)

Judas gave up his way of living to obey Jesus’ way of living.

4. All three men gave up their lives to follow Jesus.

What precisely happen to each of these men is disputed, but one thing is not, and that is that each of them died for preaching the gospel.

James was either stoned, beaten to death or crucified.

Simon may have been crucified or sawn in two.

Judas most likely was clubbed to death, although some traditions say he was shot by archers.

D. Disciples of Jesus give up everything to follow Jesus

1. Following the Lord Jesus is more important than anything in this life – even life itself.

“Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” (Mark 8:34)

We must be willing to give up everything to follow Jesus.

“Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.” (Mark 10:21-22)

Is there anything you have not yet been willing to give up?

2. Giving up everything to follow Jesus will be worth it.

“I tell you the truth,” Jesus replied, “no-one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields – and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life.” (Mark 10:29-30)

It will be worth it in this life in the context of being part of the church.

More importantly it will be worth in the life to come.