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AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

Mat 10:2-4 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him

The apostles of Christ were the foundation stones of His church. In **Revelation 21:14**, we are told that the twelve foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem will have in them the names of the twelve apostles. It is evident, therefore, that our Lord attaches great importance to these men. The information compiled are the most respected legends and traditions. We do not mean to infer, that legend and tradition constitute historical fact. We do feel, however, that they do have value in the study of the lives of these men who ". . . turned the world upside down."

ANDREW

Andrew was the brother of Peter, and a son of Jonas. He lived in Bethsaida and Capernaum and was a fisherman before he was called by Jesus. Originally he was a disciple of John the Baptist (**Mark 1: 16-18**). Andrew brought his brother, Peter, to Jesus (**John 1:40**). He is the first to have the title of **Home and Foreign Missionary**. He is claimed by three countries as Their Patron Saint-**Russia, Scotland and Greece**. Many scholars say that he preached in Scythia, Greece and Asia Minor. Andrew introduced others to Jesus. Although circumstances placed him in a position where it would have been easy for him to have become jealous and resentful, he was optimistic and well content in second place. His main purpose in life was to bring others to the Lord.

According to tradition, it was in Achaia, Greece, in the town of Patra that Andrew died a martyr. When Governor Aepeas' wife was healed and converted to the Christian faith, and shortly after that the Governor's brother became a Christian, Aepeas was enraged. He arrested Andrew and condemned him to die on the cross. Andrew, feeling unworthy to be crucified on the same-shaped cross as his Master, begged that his be different. So, he was crucified on an X-shaped cross, which is still called Saint Andrew's cross and which is one of his apostolic symbols. A symbol of two crossed fish has also been applied to Andrew, because he was formerly a fisherman. The relics, which consist of the small finger, part of the top of the cranium of Andrew and small parts of the cross, were in Rome By a decision of **Pope Paul VI** in 1964, the relics that were kept in the **Vatican City**, were sent back to Patras

BARTHOLOMEW

Bartholomew, son of Talmai, lived in Cana of Galilee. Tradition says he was a missionary in Armenia. A number of scholars believe that he was the only disciple who came from royal blood, or noble birth. His name means Son of Tolmai or Talmai (2 Sam. 3:3). Talmai was king of Geshur whose daughter, Maacah, was the wife of David, mother of Absalom. Bartholomew's name appears with every list of the disciples (**Mat. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13**). Bartholomew was not a first name, however; it was his second name. His first name probably was **Nathaniel**, whom Jesus called "An Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile" (**John 1:47**). The New Testament gives us very little information about him. Nevertheless, we have clear information that he was a great searcher of the Scripture and a scholar in the Law and the Prophets.

He was a man of complete, sincerity, a man earnest in prayer, a man who made complete surrender to the Carpenter of Nazareth, and one of the Church's most adventurous missionaries.

He is said to have preached with Philip in Phrygia and Hierapolis; also in Armenia. Other traditions record him as serving as a missionary in Ethiopia, Mesopotamia, Parthia, and Lycaonia. The Armenian Church claims him as its founder and martyr. However, tradition says that he preached in India, and his death seems to have taken place there. He died as a martyr for his Lord. **He was flayed alive with knives**. His apostolic symbol is three parallel knives. After being whipped severely by seven soldiers, they tied his body to the cross with cords to prolong his agony. His followers reported that when he was led toward the cross, Andrew saluted it in these words: **“I have long desired and expected this happy hour. The cross has been consecrated by the body of Christ hanging on it.”** He continued to preach to his tormentors for two days until he died.

JAMES

James, the Elder, son of Zebedee and Salome, brother of John the Apostle; a fisherman who lived in Bethsaida, Capernaum and Jerusalem. He preached in Jerusalem and Judea and was **beheaded by Herod, A.D. 44 (Acts 12: 1, 2)**. He was a member of the Inner Circle. The New Testament tells us very little about James. His name never appears apart from that of his brother, John. They were an inseparable pair (**Mark 1:19-20; Mat. 4:21; Luke 5:1-11**). James was one of only three apostles whom Jesus selected to bear witness to his Transfiguration

He was a man of courage and forgiveness, a man without jealousy, living in the shadow of John, a man of extraordinary faith. Agrippa had **James executed by sword** making him the first of the apostles to be martyred. His symbol is three shells, the sign of his pilgrimage by the Sea.

His remains are said to be in Santiago de Compostela in Galicia (Spain).

JAMES

James, the 'Lesser or Younger, son of Alpheus, or Cleophas, and Mary, lived in Galilee. According to tradition he wrote the Epistle of James, preached in Palestine and Egypt and was crucified in Egypt. James was one of the little known disciples. His brother Thaddeus was also an apostle. Some scholars believe he was the brother of Matthew, the tax collector. James was a man of strong character. **He was martyred at Jerusalem by being thrown from a pinnacle of the Temple, then stoned and beaten with clubs and r's mallets, while praying for his attackers. Others said that he was sawed in pieces.**

JOHN

John, son of Zebedee and Salome, brother of James, the Apostle. He was known as the Beloved Disciple. A fisherman who lived in Bethsaida, Capernaum and Jerusalem, he was a member of the Inner Circle. He wrote the Gospel of John, I John, II John, III John and Revelation. He preached among the churches of Asia Minor. Banished to the Isle of Patmos, he was later freed and died a natural death. John was one of the prominent Apostles. He is mentioned in many places in the New Testament. He was a man of action; he was very ambitious; and a man with an explosive temper and an intolerant heart. His second name was Boanerges, which means Son of Thunder. He and his brother, James, came from a more well-to-do family than the rest of the Apostles. Since his father had hired servants in his fishing business (**Mark 1:20**) he may have felt himself above the rest. He was close to Peter. They were acting together in the ministry. Peter, however, was always the spokesman for the band. John mellowed with time. At the latter part of his life, he had forgotten everything, including his ambition and explosive temper, except his Lord's command of love. It is said that an attempt was made on his life by giving him a chalice of poison from which God spared him. He died of natural causes. A chalice with a snake in it is his symbol. Some modern scholars believe that John the Apostle, John the Evangelist, and John of Patmos were three separate individuals. Certain lines of evidence suggest that John of Patmos wrote only Revelation, neither the Gospel of John nor the Epistles of John. For one, the author of Revelation identifies himself as "John" several times, but the author of the Gospel of John never identifies himself directly.

JUDAS

Judas Iscariot, the traitor, was the son of Simon who lived in Judah. He betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver and afterwards hanged himself (**Mat. 26:14, 16**).

Judas, the man who became the traitor, is the supreme enigma of the New Testament because it is so hard to see how anyone who was so close to Jesus, who saw so many miracles and heard so much of the Master's teaching, could ever betray him into the hands of his enemies.

His name appears in three lists of the 12 Apostles (**Mat. 10:4; Mark 3:19; Luke 6:19**). It is said that Judas came from Judah near Jericho. He was a Judean and the rest of the disciples were Galileans. He was the treasurer of the band and among the outspoken leaders.

It is said that Judas was a violent Jewish Nationalist who had followed Jesus in hope that through Him his nationalistic flame and dreams might be realized. No one can deny that Judas was a covetous man and at times he may have used his position as treasurer of the band to pilfer from the common purse. There is no certain reason as to why Judas betrayed his master; but it is not his betrayal that put Jesus on the cross-it was our sins. **He hung himself.**

His apostolic symbol is a hangman's noose or a money purse with pieces of silver falling from it.

JUDE THADDEUS

Jude Thaddeus, or Lebbeus, son of Alpheus or Cleophas and Mary. He was a brother of James the Younger. He was one of the very little-known Apostles and lived in Galilee. Tradition says he preached in Assyria and Persia and died a martyr in Persia. Jerome called Jude "Trinomious" which means "a man with three names." In **Mark 3:18** he is called Thaddeus. In **Matthew 10:3** he is called Lebbeus. His surname was Thaddeus. In **Luke 6: 16 and Acts 1: 13** he is called Judas the brother of James. Judas Thaddeus also was called Judas the Zealot. By character he was an intense and violent Nationalist with the dream of world power and domination by the Chosen People. In the New Testament records (**John 14:22-23**) he asked Jesus at the Last Supper, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" Judas Thaddeus was interested in making Christ known to the world. Not as a suffering Saviour, however, but as ruling King. We can see plainly from the answer Jesus gave him, that the way of power can never be substituted for the way of love. It is said that Jude went to preach the gospel in Edessa near the Euphrates River. There he healed many and many believed in the name of Jesus. Jude went from there to preach the Gospel in other places. **He was killed with arrows at Ararat.** The chosen symbol for him is the ship because he was a missionary thought to be a fisherman. According to other traditional accounts, Jude was beaten to death with a club, then beheaded, in Persia, sometime before the end of the first century.

MATTHEW

Matthew, or Levi, son of Alpheus lived in Capernaum. He was a publican or tax collector. He wrote the Gospel that bears his name. He died a martyr in Ethiopia. The call of Matthew to the apostolic band is mentioned in **Mark 2: 14, Mat. 9:9; and Luke 5:27-28**. From these passages, we learn that Matthew also was called Levi. It was a common custom in the Middle East at the time of Christ for men to have two names. Matthew's names mean "a gift of God." The name Levi could have been given to him by Jesus. It is likely that James the Lesser, who was one of the twelve Apostles, was Matthew's brother, also the son of Alpheus. Although we know little about Matthew personally, the outstanding fact about him is that he was a tax collector. The King James Version calls him a publican, which in Latin means engaged in public service, a man who handled public money, or a tax gatherer. Of all the nations in the world, the Jews were the most vigorous haters of tax gatherers. To the devout Jew, God was the only one to whom it was right to pay tribute in taxes. To pay it to anyone else was to infringe on the rights of God. The tax collectors were hated not on religious grounds only but because most of them were notoriously unjust. In the minds of many honest, Jewish men, these tax collectors were regarded as criminals. In New Testament times they were classified with harlots, Gentiles and sinners (**Mat. 18: 17, Mat. 21:31, 33; Mat. 9:10; Mark 2:15, 16; Luke 5: 30**).

Tax collectors had been known to assess duty payable at impossible sums and then offer to lend the money to travelers at a high rate of interest. Such was Matthew. Yet, Jesus chose a man all men hated and made him one of His men. It took Jesus Christ to see the potential in the tax collector of Capernaum. Matthew was unlike most of the other Apostles, who were all fishermen. He could use a pen, and by his pen he became the first man to present to the world, in the Hebrew language, an account of the teachings of Jesus. It is clearly impossible to estimate the debt that Christianity owes to this despised tax gatherer. The average man would have thought it impossible to reform Matthew, but to God all things are possible. Matthew became the first man to write down the teachings of Jesus. He was a missionary of the Gospel, who laid down his life for the faith of his Master. The apostolic symbol of Matthew is three money bags which remind us that he was a tax collector before Jesus called him. Matthew suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia, **killed by a sword wound**.

PETER

Simon Peter, son of Jonas, was a fisherman who lived in Bethsaida and Capernaum. He did evangelistic and missionary work among the Jews, going as far as Babylon. Tradition says he was crucified, head downward, in Rome. Some scholars ascribe I and II Peter to him. He was a member of the Inner Circle. In every apostolic list, the name Peter is mentioned first. However, Peter had other names. At the time of Christ, the common language was Greek and the family language was Hebrew. So, his Greek name was Simon (**Mark 1: 16; John 1:40, 41**). His Hebrew name was Cephias (**I Cor. 1:12; 3:22; 9:5 and Gal. 2:9**). The Greek meaning of Simon is rock. The Arabic meaning of Cephias is also rock. By trade, Peter was a fisherman. He was a married man (**I Cor. 9:5**) and his home was Capernaum. Jesus probably made His headquarters there when He visited Capernaum. Peter was also a Galilean and was typical of many of the other disciples. Among the twelve, Peter was the leader. He stands out as a spokesman for all the Apostles. It is he who asked the meaning of the difficult saying (**Mat. 15: 15**). It is he who asked how often he must forgive. It is he who first confessed Jesus and declared Him as the Son of the Living God. It is he who was at the Mount of Transfiguration. It is he who saw Jairus' daughter raised to life. Yet, it is he who denied Christ three times. He was an Apostle and a missionary who laid down his life for his Lord. It is true, Peter had many faults, but he had always the saving grace of the loving heart. No matter how many times he had fallen and failed, he always recovered his courage and integrity. **Peter was martyred on the cross**. Peter requested that he might be crucified head downward for he was not worthy to die as his Lord had died. His apostolic symbol is a cross upside down .

PHILIP

Tradition says that Philip preached in Phrygia and died a martyr at Hierapolis. Philip came from Bethsaida, the town from which Peter and Andrew came (**John 1:44**). The likelihood is that he, too, was a fisherman. Although the first three Gospels record his name (**Mat. 10:3; Mark 3: 18; Luke 6: 14; Acts 1: 13**), it is in the Gospel of John that Philip becomes a living personality. Scholars disagree on Philip. In Acts 6:5, we have Philip as one of the seven ordained deacons. Some say this is a different Philip. Some believe this is the Apostle. If this is the same Philip, then his personality came much more to life because he had a successful campaign in Samaria. He led the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ (**Acts 8:26**). He also stayed with Paul in Caesarea (**Acts 21: 8**) and was one of the major figures in the missionary enterprise of the early church. The Gospel of John shows Philip as one of the first of many to whom Jesus addressed the words, "Follow Me." When Philip met Christ, he immediately discovered Nathaniel and told him, that "we have found him, of whom Moses and the prophets did write." Nathaniel was skeptical. Philip did not argue with him; he simply answered, "Come and see." This story tells us two important things about Philip. First, it shows his right approach to the skeptic and his simple faith in Christ. Second, it shows that he had a missionary instinct. Philip was a man with a warm heart and a pessimistic head. He was one who would very much like to do something for others, but who did not see how it could be done. Yet, this simple Gali-

lean gave all he had. In return God used him. **It is said that he died by hanging.** While he was dying, he requested that his body be wrapped not in linen but in papyrus for he was not worthy that even his dead body should be treated as the body of Jesus had been treated. The symbol of Philip is a basket, because of his part in the feeding of the five thousand. It is he that stressed the cross as a sign of Christianity and victory.

SIMON

Simon, the Zealot, one of the little-known followers called the Canaanite or Zelotes, lived in Galilee. Tradition says he was crucified. In two places in the King James Version he is called a Canaanite (**Mat. 10:4; Mark 3:18**). However in the other two places, he is called Simon Zelotes (**Luke 6: 15; Acts 1: 13**). The New Testament gives us practically nothing on him personally except that it says he was a Zealot. The Zealots were fanatical Jewish Nationalists who had heroic disregard for the suffering involved and the struggle for what they regarded as the purity of their faith. The Zealots were crazed with hatred for the Romans. It was this hate for Rome that destroyed the city of Jerusalem. Josephus says the Zealots were reckless persons zealous in good practices and extravagant and reckless in the worst actions. From this background, we see that Simon was a fanatical Nationalist, a man devoted to the Law, a man with bitter hatred for anyone who dared to compromise with Rome. Yet, Simon clearly emerged as a man of faith. He abandoned all his hatred for the faith that he showed toward his Master and the love that he was willing to share with the rest of the disciples and especially Matthew, the Roman tax collector. Simon, the Zealot, the man who once would have killed in loyalty to Israel, became the man who saw that God will have no forced service. Tradition says he died as a martyr. His apostolic symbol is a fish lying on a Bible, which indicates he was a former fisherman who became a fisher of men through preaching. He was martyred, but the location is uncertain; some claim that **he was crucified in Samaria**; others claim that he was **sawn in half at Persia**; still others claim that he was martyred in Iberia.

THOMAS

Thomas Didymus lived in Galilee. Tradition says he labored in Parthia, Persia, and India, suffering martyrdom near Madras, at Mt. St. Thomas, India. Thomas was his Hebrew name and Didymus was his Greek name. At times he was called Judas. Matthew, Mark and Luke tell us nothing about Thomas except his name. However, John defines him more clearly in his Gospel. Thomas appeared in the raising of Lazarus (**John 11: 16**), in the Upper Room (**John 14:1-6**) where he wanted to know how to know the way where Jesus was going. In John 20:25, we see him saying unless he sees the nails in Jesus' hand and the gash of the spear in his side he will not believe. That's why Thomas became known as Doubting Thomas. Thomas became certain by doubting. By nature, he was a pessimist. He was a bewildered man. Yet, he was a man of courage. He was a man who could not believe until he had seen. He was a man of devotion and of faith. When Jesus rose, he came back and invited Thomas to put his finger in the nail prints in his hands and in his side. Here, we see Thomas making the greatest confession of faith, "My Lord and my God: Thomas' doubts were transformed into faith. Thomas was always like a little child. His first reaction was not to do that he was told to do and not to believe what he was asked to believe. The good news to him was always too good to be true. By this very fact Thomas' faith became great, intense and convincing. It is said that he was commissioned to build a palace for the king of India, and he was **killed with a spear as a martyr for his Lord**. His symbol is a group of spears, stones and arrows.

PAUL

St Paul, whose earlier Hebrew name was Saul, was of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews and in religious respects "as touching the law, a Pharisee" (**Philippians 3:5**). Acts identifies Paul as from Mediterranean Tarsus (in present-day south-central Turkey), well-known for its intellectual environment. Acts also claims Paul said he was "a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee" (**Acts 23:6**).

According to his own testimony, Paul “violently persecuted” the “church of God” (followers of Jesus) prior to his conversion to Christianity (**Galatians 1:13-14**, **Philippians 3:6**, and **Acts 8:1-3**). Following his stay in Damascus after his conversion, where he states he was healed of his blindness and baptized by Ananias of Damascus, Paul says that he first went to Arabia, and then came back to Damascus (**Galatians 1:17**). He describes in Galatians how three years after his conversion he went to Jerusalem. There he met James and stayed with Simon Peter for 15 days (**Galatians 1:13–24**). There is no evidence that Paul had known Jesus prior to the Crucifixion. Tradition has said that Paul was beheaded, during the reign of Nero

Paul asserted that he received the Gospel not from any person, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (**Galatians 1:11–12**). "The details are all wanting. Tradition supplies only a few, which may be true or not. The story is that Paul was beheaded on the Ostian Road. It was customary for criminals of prominence to be executed several miles out of the city so as to avoid the crowds. We may picture the event in a possible manner. One day in late spring or early June the executioners came to Paul's dungeon and led him out of the city. One is reminded of Jesus as he bore his cross along his Via Dolorosa. Paul, as a condemned criminal, would be the victim of the rabble's sport. He would have no defender. We do not know if Luke was with Paul to the very last. We may at least hope so. If he could, he would surely walk along as near Paul as would be allowed. But no band of Christians followed with him now. He was going out of Rome on his way to the true Eternal City. He knew Rome well, but his eyes were fixed on other things. Outside the city the busy, merry life of the time went on. The crowds flowed into town. Some were going out. Paul was only a criminal going to be beheaded. Few, if any, of the crowds about would know or care anything about him. At a good place on the road some miles out the executioners stopped. The block was laid down. Paul laid his head upon it. The sword (or axe) was raised. The head of the greatest preacher of the ages rolled upon the ground. Tradition says that a Roman 'matron named Lucina buried the body of St. Paul on her own land, beside the Ostian Road.' Be that as it may, no Christian can come to Rome, especially by the Ostian Road, without tender thoughts of Paul, the matchless servant of Jesus." (***A.T. Robertson, Epochs In The Life Of Paul, pp. 316-317***).

On the basis of credible witnesses, the common voice of the Church attributes thirteen Epistles to Apostle Paul's authorship, which appear in the Bible in the following order:

Epistle to the Romans, First Epistle to the Corinthians, Second Epistle to the Corinthians, Epistle to the Galatians, Epistle to the Ephesians, Epistle to the Philippians, Epistle to the Colossians, First Epistle to the Thessalonians, Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, First Epistle to Timothy, Second Epistle to Timothy, Epistle to Titus, Epistle to Philemon, Did Paul write the **Epistle to the Hebrews** epistle?

Act 27:6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein. **Heb 13:24** Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. Paul used the word salute in Romans, 1&2 Corinthians and Philippians

Matthias, the successor of Judas Iscariot, if Christian tradition is to be credited, was put to death three times, crucified, stoned, and beheaded. Some say that he died of old age.

Mark died in Alexandria, Egypt, after being dragged by horses through the streets until he was dead.

Luke was hanged in Greece as a result of his tremendous preaching to the lost.

Barnabas, one of the group of seventy disciples, He preached throughout Italy and Cyprus. Barnabas was stoned to death at Salonica.