



## World Christian Fellowship

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### Apostles- James Simon and Judas Luke 6:12-16

**Luke 6:12-16**, *Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.<sup>13</sup> And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:<sup>14</sup> Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew;<sup>15</sup> Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot;<sup>16</sup> Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor.*

#### Group One:

1. Simon called Peter,
2. Andrew,
3. James,
4. John.

Peter, James, and John's names get mixed around in the list, Peter's is always first, but they are always in group one.

### **Group Two:**

1. Philip,
2. Bartholomew — or Nathanael,
3. Matthew,
4. Thomas.

Always group two in every list.

The names of Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, and Thomas get mixed, but Philip is always the first name of group two.

### **Group Three:**

1. James the son of Alphaeus,
2. Simon the Zealot,
3. Judas son of James,
4. Judas Iscariot.

Always the same in every list.

The names may be mixed a little bit, the two middle names, the names of Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James get mixed.

James the son of Alphaeus is always the first name in group four and Judas is always the last name of the twelve.

## James small

Number nine in the full list is a man indicated to us in verse 15 by the name James the son of Alphaeus.

James the son of Alphaeus.

He had a name that was shared by some others:

James the son of Zebedee who was the brother of John.

James is known to us and there are several incidents in the gospels where James appears.

Another James, the James who was the brother of our Lord. Our Lord had a half-brother born to Joseph and Mary by the name of James. He later became the leader of the Jerusalem Council and authored the epistle James.

This James, the son of Alphaeus, is just obscure. We do not even know anything about Alphaeus.

**Mark 15:40**, *There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome,*

*"James the mikros,"*

Micro James, little James. Translated as "James the Less." little James.

### **What does it mean less or little or mikros?**

It could refer to his physical features.

He could have been very small, just a little guy.

It may also be that he was young in age. It would be hard to imagine that were he an older man he would still be bearing the moniker "little James." They may have wanted to show a little more deference to his age.

It is also true that he was something of a background person, and that is why he's called "little James," or "James the Less," small James.

Perhaps it is a combination of that, we certainly cannot be dogmatic, but let us for our mind's sake assume that he was a kind of a small sort of quiet person.

"Little James" was probably his nickname, not a world beater in physical terms, but then our Lord has never depended upon superstars.

Have you noticed?

**Mark 2:14**, *As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him.*

The Apostle Matthew (called Levi, the tax collector before becoming a follower of Christ), is also identified as the son of Alphaeus.

**Could it be that this James was the brother of Matthew?**

That could be.

There is no effort on the part of the Scripture writer to distinguish between the two Alphaeus.

Could be.

That would not be uncommon since

Peter and Andrew were brothers.

James and John were brothers.

Why not James and Matthew Levi?

Yet scholars doubt he and James were brothers. Never in the Gospels are the two disciples connected.

The New Testament tells us absolutely nothing about him.

If we do not know anything about him that in itself is an interesting fact. Apparently, he sought no recognition. He displayed no great leadership, asked no critical questions, demonstrated no unusual insight. Only his name remains, and all his life and labours are sunk in obscurity.

## **Accomplishments of James the Lesser**

James was hand-picked by Jesus Christ to be a disciple. He was present with the 11 apostles in the upper room of Jerusalem after Christ ascended to heaven. He may have been the first disciple to see the risen Saviour.

**1 Corinthians 15:7**, *After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.*

Although his accomplishments remain unknown to us today, James may simply have been overshadowed by the more prominent apostles. Even still, being named among the twelve was no small achievement.

Historical tradition tells us, however, that he was sent after Pentecost to Persia to preach the gospel, modern Iran, and there preached the gospel. The gospel was rejected by the power that was there and he was crucified for his faithfulness to Christ, just as his Lord had been crucified.

The legacy for Iran was pagan Islam. The Lord uses people who seem not extraordinary at all. Here is such a quiet, unknown soldier.

James the less became a great preacher, he was able to do miracles, cast out demons, heal people to validate the message that he preached. He preached the message with faithfulness

and God's Word never returns void, Isaiah says, so he bore fruit for his preaching. He was powerful enough to bring about his own martyrdom.

There is another interesting thought.

**John 19:25**, *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.*

Some scholars tell us that Cleophas is just another form of Alphaeus.

If this James was the son of the sister of Mary, he would have been Jesus' cousin.

**Was James the cousin of our Lord?**

**Was he the brother of Matthew?**

We do not know.

It does not matter to the Lord.

People try to attach some big names or family name to get some attention. But God uses nobody!

The apostles never really were the true workers in the kingdom, anyway. Christ was, they were just the tools.

Had they been important and had their pedigree, methods, styles, and their careers then we would have some information.

When we read the book of Acts, we do not hear anything about them except for Peter, James, and John. Peter and John dominate the first part, and the apostle Paul, the apostle who came later, dominates the back half of the book of Acts.

So, there is not anything that we know about them.

### **Why?**

The reason for that is that the men are not the issue.

It was enough to know that they were chosen by the Lord, empowered by the Spirit, and carried the gospel to the world of their day. They just sort of disappear.

The Scripture always keeps the focus on the power of Christ and the power of the Word. They preach the Word, filled with the Spirit, and that is what we need to know.

The vessel is not the issue, the Master is. James the son of Alphaeus was like the rest of the apostles.

He was pulled into the Lord's love. He lived only for His glory and died without leaving any earthly record.

There is a heavenly record. He right now shines in heaven. His name right now is on the foundation of one of the gates that lead into the New Jerusalem.



## **Simon the Zealot:**

Simon who was called the Zealot.

In Matthew and Mark he is called Cananaen.

Luke calls him as Zealot.

### **Why do Matthew and Mark use Cananaen?**

The best ancient manuscripts read Cananios, and that is a word that comes from the Hebrew word, a Hebrew root that is carried over into the Greek word.

The Hebrew word is qanah and it means "to be jealous," or "to be passionate, zealous."

It was used in the Hebrew language for those who were passionate and jealous and zealous for the law of God. That's cananios, sort of a derivative from the Hebrew word.

Zelotes is the word for "zeal" in the Greek, and that's the word that appears here, zelotes from which we get "zealot."

It is the same word in Greek.

Both words then refer to this man. He was a man who had zeal and passion for the law of God. The terminology bears that out.

Both words then indicate to us that he was a man clearly defined by one characteristic in his life, and that was this passion for the law of God.

He bore the label all his life. It has nothing to do with geography, but it distinguishes Simon as a member of a jealous, radical, zealous, evolutionary party among the Jews.

**There were primarily four parties among the Jews.**

There were the **Pharisees**, fastidious about the law, religious fundamentalists.

There were the **Sadducees**, those are the ones who were the religious liberals.

There were the **Essenes**, and they were the monastics. They were the separated people who lived out in the desert and lived an austere lifestyle and disdained the comforts of the city. They would be like monks living in a monastery.

The last, the fourth and last of the primary groups that developed was the Zealot group. This was the political group. They hated the Romans.

Zealot hated anybody that imposed upon Judaism any pagan intrusion. The Romans were guilty of that. They hated the Romans. They hated the Greeks before them. They were born out of rebellion.

They were the political terrorists. They were the assassins. Their existence appears to come from the Maccabean period when the Greeks were still leading and ruling over Israel.

The Jews were sick of it and tired of it. The temple had been desecrated. A pig had been slain on the altar to mock Judaism and its ceremonial laws.

There was a Maccabean revolution.

**1 Maccabees 2:50**, "*Be zealous for the Law and give your lives for the covenant.*"

So, there was this calling together of Jews who would go and die to dispossess the pagans who had occupied their land. They were the strictest of the strict.

They were extreme Pharisees of the Pharisees who went to the point where they not only interpreted the law literally, but they believed that somebody who didn't interpret the law the way it should be interpreted and didn't live by that law could be killed, assassinated.

They insisted on a literal obligation of traditional renderings of the law. They wanted a Messiah who would kick out the Romans and every other pagan nation and who would restore the kingdom to Israel with all its former Solomonic or Davidic glory.

They were hardcore patriots and they banded together under a man named **Judas of Samaria** to deliver the Jews from the Romans. They started a rebellion and some of their crimes were quite amazing.

They were headquartered in the Galilee where the rest of the apostles, except for Judas, was from. Their headquarters were in Galilee, they stirred up agitation. They did terrorist acts everywhere. Josephus, the historian that writes so vastly of that day and with such great help, gives us a brief look at them.

The land of Israel was under Roman rule. Of course, the Jews could not accept that fact, the country was a sleeping volcano about to erupt. They wanted the Romans out. They offended them in every sense. For many years Herod the Great, who was not a Jew but an Idumaeen, had succeeded in holding the nation together in peace. He did it by the sheer force of his personality and his skill and diplomacy as well as being backed, of course, by Roman force.

It was 4 B.C. when Herod the Great died. Divided up his kingdom to his sons:

Philip took the north-east regions,

Antipas took Galilee,

Archelaus was left with Judea and Samaria.

Before this new arrangement could ever be ratified by Rome, Israel erupted.

They wanted all the Gentile rulers out and the Romans out. The blaze was the fiercest in Galilee where this **Judas of Samala** led the uprising.

The Roman power broke that insurrection, but the Zealots were all the more fortified. In the south, in Judea, the Romans found Archelaus was unfit to rule so they replaced him with a man named Quirinius.

Now Quirinius is well noted because he introduced a census. That is when Jesus was born at that time, when they went down, Joseph and Mary, to the census to record their identity and be on the tax rolls. He introduced a census for taxation. That was another terrible act as far as the Zealots were concerned and so a holy war blew up again led by Judas of Samala.

The revolt again was crushed by the Romans and this time Judas was killed, but the Zealots were fortified even more and they stopped with the open rebellion and they moved to terrorism. They became known as **sicarii**. **Sicae**, a little curved sword and they would hide it in the folds of their robe, and they would come up from behind on the Romans and stab them in the back of the ribs through the heart.

**Luke 22:38**, *So they said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough."*

They involved themselves in guerrilla warfare, burning, plundering and going up into Galilee to hide, and sometimes even killed their own countrymen whom they believed compromised with Rome. Josephus in his Antiquities of the Jews writes concerning this **Judas of Samaria** who the leader of these rebellions and sort of was out of which the Zealots were fortified.

*He said, "Judas the Galilean was the author of the fourth sect of Jewish philosophy. They, the Zealots, have an inviolable attachment to liberty and say that God is the only ruler and Lord. They do not mind dying any kind of death, nor do they heed the torture of their kindred and their friends, nor can any such fear make them call any man lord."*

*Since this immovable resolution of theirs is known to a great many, I shall speak no further about that matter, for I am not afraid that anything that I have said about them will be disbelieved, but rather fear that what I have said comes short of the resolution they show when they undergo pain."*

Josephus says all they need to say is very little because everybody knows these people are so zealous, they will literally die and if the people around them that are in their group fall at their side that does not at all mitigate their resolution.

They do not mind dying, any kind of death, nor do they heed the torture of their kindred and their friends. You can torture them. You can kill them. But you cannot change their passion.

Simon was one of them. In fact, there are historians who believe that in 70 A.D. when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, **Titus Vespasian**, the Roman general, when they destroyed Jerusalem and massacred a million, a hundred thousand Jews in Jerusalem in that one terrible holocaust, that it was largely precipitated by the Zealots.

*"When Jerusalem was besieged and when the inhabitants were slowly starving to death, and when the outlook was completely hopeless, within the besieged city a civil war was raging and the Zealots and the assassins, who were a part of the Zealots, were murdering anyone who suggested a more moderate policy, or who was prepared to come to terms before ultimate ruin engulfed the city. The Zealots and the assassins were crazed with hatred for the Romans and for anyone who had anything to do with the Romans. It was their insane hatred of Rome which in the end destroyed their city."*

When a Roman army moved in and besieged the city, what they did was cut off all the supplies, so they begin to starve the people out. That is how sieges used to work in the ancient world. That is how you defeated a city.

Just surrounded the city and supplies were cut off, the people began to starve to death. As they began to starve to death, they would come to a negotiating position. When you got them into a position of weakness, this would be like we would call "cold war power," when they knew they were on the edge of total defeat, they would then negotiate truce.

There were people in Jerusalem who wanted to do that to save their lives. The Zealots would not allow it. They killed the Jews who wanted to negotiate and as a result, wound up getting their entire city destroyed and the population massacred.

Josephus writes, *"Zealots, for that was the name those reckless persons went by, as if they were zealous in good practices and were not rather extravagant and reckless in the worst actions."* Here is Josephus even saying their zeal was ill-conceived.

Nothing shows the fanaticism of the Zealots better than the incident in which the last of them finally perished. When Jerusalem fell, some strongholds in the city still held out. The last of them was outside the city in a place called Masada. Herod's summer palace down in the south part of the desert.

*"There a group of Jews commanded by **Eleazar** held out. When it was clear that all hope of escape was gone, Eleazar summoned the Jews together, made a flaming speech in which he urged them first to slaughter their own wives and children, then to commit suicide. They took him at his word. They*



*tenderly embraced their wives," writes Josephus, "kissed their children and then began the bloody work. **Nine hundred and sixty perished.** Only two women and five children escaped by hiding in a cave,"*

They were so zealous they literally killed their families, rather than be taken by the Romans. This is Simon.

Now think about Simon having to hang around Matthew who had sold himself to Rome to extort taxes out of Israel, who was the most hated and despised of all people in that society because he was a Roman tax collector who betrayed his people and aided and abetted the pagan invader.

He would just as soon have stuck his little knife in the heart of Matthew outside this shadow of Christ into which he had wonderfully come.

It is amazing that Jesus would pick a man like this, a terrorist, a man of fierce loyalties, a man of amazing passion and courage and zeal, narrow for sure, enthusiastic to a fault, a man of action, loyal, savage. The Lord chose him.

Matthew and Simon, they joined hearts at Jesus' feet. In the furnace of His love these opposites were welded together. It was a picture and prediction on a small scale of what would come to pass in the greater church, where walls of partition were to be broken down, where national antipathies were to be

crucified and buried with Christ and rise again transfigured into the glory of the uniting faith and charity and where there were to be neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free but Christ all and in all.

Think of Simon in relationship to Judas Iscariot. Judas wanted money. Judas wanted power. Judas wanted the Jewish kingdom. He wanted the Romans out. Simon must have been comfortable hanging around Judas because Judas was a materialist. Judas was looking at the political implications of Jesus' messiahship. He betrayed Jesus in the end because it became clear to him that the thing was not going the way he thought it was supposed to go and his thoughts would have been that it would go in the same place that Simon would have thought originally that it should go, the dispossession of the Romans, the freedom of Israel.

In some ways Simon could have been the betrayer. He was even more passionate about those things than Judas.

But Simon believed the truth. The fiery enthusiasm that he had for Israel was turned to Christ.

Eusebius, the church historian, says he preached in the British Isles, in Egypt and in Africa. Finally, because of his preaching, they cut him in half.

He was willing to die for political aspirations and the love of Judaism, he was even more willing to die for spiritual aspirations and the love of Christ!

## **Judas the son of James.**

Too bad he had that name.

It means "Jehovah leads."

**What a nice name for your child?**

**But you do not keep for your son?**

**Why?**

Because there is one Judas messed it up for everybody.

But this Judas is a good man.

We do not know a lot about this person.

He had three names.

Jerome called him trinominus, the man with three names.

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

He was called Thaddaeus, and "Lebbaeus."

- Thaddaeus,
- Lebbaeus,
- Judas, son of James.

Now the name "Judas" was his name from birth that his parents gave him, "Jehovah leads," wonderful name.

Great thing for Hebrew parents to give to this little Jewish baby.

### **Thaddaeus means?**

Breast child.

The Hebrew root has to do with a female breast nursing.

We would interpret that as "momma's boy."

### **Lebbaeus means?**

Hebrew word that means "heart child."

This is a little, tender heart, momma's boy, hanging around Simon the Zealot.

This has got to be interesting stuff.

A tender-hearted, sympathetic, compassionate, gentle but courageous.

Can the Lord use such a tender person?

Zealots make great preachers and so do tender-hearted, compassionate, gentle, sweet-spirited, and momma's boys.

Do not let that obscurity cloud your respect for them. They became mighty preachers. These men will never make it into the earthly hall of fame, but they lead the parade in heaven. Their humble service is unrecorded by men but it is recorded by God. They are well-known in heaven and in the heavenly record.

We have one incident with this Judas Thaddaeus Lebbaeus. **John 14:19-22**, *“A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. <sup>20</sup>At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup>He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and [I](#) manifest Myself to him.” <sup>22</sup>Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”*

This supports the idea this is a very tender-hearted man. He does not say anything brash or bold or confident.

He does not confront the Lord and rebuke him like Peter. There is just a gentleness and a meekness and a kind of tenderness in the question.

This is the only incident he ever appears in, in the whole of the gospels.

There is a gentleness there. You are the Saviour of the world, the holy One of God. You come down to set your Kingdom up and You are preaching the good news of forgiveness and salvation and this is good news for the world, and we know that. We know that but nobody knows that. So, what's happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?

This is a pious, believing disciple.

This is a man who loves his Lord, and this is a man who feels the power of salvation in his life.

He is full of the hope for the world and typical, tender-hearted, heart- child, momma's-boy kind of way.

Jesus' answer is so marvellous!

**John 14:23-24**, *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. <sup>24</sup> He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.*

Judas question was still sort of in the political realm, sort of in the material realm.

Jesus answered saying that,

- ✓ I am not going to take over the world externally.
- ✓ I am going to take over hearts, one at a time.
- ✓ If anybody loves Me, he will keep My Word.
- ✓ If he keeps My Word, My Father will come to him.
- ✓ Together we will set up the kingdom in his heart.

Verse 24 gives the other side.

We can be everlastingly grateful to Thaddaeus Judas for eliciting the response.

Traditional history that says he became known for healing many people of many diseases in his apostolic ministry and preaching. There is some history that records that he healed a man named **Adgar**, who was a **king of Syria** as he was preaching, healing.

This man who was healed by Judas son of James became such a devout Christian that his apostate nephew captured Judas son of James, Thaddaeus, Lebbaeus, and killed him, martyred him for the gospel.

He may have been a mamma's boy but he had a heart of courage. Do not ever underestimate tender people.

Throughout history there is a symbol identified with him as an apostle. Sometimes when you see in old historical records, Judas son of James, there is a symbol associated with his name

and it is a huge club, like a baseball bat. And the reason is, that was what they used to kill him.

What kind of people does the Lord use?

Just about every kind you can imagine and called these men to the highest calling out of their obscurity.