

The Life and Ministry of Jesus' 12 Disciples

# The Twelve Disciples



Peter



James



John



Andrew



Philip



Bartholomew



Matthew



Thomas



James



Thaddaeus



Simon the Zealot



Judas Iscariot

GENERAL INFORMATION • PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER  
ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS • SCRIPTURE REFERENCES  
KEY LESSONS • STORIES

ROSE  
PUBLISHING

# Who are the Twelve Disciples?

## Their Backgrounds

- The twelve disciples were from the Galilee region except for Judas Iscariot, who was from Judea.
- Their occupations ranged from fisherman to tax collectors and revolutionaries.
- Some were married. (see Mark 1:29-31; 1 Corinthians 9:3-6)
- Some were well-versed in Scripture. (see John 1:46)

## Their Purpose

- After being baptized by John the Baptist and spending 40 days in the wilderness, Jesus started teaching and many people started following him.
- After a night of prayer and meditation, Jesus chose twelve men out of all those who were following him.
- These twelve men would be Jesus' main focus of instruction.
- These disciples were selected to let the world know of God's love, that God sent Jesus to redeem the world. (see John 17:23)

## Their Mission

- These are the twelve men who, for the most part, would prove to be valuable companions to Jesus.
- Their instruction and conversations would become the teachings, knowledge, and instruction for the church that would later grow and spread.
- Jesus knew their personalities, both strong and weak.
- Jesus knew that these men would disappoint him, desert him, deny him, and betray him.
- Jesus knew that these men, once filled with the Holy Spirit, would be the first witnesses of the Gospel, carrying God's message of redemption to Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.
- The twelve tribes of Israel were blessed in order to be a blessing to all nations. In a similar way, these twelve men, along with all disciples of Jesus who follow their lead, were to bless all nations. (see Galatians 3:8) Followers of Christ are commanded to go out and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit.



Peter

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**Other Names**  
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- Simeon bar Jona (Simon, son of Jona)
- Cephas (“rock” or “a stone”)
- Simon Peter
- Simon

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**General Information**  
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- Son of Jona and born in Bethsaida. (John 1:42-44)
- Lived in Capernaum. (Matthew 8:5-14)
- Fisherman. (Matthew 4:18)
- Brother of Andrew. (Matthew 4:18)
- Partner with James and John. (Luke 5:10)
- Married. (Matthew 8:14)
- One of the pillars of the Jerusalem church. (Galatians 2:9)
- Boldly preached, healed, and ministered to Jews and Gentiles after Pentecost. (Acts 2–12)
- Imprisoned by Herod for preaching and rescued by an angel of the Lord. (Acts 12:3-19)
- Wrote 1 and 2 Peter.

**Personality & Character**

- Impulsive (Matthew 14:28), yet cowardly. (Matthew 14:30; 26:69-74)
- Hot tempered (John 18:10), yet tenderhearted. (Matthew 26:75)
- Insightful (Matthew 16:16), yet dense. (Matthew 16:21-23)
- Courageous and solid after Pentecost. (Acts 5:27-30)

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**Encounters with Jesus**  
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- Was called to be a fisher of men. (Matthew 4:19) Left everything to follow Jesus. (Luke 5:11)
- One of the three disciples in the core group of disciples. (Mark 5:37; 9:2; 13:3; 14:33)
- Simon said Jesus is the Christ, Son of the living God. Jesus names him Peter (rock) and said, “Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:16-19)
- Was reprimanded because he refused to accept that Jesus had to die. (Matthew 16:23)
- Witnessed Jesus’ Transfiguration (where Jesus’ divinity was revealed). (Mark 9:2-8)
- Was sent to prepare the upper room for the Last Supper. (Luke 22:8)
- Jesus predicted that Peter would deny knowing him three times. (Luke 22:31-34)
- Was with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Matthew 26:36-46)
- Jesus instructed Peter after his resurrection. (John 21:15-19)

**Key Lesson**

God can forgive sins and strengthen the faith of those who love him.

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**Stories**  
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Papias (second-century Christian) recorded that Mark served as Peter’s scribe and wrote the Gospel of Mark based on Peter’s testimony.  
According to some stories, Peter asked to be crucified upside down.  
Peter may have been crucified during the reign of Nero in Rome.  
Symbols for Peter are sometimes keys, representing the keys to the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 16:19)



James, son of Zebedee

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**Other Names**  
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- Son of Zebedee
- Boanerges (Son of Thunder)
- “James the Elder”
- “James the Great”

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**General Information**  
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- Son of Zebedee. (Matthew 4:21)
- Son of Salome. (Matthew 27:56; Mark 16:1)
- Fisherman with his father and his brother. (Matthew 4:18-22)
- Brother of John. (Matthew 4:21)
- Partner with Peter. (Luke 5:10)
- One of the pillars of the Jerusalem church. (Galatians 2:9)
- Put to death by the sword by Herod Agrippa I. The only one of the twelve disciples who died for his faith that was recorded in Scripture. (Acts 12:2)

**Personality & Character**

- Vengeful and fiery. (Luke 9:54)
- Selfish and conceited. (Mark 10:35-37)
- Committed to Christ and courageous to the end. (Acts 12:2)

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**Encounters with Jesus**  
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- Was called to be a fisher of men. (Matthew 4:19) Left everything to follow Jesus. (Luke 5:11)
- One of the three disciples in the core group of disciples. (Mark 5:37; 9:2; 13:3; 14:33)
- Jesus named him and John “Sons of Thunder.” (Mark 3:17)
- Was rebuked with his brother John for requesting God to rain fire on a Samaritan village. (Luke 9:54, 55)
- Witnessed Jesus’ Transfiguration (where Jesus’ divinity was revealed). (Mark 9:2-8)
- Jesus responded to James’s and John’s request to sit at his right and left in the Kingdom. (Mark 10:35-43)
- Was with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Matthew 26:36-46)
- Witnessed the miraculous catch of fish on the Sea of Galilee after Jesus’ resurrection. (John 21:2-7)

**Key Lesson**

Stand firm in the face of persecution.

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**Stories**  
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Some claim he was the first bishop in Spain.  
Symbols of James sometimes include the bishop’s hat and the sword, which is in reference to his martyrdom.