

PETER



The Search for the
TWELVE APOSTLES

McBirnie Ph.D.

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CHAPTER III : PETER

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Preface and Introduction

The High Adventure of Some Kinds of Research

(A Preface)

In seeking the information contained in this book, my search for the stories of the Twelve Apostles took me to many famous libraries such as those in Jerusalem, Rome, and that of the British Museum in London. For years I have borrowed or purchased every book I could find on the subject of the Twelve Apostles. A five-foot shelf cannot hold them all.

Three times I have journeyed to the island of Patmos and to the locations of the Seven Churches of the Book of the Revelation. One whole (and fruitless) day was given to a backroads journey into the high, snowy mountains of Lebanon, up among the famous Cedars and elsewhere, to check out a rumor that St. Jude had originally been buried in some small Lebanese village nearby. He was not.

I have personally viewed the many sepulchres which reputedly contain the bones of the Twelve; not that I consider them as having spiritual value, but because I wanted to learn, as an historian, how they came to be where they are, hoping that local tradition could be found in the places where the bones are interred that had escaped the history books. This search took me from Trier, Germany, to Rome, Greece, and to almost every Middle Eastern country.

The Vatican very graciously granted me special permission to photograph in all the churches in Rome and elsewhere in Italy. Some of the bodies or fragments of the bodies of the Apostles are preserved in that historic land.

Particularly memorable was the awesome descent far beneath St. Peter's Basilica to photograph the bones of the Apostle Peter where they rest in an ancient Roman pagan cemetery. One simply cannot imagine, without seeing it, so vast and heavy a church building as St. Peter's sitting squarely over a cemetery filled with beautifully preserved family tombs dating back to the first

century before Christ!

Seven times I went to Petra in Jordan, and three times to Antioch in Turkey. I also visited Babylon and made four journeys to Iran in search of the history of the Apostles' missions there. Of course, there were some disappointments. For example, the body of St. John is today nowhere to be found. I entered his tomb in Ephesus long ago. Recently after many centuries of neglect, the authorities have sealed it and covered it with a marble floor. Though St. John's body has disappeared some parts of the bones of all the other Apostles are believed to exist, and I have seen them.

Travelers to the "Bible Lands" so often pass within a few yards of genuine relics of the Apostles and never know it. I had made twenty-six journeys to Jerusalem before learning that the head of St. James the Elder, several arm bones of James the just, and part of the skull of John the Baptist are held in veneration in two churches there! And, I might add, with some strong historical records as to their authenticity.

This is not, however, a book about bones! It is about living people who were described by St. Paul as the Founders of the churches (See Ephesians 2:19, 20). We are interested in Apostolic bones because they are possible clues as to the whereabouts of the ministry and places of martyrdom of the Twelve.

Now let me face head-on a typically Protestant attitude of skepticism concerning Apostolic remains in churches and shrines. I used to suppose that these so called "relics" were pious frauds, the result of the fervid and superstitious piety of the Middle Ages. Perhaps some are, but after one approaches the whole question with a skeptical mind, and then, somewhat reluctantly, is forced to admit the strong possibility of their genuineness, it is an unnerving but moving experience.

I suppose the practice of venerating Apostolic bones is repugnant to one who, as an evangelical Christian, sees no heavenly merit in praying before the sarcophagi in which they rest. Besides, it does no good to a literal mind to see the gaudy and tasteless trappings with which the shrines are usually festooned.

But the more one reads of the history of the Apostles, and what became of their relics, and the more steeped one becomes in the history and strange (to us) behavior of our Christian ancestors in the Ante-Nicene and Post-Nicene

eras, the more the careful preservation of Apostolic relics seems to be perfectly in character. To many of those who lived in those times who could not read, an Apostolic relic was a visual encouragement to faith!

Let it be clearly understood, this book is an adventure in scholarship, not dogmatism. I am keenly aware that absolute proof of every detail recorded here is not possible. But when a researcher checks many sources against each other, when he visits the places mentioned for himself, and when he finds many new documents which are not in books, or not commonly found, then he develops a "feel" for the probable or possible.

This book has been an ever growing labor of love. I became more emotionally committed to the task as the years progressed. On several occasions during the laborious research, arduous journeys, and interminable writing and rewriting, I have had occasion to compare notes with scholars who have written about some of the Apostles, and have found not only a gracious willingness to discuss my conclusions but to accept some of them instead of those they had hitherto held.

How does one express an adequate word of appreciation to the many who were so kind in their cooperation, without whom this study could not have been completed? My secretary, Mrs. Fred Pitzer, made this project her own and has saved it from worse faults than those it still may have. My students at the California Graduate School of Theology in Glendale have assisted, and quotations from their research appear often. The same is true of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Schonborn, and of Dr. Miriam Lamb, who is head of research for our Center for American Studies. Mrs. Florence Stonebraker, Betty Davids and Richard Chase assisted, with Italian translations by Mrs. Marie Placido.

In Jerusalem the libraries of the American School of Oriental Research, the Coptic Church, the Patriarchate of the Armenians (Church of St. James), the Ecole Biblique of the Dominicans, were most helpful in opening their archives for research. In Rome the full cooperation of Monsignor Falani opened many otherwise closed doors. How kind they all were, and many others as well!

Naturally, any errors are not theirs, but mine. Hopefully, if there are any egregious mistakes, some kind correspondent will write to me so that any future editions may be corrected. A final word about the style of this book: At first I thought to write it for scholars, tearing apart the documentation of every

source quoted. But that makes for so dull a book that I was afraid few would read it. I found to my dismay that most "critical" scholars could hardly care less about the post-Biblical story of the Apostles.

Then, I thought to write it as a narrative with few quotations and little attention to my sources. But in that case scholars would ignore the book as having no proper foundation and being without concern for critical and historical problems. As the Senior Minister of a busy church, I considered writing for pastors. These ministers might appreciate a homiletical boost for a series of sermons on the Apostles that might attract the people we are all trying to persuade to attend the church. I have not abandoned this approach altogether, but I did not do much sermonizing in this book.

It even occurred to me that the historical novel might also provide a viable format. But I tend to think as a historian and as a preacher, I lack the imagination to write a novel. Besides, what this book has to offer is analysis, fact and hopefully, truth.

So the book is in the form of an interpretation or critical analysis of every bit of knowledge I can find on the subject of the Twelve Apostles. Mostly I wrote it to become more familiar myself with the Apostles and to share that knowledge, and some conclusions drawn from it, with as many people as I can; scholars, church members, young people, historians, ministers, and all those who feel as I do, that we need to find ways to make the Apostolic age become more alive for us today.

I earnestly hope the reader will find it as interesting and enlightening to read as I found it to write.

William STEUART McBirnie

Introduction

What follows in this book is that which can be known from an exhaustive and critical study of the Biblical, historical and traditional records of the Apostles. The author has tried to reduce the legendary to the probable or likely, justifying it with the known historical facts concerning the state of the world in the first century and the documents of subsequent church history, local history, and relevant secular writings.

There is a great deal more information about the Apostles available than the casual student might guess. Ten years ago this writer produced a monograph called *What Became of the Twelve Apostles?* Ten thousand copies were distributed. In that publication I made the following observations:

"Someday a critical scholar needs to take a good look at the mass of legend which has come to us from early medieval times, and even from the last days of Roman power. He needs to try to separate the historical germ from the great over-growth of pure fantasy which one finds in those stories. In a word, a higher criticism of medieval legends needs to be made, and that criticism needs to be carried over into early church history. "I find myself disappointed in the writings of recent church historians who seem to pass over the era of the early church and say only what has been said in a hundred other books on church history written during the past four centuries. It has been so long since I have seen a new fact in a book of church history about the Apostolic Age and the Age of the Church Fathers, that I would be mightily surprised if I saw one! But perhaps someday someone will find the probable basis of truth amidst the legendary; and upon this, with perhaps the discovery of new manuscripts, we shall be able to piece together a better history than we now possess."

Since no one else seems to have done the work of producing a critical study of the Twelve, it has become a challenge to me to do so, for the sake of a renewed interest in the Apostolic church to which I hope this study can contribute.

The source of our material in that earlier publication was mostly that obtainable by anyone who would take the trouble to look into the standard books on the subject, such as church histories, sermonic literature, encyclopedias, etc., plus the observations of a few journeys to Rome, Athens and the Holy Land.

But that book was frustratingly limited and incomplete, not to mention its obvious lack of original research. Recently, the writer completed his twenty-seventh journey to the Middle East. Ten years of further study and research have revealed much light on the lives of the Twelve Apostles. Most of these insights have come in very small packages, a bit here, a bit there. Ten years ago I had not even considered writing a subsequent book to the former monograph, but the importance and volume of the material since gleaned from the many personal visits to the places of the ministries and deaths of the Apostles, plus their burial sites or tombs, has increased the conviction that this enlarged study must be offered.

Here for the first time in any one volume the preponderance of information concerning the histories of the Apostles is now assembled.

No scholar would dare suggest that anything he has written is the last word on any subject, nor indeed that his writings are the complete story. Yet these ideals have been the goals toward which we have moved.

INSIGHTS INTO THE APOSTOLIC AGE

There are several insights which the reader should have firmly and constantly in mind as the following chapters unfold. The early Christians did not write history as such.

(1) Interest in the Apostles has waxed and waned in various periods of Christian history. For that reason at certain times more information has been available than at others. New discoveries of historical information are made, then lie dormant in out of print books until a reawakening of interest at a later time brings them to light.

At first, in the Apostolic Age, the Apostles themselves and their converts were too busy making history to bother writing it. Hence, their records are fragmentary. Further, until the Ante-Nicene Fathers, history as such was not written at all. Even The Acts by St.Luke was not a general history but a polemic written to show the emergence of a Gentile Christian movement from

its Jewish matrix, with divine authority and approval. Surely St. Luke wanted to defend and validate the ministry of St. Paul, his mentor. His themes, the Acts of the Holy Spirit, the inclusion in God's redemption of the Gentiles, the gradually diminishing role of Jews in the churches, the universality of Christianity, were all the concerns of Luke. It probably did not occur to him that he was writing the prime source of church history. Hence, to a historian of the early church, Luke is both the welcome source of his main knowledge and of his despair at its fragmentary nature.

There were periods of silence in early Christian history.

(2) After Luke and the other Biblical writers (such as St. Paul who left us a considerable knowledge of early Apostolic activities) there is for a time, silence. It is as if the Christian movement were in a tunnel, active, but out of sight for a period.

This is not as strange as it may seem. First, the early Christians did not really have a sense of building a movement for the ages. To them the Return of Christ might well be expected during their generation. They certainly spoke of it often, so they must have looked for the Return of Christ daily - at first.

To see this, study carefully the difference in tone between First and Second Thessalonians. In his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul seemed to dwell at great length upon the imminence of the Second Coming. In the Second Epistle he rebukes those who are over-eager by reminding big readers of certain events which must precede or accompany the Second Coming.

It was as if he had looked again at the enormous task of world evangelism and had seen that it would take more than one generation. It was not that St. Paul lost his faith in the Second Coming, but that he balanced his faith with practicality. In any case, the early Christian movement was in a tunnel and out of sight as far as the recording of history is concerned. They were doing not writing.

The Apostles were not considered prime subjects for biography by the early Christians.

(3) The Twelve Apostles were important in the thinking of the early Christians, but were not considered to be more than leaders, brothers and dearly beloved friends at first. We look upon them as the founders of

churches. It took some time for their spiritual descendents to see them as the Fathers of the whole church movement. Their authority at first was in the anointing of the Holy Spirit, not in ex cathedra pronouncements on doctrine.

True, the first council of Apostles in Jerusalem gave authoritarian pronouncements concerning the admittance of the Gentile converts into the Christian movement. Yet this did not seem to have the ecclesiastical authority then that we attach to it now. We could, in fact, wish there had been more such pronouncements; say, concerning heresy, forms of church government, social matters, etc. But there was nothing much that came collectively from the Apostles. They simply proclaimed individually what they had heard from Jesus Christ.

As they went forth into various parts of the world they carried, no doubt, the authority of their Apostolate, but they were not the church. They founded congregations which were churches. Ecclesiasticism in the highly organized and authoritarian forms it later took was almost unknown to them. The Apostles were evangelists and pastors, not ecclesiastics. Their histories, then, are the histories of evangelists, not of prelates. History does not deal as much with evangelists as with rulers. Hence, we have little knowledge about their careers before or subsequent to the dispersion of the Jerusalem Church in A.D.69, and by this time most of them had left Jerusalem to go on their various missions and many had died.

Secular history largely ignored Christianity in the early centuries.

(4) Almost all history in the first few centuries of the Christian era which has survived is secular, military or political. Josephus did not pay much attention to Christianity though he mentions the death of St. James. Roman history, except for the writings of Pliny the Younger, hardly notices Christianity until long after the Apostolic Age. It remains for churchmen such as Hegesippus and Eusebius to give us further details of the travels and history of the Twelve.

The early Christians were humble folk, with some exceptions. Who writes a history of the meek? Therefore we are left with little information about Christianity in general secular history, except for valuable insights as to the world in which the Apostles lived. The average reader, however, would be amazed at how very much knowledge we do have on that portion of the human story. Roman history is already well known and more knowledge is

daily pouring in from the archeologists who dig into the artifacts of that great epic.

To the avid student of Roman affairs the world of the Apostles is as familiar as the world of a hundred years ago. This does not itself tell us about the actual story of each Apostle but it certainly tells us what was possible or even likely, as well as what was unlikely or impossible.

The Roman world was, during the Apostolic Age, a relatively safe world in which its citizens traveled widely and often. Read in the book of Romans, written by Paul in Corinth, the many names of people whom he knew in Rome, a city which at that time he had not visited. Read the travels of Cicero, sixty years before Christ. Recall the Roman invasions of Britain by Caesar, five decades before the birth of Jesus, and of Claudius in A.D.42.

The Roman Empire was a family of nations with a common language under the protection of one government, with roads leading everywhere, from Britain to Africa, from what is now Russia to France, from India to Spain. St.Paul himself, in the book of Romans, expressed a desire to evangelize Spain which had been conquered by Rome long before Caesar took it over in 44 B.C.

In the era of the Apostles there was a wide area of civilization awaiting them, civilized, united, and tied together by transportation and tongue. On that vast stage, and beyond it, we can easily visualize the farflung Apostolic labors. But Roman historians pretty well ignored Christianity in its early days. The "Search for the Twelve" was at first political or ecclesiastical.

(5) Long after the Apostolic Age there arose a conflict between the Greek and Roman divisions of Christianity as to what they called "Primacy". The Pope claimed it and so did the leader of the Eastern churches. An issue, for example, was one of Christian art. One group, the Romans, used images in the round as the objects of religious veneration. The Eastern Greeks preferred ikons; images-on-the-flat. There were other differences, including the removal of the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to Byzantium, but mainly it was a political power struggle which led to the great schism that divided eastern and western Christianity, as the Roman Empire itself was divided.

At this time, and even before, as the schism was building, both sides sought Apostolic identification with their own religious institutions.

So a great search was made for the relics of the Apostles. Emperor Constantine wanted to construct what he called, "The Church of the Twelve Apostles" in Constantinople. In this structure he intended to house the remains (such as bones or parts of bodies) of the Apostles. He succeeded in securing the remains of St.Andrew, and also St.Luke and St.Timothy. (The latter two, while not of the Twelve, were close to them.) Apparently Constantine felt he must leave the bones of St.Paul and St.Peter in Rome though he may have had designs on the bones of St.Peter."

He gladly built a basilica to honor the bones of St.Paul in Rome. But, one may speculate, the Roman church was also reluctant to part with the bones of St.Peter. Constantine apparently did not press the matter, but he built a church over St.Peter's resting place, hoping perhaps to later move his body to Constantinople. In any case, he did not live long enough to collect all the relics of the Apostles for his Church of the Twelve Apostles. That church building remained

(Constantine celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of his accession in the summer of 335. Probably the most significant ceremonies at Rome that year were those accompanying the solemn translation of the bones venerated as relics of the Apostles St Peter and St.Paul from the catacombs of St.Sebastian, where they had been venerated since 258, to the basilicas built to honour them at the traditional sites of their martyrdoms, at the Vatican and on the Ostian Way." (Constantine The Great, John Holland Smith, p 288; also cf. *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, vol. 1, pp.172ff.)

unfurnished except for his own tomb. (Some evidence exists that he sought to place the Apostles' bodies around him in twelve niches while his own body would be in the midst as "The 13th Apostle"!.) Eusebius tells the story in "The Last Days of Constantine."

"All these edifices the emperor consecrated with the desire of perpetuating the memory of the Apostles of our Saviour before all men. He had, however, another object in erecting this building (i.e., the Church of the Apostles at Constantinople): an object at first unknown, but which afterwards became evident to all. He had, in fact, made a choice of this spot in the prospect of his own death, anticipating with extraordinary fervour of faith that his body would share their title with the Apostles themselves, and that he should thus even after death become the subject, with them, of the devotions which should be performed to their honour in this place, and for this reason he bade men assemble for worship there at the altar which he placed in the midst. He

accordingly caused twelve coffins to be set up in this church, like sacred pillars in honour and memory of the apostolic band, in the centre of which his own was placed, having six of theirs on either side of it. Thus, as I said, he had provided with prudent foresight an honourable resting-place for his body after death, and, having long before secretly formed this resolution, he now consecrated this church to the Apostles, believing that this tribute to their memory would be of no small advantage to his own soul. Nor did God disappoint him of that which he so ardently expected and desired." (A New Eusebius, J. Stevenson, p. 395)

"Planning the Church of the Apostles, Constantine had dreamed of resting there forever in the midst of the Twelve, not merely one of them, but a symbol of, if not a substitute for, their Leader. During the months of the church's construction, his agents had been busy in Palestine collecting alleged relics of the apostles and their companions, to be laid up in the church with his body, awaiting the general resurrection." (Constantine the Great, John Holland Smith, pp. 301-302).

"At Easter in A.D.337 the emperor dedicated the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, but soon thereafter he was overcome by a fatal ailment. He visited the baths at Helenopolis in vain, and then proceeded to confess his sins in the Church of the Martyrs. At Ancyrona near Nicomedia, he prepared his will, leaving the empire to his three sons, and in the presence of a group of local bishops he was baptized by the bishop with whom he had fought so often, Eusebius of Nicomedia. To this prelate was entrusted the will, with instructions to deliver it to Constantius, Caesar of the east. Wearing the white robe of a neophyte, Constantine died on Pentecost, May 22.

"... Upon Constantius's arrival the coffin was carried to the Church of the Holy Apostles and placed among the sarcophagi dedicated to the Twelve. In the presence of a vast throng the bishops conducted an elaborate funeral with a requiem eucharist.

... His body rested, however, not in any Flavian mausoleum or with any of the great pagan emperors before him but, by his own choice, among the memorials of the twelve apostles." (Augustus to Constantine, Robert M. Grant, p.277).

The project was started but not completed. However, an official search was made for the locations of the bodies of the Apostles, and this official search was possibly the precipitating cause for the inventory which was made for the Apostolic remains or relics.

After this time there arose the practice of the veneration of relics. The superstitious awe which these relics evoked was carried to extremes. The bodies of the Apostles, the bodies of other "saints", and the various holy relics such as fragments of "the true cross" came into great demand. Healings were claimed by merely touching or kissing these relics and naturally they came to be considered of great value by both the churches and governments of the Middle Ages.

As for a knowledge of the lives of the Apostles, this search for relics both helped and harmed a true history. The major relics, including the bodies or portions of bodies of the Apostles, give us some hints of the places of the death and burial and hence by tradition or association, the locale of their ministries. We perhaps have successfully traced the history of some of these Apostolic remains or relics in the following chapters, up to their locations today.

On the other hand we must recognize that some of these Apostolic relics may not be genuine, since wishful thinking or simple mistakes may have led the devout of other, less critical ages than ours, to go astray. This was especially so since there was great church prestige, political preferment, and often much money involved in securing what were believed to be genuine Apostolic relics.

Partisans in the great church schism between the east and west undoubtedly sought to associate their possession of Apostolic relics as proof of the blessing of the Apostles and God upon them, as witness the fact that they had the original and often miracle-working relics in their exclusive possession. Fortunately that competition has ebbed with the centuries. In quite recent times Pope Paul VI has returned to Greece the head of St. Andrew, to be housed in a new church in the place of his martyrdom in Patras, Greece, under the care of the Greek Orthodox Church. This was a highly conciliatory gesture on the part of the Pope since St. Andrew, having been martyred in Greece, is meaningful to the Greek Orthodox Church. It reduces by one the Apostolic relics in Rome, but increases the chances of unity between Rome and Athens very markedly, for whatever that may prove to be worth to those involved.

If one can cut through the maze of the history of relics and trace the presence of fact back to the genuine tradition of Apostolic associations in the places of their original martyrdoms and burials, then there is great hope that this may open up the way to confirm or even discover more light on the

histories of Apostolic labors. This we have here attempted to do where possible. Admittedly this task and its results are open to scholarly criticism and interpretation.

The motivations of the Apostles are now more clearly understood.

(6) One great truth about the Apostles is unassailable. It has been strengthened by every bit of tradition and history we have studied. That is, most of the Apostles took seriously the great commission of Jesus (as recorded in Matthew 28) and went forth to "Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world" to evangelize the nations with the Christian gospel. The story of the Apostles is thus mainly the story of evangelism in the early church. They set an example for all subsequent Christians that is clear, unmistakable and unswerving. They challenged commoners and kings alike. They did not become salaried ecclesiastics but often worked with their hands to support themselves, so that by any and all means they might share the good news in Jesus. Most, like St. Paul, sought to preach Christ, "not building upon other men's foundations, but going to the regions beyond."

There was an Apostolic strategy of missions.

(7) The lives of the Apostles, especially that of St. Paul, reveal an unusual and brilliant concept of missionary strategy. They always went first to the great cities located on the trade routes. From these centers their disciples and converts then traveled out to the towns beyond and there established churches which in turn established still others. The Apostles knew the secret of strategic locations and of delegating responsibility to others, thus multiplying themselves more rapidly than is the case in many modern missionary enterprises.

THE APOSTLES WERE CHURCHMEN

Above all, they founded congregations. Some modern day evangelism is so apart from the churches that the churches must feed the evangelistic effort, rather than for the evangelistic effort to build the converts firmly into the churches or to give impetus to new churches. This was never the Apostolic principle, which is why Apostolic evangelism lasted and some modern "populist" evangelism soon passes away.

The Apostles enjoined upon their converts the responsibility to become the church. Surely this is one lesson that needs to be re-learned today. It was St.

Paul who wrote, Jesus loved the church and gave himself for it (Ephesians 5:25).

WHY THE TWELVE?

The Apostles of Jesus Christ are heroes whose portraits, as Christians have come to know them, are "larger than life." The Roman and Greek Catholic bestowal of the title, "Saint", upon each of the Twelve (and thereafter upon a flood of others) was partly responsible for making them into demigods. But long before the time the New Testament was collected into one volume (the Canon) the figures of the Twelve had assumed commanding respect. John, in The Revelation of Jesus Christ, speaks of the New Jerusalem which is to have the names of the Twelve inscribed in its foundations. (Incidentally, that inclusion settles the issue of whether Matthias was, after the defection of Judas Iscariot, truly considered by the other Apostles as one of the Twelve.)

Why did Jesus choose only twelve chief Apostles? Obviously to correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel. He, Himself, as the new and eternal high priest, would stand for the priestly thirteenth tribe, Levi. The function of the Apostles was to bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus and of His teachings. For this reason, as the election of Matthias to replace Judas confirms, an Apostle had to have been long with Jesus and a witness to his teachings.

Paul stoutly maintained that he also was an Apostle, since his conversion, call, and instruction came directly from Jesus, and the signs of an Apostle were his in abundance. Yet there is no evidence that he was ever admitted to that inner circle of the original Twelve. Some of the original Twelve probably never did fully trust him, and even Peter confessed that he did not always understand "our beloved brother, Paul" (2 Peter 3:15).

THE BOOK OF ACTS AND THE TWELVE

In a most important sense, the book of The Acts of the Apostles, the earliest Christian book of history, is the story of how Christianity, at first a sect within Judaism, was opened to the Gentiles, and how in a short time it became mainly a faith of the Gentiles. From start to finish, The Acts shows Christianity as a minority movement among the Jews, soon rejected by most Jews, becoming Gentilized as the illustrious Paul became the European leader of the Christian movement. Peter remained for a time as the most prominent

Jewish-Christian leader, but Christianity after the first century gradually died down among the Jews.

The Acts carefully records how Peter, obviously at first against his will, became a grudging Apostle to some Gentiles, yet all the while endeavoring to keep Christianity as Jewish as possible. The plan of the book of The Acts is as logically and carefully laid out as a lawyer's brief. It proves conclusively that Christianity was intended to, and slid, lose its exclusively Jewish character. It was to be much more than a sect or another party within Judaism, such as were the Pharisees, Sadducees, or Essenes.

Those who expect The Acts to be the complete early history of Christianity are doomed to disappointment. It is that only incidentally and in a fragmentary way.

Its main argument is that God, Himself, tore Christianity loose from its Jewish foundations and made it universal. To do this He used Peter at first, then Paul. The other Apostles played only incidental roles in the story of The Acts, since it is not a history of the Apostles but a history of the emergence of Gentile Christianity.

As valuable and as liberating as this emphasis is, the Bible student is soon, and perhaps unconsciously, caught up in the personal ministry of Paul. Peter, though prominent at first, is later ignored, as The Acts unfolds for the reader the story of Paul and his friends, Timothy, Luke, Barnabas, Silas and others.

The Acts, having shown Peter and the rest of the Twelve as having launched the Christian movement, and as having blessed the admission of believing Gentiles into the churches, then portrays again and again the fact that only some Jews around the Roman world accepted Christ. As others rejected Christ, in each instance Paul is shown as turning to the Gentiles who seemed much more willing to receive the gospel than the majority of the Jews.

This historical insight is necessary to know if we are to understand why we have a great deal of information about John and Peter, and even more about Paul, but know really very little of the other Apostles.

Roman and Greek Christianity early became dominant over Judaistic Christianity. Western Christians of the Roman Empire, treasured and preserved the writings of these three Apostles who worked among the Gentiles. The other Apostles did not write much, with the exception of

Matthew. But Matthew's personality does not come through clearly in his gospel. The writings, if any, of the remainder of the Twelve are lost.

Mark was the helper and writer for Peter, but Mark was not considered an Apostle but an Apostolic assistant, as were Timothy, Titus, Epaphroditus, Luke, Barnabas, Silas, Acquilla, Priscilla and Erastus. Luke wrote about Paul in The Acts, and about the Apostles and Jesus in his gospel. But Luke was not himself an original Apostle. Hence, the New Testament as we have it is the product of Matthew, an Apostle, Peter, an Apostle, John, an Apostle, and Paul, an Apostle. Other New Testament authors such as Mark and Luke, were not Apostles, but assistants, and Jude and James were not of the original followers of Jesus, but brothers of the Lord, who did not believe until after the Resurrection of Christ.

As for the history of the Apostles after the first few years in Jerusalem, except for brief references to them in The Acts, we must look into the Epistles, the book of The Revelation of Jesus Christ, the histories and traditions or legends of the early, post-Apostolic Christian writers, and to the local traditions of the Christian movement in the places where the Apostles labored or died. It is this latter research than has had the least historic treatment and which we will attempt to explore, along with those early Christian traditions and Scriptural accounts which are fairly well (but not universally) known.

LEGEND, MYTH AND TRADITION

The word legend is today in better standing than it was a short time ago. 'Legendary' has often been a word of ill repute for it has meant "mythical" to most people. The word "tradition" stands far higher in the estimation of historians. Scholars today, thanks to literary criticism, historical research, and archeological observations, have more confidence in the existence of a residue of fact amongst the legends and traditions about well-known historical or Biblical figures. Blown up and fanciful they may be, but legends and traditions are often the enlargements of reality, and traditions may not be exaggerations at all, but actual fact. We have attempted to squeeze some of the water out of those legends which exist about the Apostles and find the elements of the reasonable and possible which are in traditions. Dogmatism is impossible in our subject, but surely a fuller knowledge of the lives of all the Apostles can now be acquired than has hitherto been generally known.

THE RELEVANCE TODAY

But why should the Christian reader, or the reading public, be interested in the histories of the first Apostles of Jesus Christ?

For one thing, any increase of knowledge about the Apostles will greatly illumine the power-filled early days of Christianity, and perhaps help to recover the secret of the primitive dynamic of the early Christians.

Christians today know, or can know, more about many things than any other generation of believers. Archeology is a relatively modem science. Textual criticism has secured a clearer Biblical text than was ever available before. Yet, unfortunately, much of the power and spirit of New Testament era Christianity is obviously missing in today's churches.

The general public needs to see afresh the dedication of the earliest Christian leaders, and to feel the modern relevance of their timeless methods and ideals. Christianity needs a self-renewal, as do all institutions. From where will this renewal come? That dynamic momentum which early Christians bequeathed, and which has still not entirely run down, was surely, in part, the personal and direct heritage of the Twelve Apostles and their Christian contemporaries.

The least that a study of this kind should contribute to all Christians is to direct our attention back to the days of a purer, unencrusted, tradition-free Christianity. There is much about the lives of the Twelve Apostles that can speak to us existentially today. Indeed, to discover what the Apostles did, or what it is claimed that they did, is to rediscover their motivation and the life-strategy which they followed.

HOW THIS STUDY BEGAN

In a sense this book has taken thirty years of comprehensive and intensive study to write. In 1944 the author finished a Bachelor of Divinity at Bethel Theological Seminary, St.Paul, Minnesota, with a major in church history which included over sixty semester credit-hours and a thesis on the same subject. In 1952 the author submitted another dissertation on the same subject and was graduated with a Doctorate in Religious Education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Since that time, he has read continually in the subject of ecclesiastical history and has traveled repeatedly to Europe (39 times) and the Middle East (27 journeys) in search of Biblical and ecclesiastical information. This rich

experience has been a labor of love and has been highly rewarding in terms of the discovery of new facts and fresh insights. It is a false supposition that all useful historic knowledge is to be found only in books, though many hundreds have been read by this writer about the Twelve Apostles. There is much additional information about them to be gleaned only by travel to places the Apostles once knew, and by conversation with people who now live there, who know of traditions not widely found in the books which are readily available to scholars. No one book, to my knowledge, has ever been written that includes all known facts about the Apostles until now.

For example: in October, 1971, the writer was an official guest in Iran for the celebration of the 2,500 year memorial to Cyrus the Great. Upon this occasion the opportunity arose to interview the leaders of several of the very ancient Christian movements of Iran who trace their spiritual descent back to the visits to Persia in the first century of at least five of the Apostles of Jesus! Not only was new information obtained, but a wider understanding of the Eastern thrust of early Christianity beyond the borders of the Roman world about which we Christians of the Western tradition know very little. This has been our great loss. The following observations are an illustration of an area of Christian history about which few American Christians know:

"...Iran had known Christianity from the earliest times of Apostolic preaching. When Christianity was first preached in this part of the world, that is to say, beyond the frontiers of East Roman Empire, namely in the easternmost regions of Asia Minor, north-eastern regions of Ancient Syria and Mesopotamia, the Apostles and their immediate successors did not know any boundary between East Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia and Persia. In fact, the peoples of these countries lived in such a state of close association that the first Christians all belonged to the same stream of evangelization, they shared the same Christian traditions handed down to them by the first Apostles and their disciples.

"Thus, beginning from the first century, the Christian faith had been preached in Edessa, in the kingdom of Osrohene. It penetrated also Armenia and Persia in the same century. As Tournebize has said: 'From Osrohene the faith undoubtedly had shown forth quite early to the East; between Edessa and Armenia the distance was not big.' Long before Bar Hebraus, the alliances and frequent interpenetrations between Parthians, Persians, Edessenians and Armenians had justified the following remark of the famous monophysite patriarch: Parthians or Persians, Parthians or Edessenians, Parthians or

Armenians, all are one." (The Armenian Christian Tradition in Iran, A Lecture, Interchurch Centenary Committee, p.1).

Later, in November of 1971, the writer led a group of people from all over America on a historic journey which was entitled, "The Search For the Twelve Apostles." On this expedition, through Europe and the Middle East, many more of the recorded facts in this book emerged. It can possibly be said that no other group in modern or ancient times has hitherto made so comprehensive a study into the lives and burial places of the Apostles in the actual locations indicated by history or tradition as have been associated with the Apostles.

Possibly there is yet more light to be thrown on the subject of the Twelve Apostles. One thinks, for instance, of the vast archives of ancient and as yet untranslated documents in the Greek Orthodox monasteries, or the Vatican Library in Rome. We do not pretend to the scholarship, linguistic ability, or the sheer time which would be necessary to dig for the needles in these huge haystacks. We must await the happy day when others more able will accomplish these tasks.

But within the limits of present scholarship, original research, and the critical examination of history and traditions, we have, we hope, amassed all that is known, or which reasonably can now be learned about the Apostles. We can anticipate with joy that further scholarship which will add to the body of information here presented.

CHAPTER ONE

The World of the Apostles

A STRONG TIDE of optimism had begun to well up throughout the vast reaches of the Roman Empire as the year 30 A.D. dawned. Tiberius Caesar in his palace on Capri did not know it, but a new force was being born that would one day inherit the empire.

[Rome was inherited by the force of the false Christianity that would rise to power after the first century - Editor]

Under the iron grip of Augustus, the successor to Julius Caesar, peace, even if the oppressive peace of a total conquest, had come to be an accepted way of life for the people of the Roman Empire.

The "Pax Romana"

There were spots of local rebellion which grew hot from time to time, but there was absolutely no doubt that Rome was the saddle that was securely trapped on to Europe, North Africa and Asia Minor. Augustus and his successor, Tiberius, sat long and firmly in that saddle. Any client king who doubted it, or rebellious province which had the temerity to challenge Caesar, soon found out with bloodshed, just who rode the world. Further, no one doubted that these affairs would continue, as indeed the future state of the empire of the next three hundred years confirmed. The prolongation of the Pax Romana brought prosperity, trade, education, cultural and language homogeneity, and safe travel; an ideal preparation for Christian apostles and missionaries.

[Yes, ideal for a short time, per se. But enough time for the 12 apostles to reach the bulk of Israelites scattered and those Israelites in Britain - Commentary]

There was one perpetually troublesome exception to the Pax Romana, the land of Judea. There the Roman legions, as occupation troops, constantly had to be on guard against an implacably hostile population. The Herodian monarchs had ruled since the days of the first Caesar only by the imposed power of Rome. They all understood, if their people did not, that Rome was there to stay and that the Pax Romana was undoubtedly the best of all realistically possible conditions. The various Herods, one after another, had sailed to Rome to visit the dazzling center of power. There they saw the larger picture of the empire and could more easily fit Judea into its small place. But the people they ruled in Rome's name were provincial in the extreme and were able to see no farther than their own borders. To the Israelites, however just and fair they often tried to be, the Romans were hated oppressors, idol-worshipping inferiors, outside the covenant of God, and the proper objects of unceasing attempts at rebellion and assassination. The Roman's haughty contempt for Jewish pride created a resentment that would inevitably lead to slaughter and dispersion for the Jews. In the end only Rome could win. But rationally or not, in no people in the world of that time did the passion for independence burn so fiercely as it did among the Jews. Most Jews cared little for the safety and prosperity they admittedly gained by being a part of a great cohesive empire.

Their resentment, being nationalistic and ideological, grew primarily as a reaction to the infernal pride of the Romans. To the Jews, nothing Rome could do could possibly be right. To the Romans, granted the right of empire, (which we moderns cannot of course grant) the choice was clear; keep Judea pacified or risk the brush-fires of rebellion breaking out everywhere else. The Romans sought to be as just as possible to make their empire viable. But, just or not, Rome would rule whatever the people of Israel did or however they felt. The clash of wills between Jerusalem and Rome was the most troublesome political fact of the first century. Eventually it could have but one tragic outcome for Judea.

The peace of Rome, disastrous and painful for the Jews, nevertheless opened up a great share of the world to easy penetration by the newly risen movement of Christianity. In every Roman city godly Jews were already dwelling. All Israelites, whether from the tribe of Judah proper, or of the remnants of the thirteen tribes, now came to be called "Jews." Judah was the Royal tribe of David, and "Jew" is simply an abbreviation for Judah. It had spearheaded the Return of the Exiles from Babylon, and now again possessed the capital, Jerusalem. It was the strongest and most persistent of the tribes and it was the keeper of the Temple in Jerusalem which was the proper

geographical focal point of prayer, wherever in the world Israelites were themselves located. So gradually the Israelites of all the tribes who cared about preserving their own national identity, and their ancient Mosaic traditions and religious faith, came to be called "Jews."

[The "Jewish" Israelites yes, but the other Israelites [those of the Ten tribes or House of Israel, taken captive by the Assyrian empire - 745-718 B.C.] became so-called "lost" - in time they even forgot themselves that they were Israelites. But we know James knew they were scattered abroad, all TWELVE tribes. See James 1:1 – Editor]

Intermarriage between the people of the various tribes of Israel in the Diaspora doubtless helped bind all dispersed Israel toward identification with Judah. Those who did not join this spiritual and nationalistic movement were soon lost, not as whole tribes, but as individuals, as intermarriage with Gentiles or the attrition of death gradually exterminated or eliminated those who were indifferent to their Israelitish heritage.

[McBirnie is very WRONG on this point, the Ten tribe House of Israel was by-and-large in EUROPE and BRITAIN by the time the apostles came on the scene - Editor]

There was not just one single dispersion of the tribes of Israel, though the process began in 725 B.C.

[Actually in 745 B.C. and ended 718 B.C. for the house of Israel - Keith Hunt]

When Assyria carried off many people out of the Northern tribes. Instead, there were successive waves of removal from Palestine which scattered the Israelites everywhere. (Recently a colony of Jews which has lived in Cochin, India, since 70 A.D. has come to world attention, as emigration to the modern state of Israel has finally depleted that section of Indian Jewry. This event reminds us that people travelled much more widely in the first century A.D. than is commonly realized, a fact that has a bearing on the genuineness of the apostolate of St. Thomas in India during the first century.)

[Yes SOME Israelites, probably from the Judah captivity by the Babylon Empire - 604-586 B.c., were indeed over in the India area of the world - Editor]

The Biblical Research Handbook (Vol.2) provides a reminder of the dispersion of the Jews in the pre-Christian era. As the Apostles always went first to the Jews in their missions, this passage is very illuminating:

"... Armenian and Georgian historians record that after the destruction of the First Temple ... Nebuchadnezzar deported numbers of Jewish captives to Armenia and the Caucasus. These exiles were joined later by co-religionists from Medes and Judea ... at the end of the fourth century there were Armenian cities possessing Jewish populations ranging from 10,000 to 30,000 ... Monuments consisting of marble slabs bearing Greek inscriptions and preserved in the Hermitage St.Petersburg, and in the museum at Feodosia (Kaffa), show that Jews lived in the Crimea and along the entire eastern coast of the Black Sea at the beginning of the common era, and that they possessed well-organised communities with synagogues. They were then already Hellenized, bearing such Greek names as Hermis, Dionisiodorus and Heracles. In the reign of Julius the Isaurian (175-210) the name 'Volamiros' was common among the Jews of the Crimea. This was the origin of the Russian name 'Vladimir' ... " (Bible Research Handbook, Vol.2, pages unnumbered)

[Exactly! Proves what I just said above. The "Jewish" Israelites were also scattered. But the MAIN part of the house of Israel Israelites were in Europe and even Britain by the first century A.D. - Commentary]

Greek culture had penetrated as far as France, then called the land of the Gauls, by the middle of the first century B.C. The various languages of each country were used locally of course, but throughout the Roman Empire both Greek and Latin were widely and universally employed. This fact made it possible for Greek philosophy and culture to affect the Roman world profoundly.

Later it would provide common literary and linguistic vehicles for the Christian gospel.

The splendid Roman roads, many of which can still be seen today, related the cities of all countries to each other. Over those safe and straight highways and the increasingly viable sea lanes came a busy interchange of goods and customs. These same highways would soon be the paths of the propagation of the faith.

Thus in the first century the Roman world, with all its initial cruelties and harsh conditions, was changing and uniting into the largest and most

continually ruled empire the world has ever known. In the Middle Ages the Mongol Empire briefly ruled a larger area, and perhaps more people, but it left no enduring civilization since it was an empire of destruction which soon faded back into the vast emptiness of Asia from which it had come. Rome brought a culture which remained. Indeed, that culture still remains today and its influence is as strong as ever.

[Yes, indeed, so much so that it gave rise to the MYSTERY BABYLON RELIGION of the Roman Catholic church which has planted its theology and customs, practices, traditions, all over the world, especially the Western world. The nations of Israel are today IN Babylon, deceived by a false Babylon/Roman Christianity – Commentary]

Rome had drawn much of her civilization from others; at first from the mysterious Etruscans. But by the first century, the Etruscans had been so completely swallowed up as to have disappeared into history. We cannot read their language even now. Egypt also had given much and would give more. But Egypt had lost the civilization of the Pharaohs and had become Hellenized. Greece itself was still the cultural and medical center of the Roman Empire, but it had become little more than a province which fed its influence into the bloodstream of the empire. Greece was of course eventually to triumph over Rome and rise again, not in Athens but in Constantinople. During the first century, however, Rome was the greatest political fact in the world.

[And Rome was to be the MOST false influence on the world over the next 2,000 years to today and still counting - Commentary]

This, then, was the world of Jesus and His Apostles. On the narrow land bridge between three continents the people of Israel had come and gone, and come again. The Greeks, and afterwards the Romans, had conquered Palestine, but had never really subdued her people. Rebellion continuously simmered. It frequently flared with little provocation into revolution against Rome. If the Herods could not put the rebellion down, the Romans could and would. And when this happened, the Herodians lost face and paid severe penalties to Caesar. For this reason the Herodians were zealous to stamp out any sedition before it could be embarrassing to them. It was on a charge of sedition that Jesus was tried and in an illegal trial, which soon got out of hand, was falsely condemned to death for blasphemy and treason, though the Roman governor Pilate had declared Him innocent.

Of course, sedition was only the ostensible reason why Jesus was condemned. As the Apostles saw clearly then, and history's long judgment has since confirmed, the greatest reason for his condemnation was the fact that Jesus had lanced through the swollen hypocrisy of the Jewish political and ceremonial religion and the religious bureaucracy of professional priests, Pharisees and Sadducees. So all the main Jewish leaders, including the official party of the Herodians called by that name, consented to or sought his death.

When men gain high places and hold them precariously, they often stoop to fatal compromises. When they do so in a semi-religious state they also have a bad conscience. When they are exposed and their real motives are laid bare, they tend to strike back with fangs bared and venom dripping. Jesus aptly called them, "A generation of vipers", and for this most of all they lay in wait, coiled, and then struck Him down. Their charges against Him were blasphemy and sedition. Thus Rome was induced to join with Jerusalem to crucify the Son of God.

His Apostles, after the resurrection, enjoyed a great resurgence of popularity in Judea. The guilt for the death of Jesus lay on the public conscience and the Apostles assured those who would repent that this guilt, and all other sinful guilt, had been atoned for by the true Lamb of God. Thousands professed conversion to Christ soon after the resurrection, and day after day were added to the growing Jerusalem church.

Soon no public or private building could contain their assembly. Steps were taken by the authorities to discourage the Apostles lest again Israel be troubled. But this time there was no stopping them.

Despite martyrdoms, such as those of Stephen and James the brother of John, and the imprisonment of Peter, the church grew, spilled out over Judea, Samaria and the whole of Palestine. Then it leaped to Antioch in Syria which, during the first century, was the third city of the Roman Empire and the true crossroads of east and west.

From Antioch the newly named "Christians" sent forth as missionaries, Barnabas, who had come from Jerusalem to shepherd the vigorous church in Antioch, and Saul of Tarsus, whom Barnabas had befriended in Jerusalem and had called from Tarsus to aid him in Antioch. Their missionary destination was Barnabas' nearby island home of Cyprus, and their targets were first the Jews, and then the Gentiles. They journeyed, after notable triumphs on Cyprus, to the mainland of Asia Minor which Saul (now called Paul)

apparently felt was ripe for the Christian message. The experience of these two eager Apostles, first at Antioch and now in Cyprus and Asia Minor, had confirmed that the gospel had indeed been intended for all and could be well received by the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Thus a milestone in Christian history was passed. The process had begun which would tear Christianity loose from its Jewish exclusiveness and make it an universal movement for all men.

Paul and Barnabas did not break the first ground to extend Christianity to the Gentiles. That had been done on the day of Pentecost when people from many parts of the Roman world had heard the message, shortly after the ascension of Jesus. But in the Jerusalem church, conversions of the Gentiles were rare and incidental.

The Twelve Apostles, now reduced by the death of James to eleven, had remained in Jerusalem or at least in Palestine. It seemed they could not bring themselves to the world apostolate which Jesus had commanded. Soon however, Jewish persecution would force some of them out. The nation of Israel was still not willing to accept Jesus as the Christ. Soon the Twelve would also have to turn to the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas had successfully shown the way. From this time forth the Apostles would go first to the Jews and then, if rejected, turn to the Gentiles. The book of Acts is the record of how Christianity was thus moved by both example and persecution, out of Jerusalem into the rest of the Roman world with a universal message to both Jews and Gentiles. While Rome herself was even more hostile to Christianity than was Jerusalem, many Jews and Gentiles everywhere received the new faith.

Within the life time of the Apostles the gospel of Christ had spread over the long Roman roads, as well as by the sea, to such far off places as Gaul and Britain to the northwest, Alexandria and Carthage on the coast of Africa to the south, Scythia and Armenia (now the Soviet Union) to the north and Persia and India to the east. In the course of this initial outburst of Christian fervor, the Twelve Apostles, and many others also called apostles, carried the Christian message to great extremes of distance and into perilous lands both near and far, even beyond the Roman Empire. There they died, but their message and the churches they founded survived them.

Early in its progress Christianity recorded histories and legends which tell of the high adventures the Apostles had in the initial years of Christian expansion. The Apostles themselves apparently did not seem aware that their

mission was historic so they kept few records which have remained. Such records as we have, apart from the Scriptures, are not without flaw and often lean towards the fanciful. Yet so much more is to be learned about the Apostles than the general Christian public knows, or has ever been written by the scholars in a single history, to this end this account of the lives of the Twelve Apostles will serve to illuminate the earliest days of the Christian mission.

Hopefully it may help to recover the Apostles as real people.

CHAPTER TWO

When Did The Apostles Leave Jerusalem?

St.Luke, who wrote the book of Acts, selected as his thesis the emergence of Christianity as an universal faith, not to be held for long in the matrix of Judaism, but liberated, mainly under the pioneering of St.Paul, so that the gospel might be presented also to the Gentiles. From first to last in The Acts, Luke expresses this theme. Christianity, he wrote, began with God and Jesus Christ, His Son. Upon the rejection of Jesus by the Jewish national and religious leadership, the gospel was presented as was always intended by God to the Gentiles. That methodology is reported many times in The Acts.

First, Pentecost was an international experience. Jews from many nations were in Jerusalem, but surely, so were many Gentiles. "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." (Acts 2:9-11) Then Acts records how St.Philip witnessed to the Ethiopian treasurer, under the direct leadership of the Holy Spirit. The implication of divine approval and authentication upon Gentile evangelism is explicit. St. Luke is making a point which misses most modern readers.

Next, Peter was directly commanded of God to witness to and baptize Cornelius, the Roman centurion, at Joppa. Paul was meanwhile shown as the persecutor of the Church motivated by his zeal for keeping the Law of Moses and the Jews themselves from adulteration. He haled into prison those Jewish Christians who would forsake Moses for Christ. No one can accuse Paul of not being initially a faithful Jew, though his critics certainly tried.

After Paul's conversion, Luke records, often as an eyewitness, the growing missionary triumphs of St. Paul, but carefully notes that St. Paul nowhere broke the Mosaic Law, but always in each city went first to the Jewish synagogue to try to win those Jews who would believe. Only then did he go to the Gentiles after the inevitable persecution in the synagogue. As Luke concluded his story in The Acts, Paul was in Rome, having first witnessed to the Jewish religion's leaders. He was rejected by most, as usual, so he turned to the Gentiles. There the book of Acts ends the story.

The book of Acts is a limited, but rich slice of Apostolic Christian history. It is the record of only some of the Apostles and their deeds. It is the story of the mighty acts of the Holy Spirit in the establishment of the early churches. It is a shining vindication of Paul and of his decision to carry the gospel "to the Jews first and afterwards to the Gentiles." To these purposes, all Biblical commentaries abundantly agree. But if we stop here, perhaps we have missed the most compelling of all effects which Luke may have been trying to achieve by writing The Acts. This was to encourage all Jewish Christians to consciously go forth to the Gentile world and, like Paul, bear witness directly to it in full confidence of success, believing confidently that this was the Holy Spirit's intention and that God would bless their efforts in this mission and crown them with success!

In a word, Acts is a book of successful procedures in international evangelism. The truths contained in it were aimed to stir up those early Jewish Christians who for too long were bound to Jerusalem and Judea or at least to Judaism.

Biblical scholars have long been troubled by the lengthy time after the Resurrection which some of the Apostles spent in Jerusalem. It was as if some of them clung to the Temple and Judaism for perhaps a quarter of a century, despite the clear commandment of Jesus to discipline all nations.

Even when the Apostles occasionally were able, or forced, to lead a Gentile to Christ, they themselves soon returned to Jerusalem. Even when the believers were scattered abroad by persecution and sent everywhere preaching, Luke notes that the Apostles were expected to remain in Jerusalem, which they did. Why? Possibly because they were reluctant to go forth officially to win Gentiles and start organizing Gentile churches. Who knows the agony or timidity these Jewish men had in breaking with Judaism?

The date of the writing of The Acts seems certain to have been about the year 66 A.D. By then the Apostles, for the most part, would surely have already left Jerusalem on their world missions.

But The Acts covers a considerable period of time, at least thirty-five years. Perhaps the experiences of St. Paul provided a direct challenge to the early Christians and even to some of the Apostles, to get on with the task which belonged to them from the beginning; opening the whole world and all nations to the gospel.

The Apostolic council in Jerusalem told Paul, "You go to the Gentiles and we will go to the Jews." The Acts may well have been later used as an historical handbook of methods Paul had triumphantly used, how he fared, and the clear proof that the Holy Spirit was visibly willing, despite all obstacles, to bless a mission to the Gentiles. But though we do not suggest that the Apostles were shamed into their task of world evangelism by The Acts, for the date of writing precludes this conclusion, it might still be possible that some early portions of the book, or at least the experiences of St. Paul that were later recorded in the book, might have had this effect.

We know nothing of the "Theophilus" to whom Luke addressed The Acts. Theophilus is a Greek name to be sure but it simply means "Lover of God." Perhaps, with infinite tact, Paul sought to teach some of the "Teachers" a lesson they somehow had not yet all learned. If it had been couched as a frontal attack or criticism they could not have accepted it at the hands of Paul, since they were disciples and Apostles before he had ever encountered Christ, and were therefore probably reluctant to accept new light on their duties from this "latecomer" to the faith.

If these conclusions are sound, that means the early parts of the book of The Acts were perhaps intended for some Apostles (James having been martyred) as a virtual handbook on "successful methods of witnessing to Gentiles", with due credit carefully given to the anointing of the Holy Spirit in all instances. This possibility is strengthened in the various epistles of St. Paul, particularly in his reference to St. Peter's reluctance to even eat with Gentile Christians in Antioch when Jewish Christian emissaries from James in Jerusalem arrived on the scene. "I withstood him to the face," said Paul, "because he was to be blamed." (Galatians 2:11)

St. Paul, in fact, had experienced the reluctance of the Apostles to go to the Gentiles in any systematic way and pointed out their strategy as follows: "And

when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision" (Galatians 2:9).

Whether or not one of the purposes of the recording of St. Paul's experiences, which later grew into what is now called the book of The Acts, was to encourage and instruct the Apostles and other early Christian workers in their duty to the Gentiles, that was what in fact eventually resulted. Somewhere, sometime, formally or naturally, the Apostles one day apparently decided on a world strategy of evangelism, and each went his separate way. Eusebius tells us the Apostles "divided the world and set forth to all points of the compass. Was this decision prompted or influenced by the experiences of St. Paul later recorded in the book of The Acts? We cannot know with certainty, but it seems likely, at least, that Paul's success could not possibly have been unnoticed, ignored, or uncopied. There is a fragment of early Christian history which indicates there may be some substance to this idea.

"At the beginning of Book 3 of his History of the Church, after having described the Fall of Jerusalem, Eusebius says that 'the inhabited world' was divided into zones of influence among the Apostles: Thomas in the region of the Parthians, John in Asia, Peter in Pontes and Rome, Andrew in Scythia. This statement contains a certain measure of historical truth, particularly for John, but it is difficult to verify for the others. One fact, however, gives support to it. The apocryphal writings of the New Testament are divided into cycles: the cycle of Peter, the cycle of Thomas, the cycle of Philip, the cycle of John. These cycles seem to refer to definite geographical areas, and it seems, in particular, that the Judaeo-Christian mission at the beginning of the second century took several different forms: the Mesopotamian, linked to James and Thomas; Asiatic Christianity, which depends on Philip and John; the Petrine group comprising Phoenicia, Pontes, Achaea and Rome." (The Christian Centuries, J. Danielou, p.39).

A study of what became of the Apostles, then, must take into account the possibility that the experience of Paul later recorded in The Acts may have served as a catalyst to hasten the decision of the Apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel. A study of the date of the book of First Peter certainly allows time for the book of Acts to have been completed by A.D. 64. This is mentioned because it is clear from I Peter 1:1 that Peter made missionary journeys to Asia Minor before the conclusion of Paul's first Roman imprisonment in A.D.64. But even if Peter became an earlier witness to the Gentiles (despite Galatians 2:9) this does not mean all the other Apostles had

also left Jerusalem by A.D.64, which is the earliest possible date of the writing of The Acts. Nor does it imply that, even if all the Apostles had left Jerusalem itself long before A.D.64, that they had necessarily engaged in a ministry to the Gentiles wherever they may have gone, for Jews were found everywhere. To have achieved this, even among some of the Apostles would be a worthwhile purpose for the experiences of St.Paul to be told and later incorporated in The Acts.

In any case, once they had been launched into the far reaches of the Roman Empire, the Apostles lighted a fire that shines in most of the world to this day.

NOTE:

It is true that the first century Apostles "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). The "true" Gospel and the truth of God was established near and far. But when McBirnie says, "the Apostles lighted a fire that shines in most of the world to this day" the light that he is talking about (which he would not admit being a Protestant) is the dark light of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, both of which are Babylon Mystery Religion of the book of Revelation - not the truth of God's word (though of course SOME truth is mixed in with error - the Devil works that way) as proclaimed by the Apostles. Even in the days of Jude, he had to tell his readers to hold on to the "faith which was once delivered to the saints." Over the centuries as the Roman Catholic religion gain POWER through the rise of the Holy Roman Empire, true Christianity as a large and bright light was overcome and exchanged for the false light of Catholicism and Protestantism.

There are a number of studies on this Websight showing you HOW and WHEN the the true LIGHT was extinguished. The last books of the Bible in "The New Testament Bible Story" also show you that before the end of the first century A.D. there was a movement from WITHIN the very true Church of God to depart from the faith once delivered to the saints. That movement that started from WITHIN the Church of Christ gained more and more influence and power through the Empire of Rome, until it became the HOLY Roman Empire. God calls it Babylon Mystery Religion, the woman whose that rides the Beast, in the last chapters of Revelation. That power is the working whereby all the world is deceived, and being deceived more and more each week, month, and year. It is the power that is responsible for the killing of true saints, down through many of the centuries of the last 2,000 years. She is truly drunk with the blood of the saints.

The 12 Apostles may have not left Jerusalem in the early years after Pentecost of 30 A.D. but **SOME** of the true children of God did, and some of them came into the British Isles, before 40 A.D. But that's another history story for another book and another time - although **SOME** of that history is in some of the studies on this Website (i.e. "When did Christianity come to Britain") -
Commentary

CHAPTER THREE

PART ONE: Simon PETER

OF ALL ME HUMAN personalities whom Jesus remade, Simon Peter is the one (next to Paul) about whom we know the most, and the man who seems most like ourselves. As Dr.Stalker has said, "He [Christ] managed the tumultuous and fluctuating elements of his [Peter's] character as a perfect rider does a high mettled horse. He transformed a nature as unstable as water into the consistency of a rock."

The first meeting Jesus had with Simon, He addressed him thus:

"Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation 'a stone'" (John 1:42).

A great deal of misunderstanding has arisen from the disputes over the real meaning of this word "stone." Dr. Schofield's footnotes are correct when he comments as follows:

"There is in the Greek, a play upon the words Thou art Peter (Peters-literally, 'a little rock' or 'pebble') and upon this Rock (Petea) I will build my church. He does not promise to build His church upon Peter, but upon Himself, as Peter himself is careful to tell us." (I Peter 2:49) That there may be no misunderstanding at this point, let the Apostle Paul settle the issue once and for all as to what the Foundation of Christianity is:

'For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ' (I Cor.3:11)'

Had Paul ever understood that Peter was the foundation of the church which Christ organized in Jerusalem, he would not have said there is no other foundation but Christ Himself."

PETER'S HOME IN CAPERNAUM

The discovery of the house of St.Peter is a triumph of modern archeology. For most of the 20th century, with some interruptions, Italian archeologists have been digging and restoring the town of Capernaum. The site is one of the most visited spots in Galilee and yet many tourists who go there do not recognize even yet the real link to the lives of the Apostles which has been found there in St.Peter's actual home. Ancient church history tells the story and has provided the vital clues for the discovery of the history of St.Peter's house.

"In his Panarion - a treatise on heresies - St.Epiphany mentions the difficulties encountered in establishing a Christian community in Kfar-Nachum which was still wholly Jewish till the middle of the fourth century. Only when Count Joseph - a convert to Christianity and Governor of Tiberias - managed to obtain from the Emperor Constantine The Great [just a few years before his death in 337] an Imperial decree to build a church on the traditional site of St.Peter's house in Kfar-Nachum-could preparations for this building start. And even then the actual work on site did not begin until 352. In the came of time this modest church was superseded by a splendid basilica frequently mentioned in texts of the Pilgrims who visited it and appreciated its beauty." (Capernaum, Baruch Sapir, Dav Ne'eman, p.22).

In his New Memoirs of St.Peter by the Sea of Galilee Virgil Corbo reports:

"From the very first day Jesus visited Capernaum, the building was marked out as 'the home of Simon and Andrew' (Mark 1:29). Here, on the morrow, Jesus healed the mother-in-law of Peter. Here, near the door, he cured a great number of other sick people (Mark 1:33). Subsequently, it is made clear that he passed the night under this roof (Mark 1:35). The house of hospitality is next described as surrounded by such a crush of people seeking Jesus that there was no room even outside (Mark 2:2). To this home Jesus returned after his journeys round the Lake, and after the official election of the twelve apostles (Mark 3:19). It was here that he imparted his more intimate teaching (Mark 7:17). There, one day, his mother appeared, together with his 'brethren' (Mark 3:31). It was in this very home that Jesus embraced a little child, to give the Twelve a lesson in humility (Mark 9:33-37). Here occurred the mirade of the healing of the paralytic (Mark 2:1-12). The last time the house is mentioned in Mark is when Jesus came back from a tour of preaching (Mark 10:10). In this list of events in Jesus life at Capernaum, we make mention only

of those involving the house of Simon Peter and Andrew. It has been our good fortune to bring to light this very building, so specially blessed by the presence of Christ. (p.10, 11).

"The octagonal basilica was erected as a place of worship, not for any ordinary needs of a Christian community, but as a memorial. It stood over the ruins of a house which, from very ancient times, bore proofs of veneration on the part of the Christian community of Capernaum which was of Jewish origin. All this had been long attested by tradition and was proven true by our excavations. The latter show most dearly that, beneath the octagonal basilica, there lay buried a complex of small buildings of great antiquity. The architect of the basilica took care to site the central octagon directly above a room which was held in great reverence, and even to follow its very dimensions. At the same time, while removing the upper parts of the ancient buildings, he took care to preserve the latter substantially when he filled in earth round about them. In this respect, one discovery was most striking. To preserve a doorstep which would normally have been built into the foundations, the architect placed a little bridge over it. Thus, we owe this unknown planner a deep debt of gratitude. Designing his octagonal basilica, and placing its floors a metre and a half above those of the ancient dwelling, he could have obliterated the previous structure completely. Instead, he providentially preserved for all posterity its venerated remains" (p.21,22).

The archaeologists who have long and painstakingly excavated the house of St.Peter in Capernaum have unearthed a great deal of interesting and vital information which is not generally known. Father Corbo continues his description:

"The archaeological excavation beneath the pavements of the Byzantine church has not only brought to light a network of habitations of the first century of our era, but has demonstrated with the same evidence also the evolution of a cultic character which made itself known in these habitations around the largest room of the complex. The sacred character of this hall is known from ancient Christian tradition, which has reached us through the testimony of pilgrims; today we know this independently of the testimonies, also from the testimonies of the archaeological excavations, which we will present in a complete manner to scholars in the final publication of these researches. Peter the Deacon reports an ancient text ascribed to Egeria. In Capharnaum, however, a church has been made out of the house of the prince of the Apostles; its walls are standing until today as they were. There the Lord cured the paralytic. A writer known as 'Anonymous of Piacenza' (570 A.D.)

writes, 'We likewise came into Capharnaum into the house of blessed Peter, which is now a basilica.' (Enchiridion Locorum Sanctorum, Baldi, O.F.M, p.299, 293)" (p.53).

Father Corbo describes the rooms of St.Peter's house:

"The principal and largest room of a very poor habitation was venerated by the Jewish Christians of the first generation and in the following centuries by adapting some dependencies into a place of reunion and of prayer it order to preserve in this place the sacred character which it derived both from the person of the proprietor Peter and also from the consecration given to it by the long stay of the Lord. So whilst around this hall the cult of the primitive Jewish Christians of the community of Capharnaum was centered, the other surrounding rooms continued to throb with the ordinary life of men. The house of Peter, in the following centuries, continued to be indeed the house of the Lord and the house of men (p.54).

"Among the objects found on the floor of the house church I mention two fishhooks and behind the east wall of the central octagon a small axe for cutting stones" (p.70).

Father Corbo sums up the conclusions of the findings at Capernaum:

"Having reached the end of this report we consider it useful to sum up in a few points the principal discoveries which we made in these first two campaigns of excavation in the area of the Christian church at Capharnaum, constructed over the house of St. Peter.

1) A complex of habitations of the first century of our era has been found in the entire area of the excavation. 2) In this complex of very poor habitations one hall was venerated in a special way from the first century onwards by the local community of Jewish Christians, who transformed this area into a place of cult, whilst they continued to live in the other rooms next to this one. 3) From the late Roman period (about the fourth century onwards) the community of Jewish Christians of Capharnaum enlarged the primitive house church by adding to the venerated hall an atrium on the east and dependencies on the north by enclosing the entire small 'insula' of the house of Peter within a sacred precinct. 4) The belief of the community of Jewish Christians of Capharnaum and of pilgrims in the sanctity of the place, indicated as the house of St.Peter by tradition, finds expression in incisions of symbols and graffiti on the walls of this venerated hall. 5) A church with a central plan

(two concentric octagons with a portico on five sides and sacristies and subordinate loci on three other sides) was constructed at Capharnaum towards the middle of the fifth century over the venerated house of St. Peter" (The House of Saint Peter at Capharnaum, Father Virgilio Corbo, p.71).

THE CONVERSION OF PETER

Peter was brought to Christ by his brother Andrew. They were both fishermen, plying their trade on the sea of Galilee. Peter was a young man when he first met Christ, and certainly he was interested in the Messiah. When his brother Andrew announced that he had found the Messiah, Peter eagerly dropped his nets and went along to see for himself. Then he returned to his trade.

It was sometime later that Jesus came to the shores of Galilee and there found Peter who had talked with Him before. There the invitation of Christ came, 'Follow me and I will make you to become fishers of men.' (Matt.4:19) Peter and Andrew straightway left their nets and boats and followed Jesus. He was married and his mother-in-law apparently lived with him and his wife.

PETER'S PERSONALITY

Much has been made of Peter's temperament. He was not particularly modest, but usually was self-assertive. He frequently stood in the early days at the forefront of the Apostles and was their spokesman. It remained only for Paul to outshine him. But Peter always remained firm in the affection of the early Christians as the first among the great Christians. Though the record indicates that John and Paul were also highly regarded, nevertheless, in the lists of Apostles in the Scriptures, we find the name Peter preceding the rest of the twelve.

Peter was impulsive. He often acted first and thought second. He quickly dropped his net at the invitation of Christ. When Jesus walked across the water Peter stepped over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Him. After the Resurrection, Peter threw himself into the sea and swam impulsively to shore, not waiting for the slow rowing of the boat Peter's character was not at fast as firm as it might have been. He was the loudest in his avowals of loyalty to Christ the night before Jesus was seized. That night, with all the rest, he forsook Him and cursed His Name. Then in another impulsive reversal, after Jesus looked at him, Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Peter was a rare combination of courage and cowardice, of great strength and regrettable instability. Christ spoke more often to Peter than to any other of His disciples, both in blame and praise. No other disciple is so pointedly reproved by our Lord as Peter, and no disciple ever ventured to reprove his Master but Peter! However, by degrees and under the teaching and example and the training of Christ, Peter's overly tempestuous character was gradually brought under control, until finally after Pentecost it became the personification of faithfulness to Christ.

There was one redeeming factor about Peter's character and that was his exquisite sense of sin. He was extremely sensitive and tender in his spirit in this respect. It was Peter who said, "Depart from me O Lord for I am a sinful man." (Luke 5:8) Peter sinned as grievously as did Judas. Judas sold Jesus. Peter cursed Him. There is no essential difference, except that Peter repented and Judas did not. It is revealing to read from his own epistle the following words written in the evening of his life.

"Ye, therefore beloved, seeing ye know all these things beware lest ye also fall from your steadfastness, but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be glory both now and forever. Amen" (2 Peter 3:17-18).

FACTS THE BOOK OF ACTS REVEALS ABOUT PETER

In the Book of Acts we note that Peter takes a unique and early position of importance in the church in Jerusalem. In fact the first division of the Book of Acts is composed largely of the Acts of Peter, just as the second division of the book contains the stories of the Acts of Paul. The Book of Acts was originally written to show the transition of Christianity from a Jewish sect to a world faith. Therefore, the story of Peter is told us there that we might see how Peter who had the leadership position in the early church gradually carried the gospel beyond the boundaries of the Jewish into the Gentile world. Then the story is transferred to Paul who became uniquely the Apostle to the Gentiles.

It was Peter who prompted the choice of the twelfth disciple to take the place of Judas. It was he who spoke to the assembled multitude on the day of Pentecost. It was he who performed the healing miracle on the lame man. In Galatians 2:9 Paul speaks of Peter with James and John as "pillars" of the church. It was Peter who defended the cause of the gospel when the authorities

of the Jews took action against the Apostles. He exercised church discipline in the congregation in the case of Ananias and Sapphira.

He also spoke out against Simon, the magician who sought to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Book of Acts emphasizes the faith of the common people in the miraculous power of Peter. They considered his shadow capable of effecting a healing. Peter was delegated by the Twelve in Jerusalem to go to Samaria to look into the genuineness of the spiritual renewal which was going on there under the direction of Philip. Following this, Peter appeared in missionary activities in Lydda, Joppa and Caesarea, where he is especially mentioned as having been led to baptize the household of the Gentile, Cornelius.

Finally Peter appeared at the Apostolic Council where he defended the inclusion of Gentiles in the Christian movement. From this point Peter disappears from the narrative in the Book of Acts. Paul mentions him in his epistles only in regard to Peter's mistake when in Antioch he feared the Jewish Christians from Jerusalem who demanded separation from the Gentile Christians on the part of Jewish Christians. Paul says in his statement that Peter was to blame and that therefore he, Paul, had withstood him to the face! Peter apparently backed down before Paul's fierce logic.

We are on certain ground in tracing St. Peter to Corinth after St. Paul had founded the church there and before Paul wrote his epistles to the Corinthians. Jean Danielou observes:

"In Corinth the memory of Peter was closely associated with that of Paul by the bishop Dionysius. It is evident from the Letter that Clement of Rome wrote to the members of the Church at the beginning of the second century that there were links between Corinth and Rome, with which Peter and Paul were also associated. The Letter shows that the town was torn by discord, the presbyters against another party, perhaps that of the deacons" (The Christian Centuries, Jean Danielou, p.51).

In the Epistles of Ignatius there is a reference to St. Peter at Antioch. Eusebius quotes the passage:

"About this time flourished Polycarp in Asia, an intimate disciple of the Apostles, who received the episcopate of the church at Smyrna, at the hands of the eyewitnesses and servants of the Lord. At this time, also, Papias was well known as bishop of the church at Hierapolis, a man well skilled in all manner

of learning, and well acquainted with the Scriptures. Ignatius, also, who is celebrated by many even to this day, as the successor of Peter at Antioch, was the second that obtained the episcopal office there." (Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, Eusebius, p.120).

The church historian Jean Danielou discusses the presence of St.Peter at Antioch:

"It remains true that if the Church of Antioch was not typically Petrine, it had many ties with Peter; we have seen that he had stayed there at a very early date. The Petrine apocryphal writings were popular in Antioch, as Theophilus and Serapion show. The Ascension of Isaiah is the first work to mention Peter's martyrdom. Antiochene Judaeo-Christianity thus appears as representing the Petrine position. We have also noticed its links with the Phoenician sector, which was specially dependent on Peter. The same links are to be found in the other regions which came under Peter's influence and which were in communication with Antioch. Eusebius tells us that Pontus and the neighbouring regions of Bithynia, Cappadocia and Galatia were dependent on Peter; other facts confirm this. The First Epistle of Peter was addressed to the Christians of these regions. That may be the source of Eusebius's information, but this hypothesis is far from certain, since there is other evidence for the link. Pontus and Cappadocia are geographically an extension of North Syria and it was in that direction that Syria usually expanded. In a letter of Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth in the middle of the second century, we see the links between Corinth and Pontus. Now Corinth was in Peter's sphere of influence. In the Paschal controversy, the bishops of Pontus were in agreement with the Bishop of Rome and in disagreement with the Asiatic bishops." (The Christian Centuries, Jean Danielou, p.50).

There is widespread confirmation that St.Peter did indeed make Antioch his headquarters; Hugo Hoever in his "Lives of the Saints" writes as a Catholic scholar:

"Church historians affirm positively that St.Peter founded the See of Antioch before he went to Rome. Antioch was then the capital of the East. St. Gregory the Great states that the Prince of the Apostles was Bishop of that city for seven years" (p.82).

In the memorial book called "Souvenir-India" in an article entitled, "The Holy See of seleucia-Ctestphon" by V. K. George is recorded the traditions of the church of the East.

"Meanwhile, the Apostles set out to preach the Gospel. The first missionary field of the Apostles was the Jews. They were their own racial kinsmen. They were the people who were waiting for the coming of the Messiah. Hence the work among them was very easy. The Apostles had only to add a few articles to their existing faith that the Messiah had come; that he had died for their sins and risen for their salvation; that he had ascended into heaven and had sent His Holy Spirit to his disciples; and that he was to be worshipped as God: At that time Mesopotamia. was one of the strongest centres of Jews. It was there that the 'Lost Tribes' were living.

[No, they were not the "lost tribes" per se. They were Jews from the the House of Judah captivity by the Babylon Empire; 604-586 B.C. The "lost sheep of the House of Israel" captivity; 745-718 B.C by the Assyrian Empire, had moved further west into Europe and Britain by the first century A.D. - Editor]

They were very rich and influential and they had commercial settlements in many places on the coast of India, Ceylon, Malaya and on the farthest coast of China. We see that Jesus Himself had sent the seventy apostles to Mesopotamia during his ministry on earth. And therefore it was natural that the Apostles chose that area for their first missionary activity. St.Thaddeus, (Mar Addai) went to Edessa to fulfil the promise of Our Lord to King Abgar of Edessa. St.Peter also preached the Gospel in Babylon and the Holy Bible proves it: "The chosen Church which is in Babylon and Mark, my son, salute you: (I Peter 5:13). St.Thomas had worked among the Jews of Mesopotamia and later on went in search of their small colonies on the coast of India and reached Cranganore in 52 A.D. St.Bartholomew and Mar Mari of the Seventy were also the founders of this Church.

"As in the Roman Empire, so also in the Persian Empire, Christianity had the beginning in important cities and spread into the interior. Thus Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, Alexandria, Rome, etc., in the Roman Empire and Edessa, Arbil, Seleucia-Ctesiphon, etc., in the Persian Empire became strong Christian centres."

The Coptic church historians agree with the Roman Catholics:

"Moreover, Eusebius asserts that the church of Antioch was founded by St.Peter, who became its first bishop even before his translation to the See of Rome. According to tradition, he presided for seven years over the newly established Antiochene church, from 33 to 40 A.D., when he nominated

St.Euodius as his vicar before departure to the West. While the circle of preaching the Gospel was widened towards the East in Edessa, Nisibis and distant Malabar by the Apostle Thomas and Mar Addaf (St. Thaddaeus), the fall of Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D. could only have increased the number of Christian Jewish emigrants to Antioch." (A History of Eastern Christianity, Aziz S. Atiya, p.172).

PETER AND ROME AND BABYLON

Here we must part company with Eusehnius. There is no evidence that St.Peter was in Rome as early as 44 A.D. It is much more likely that he was in Babylon, as the Eastern churches claim. In the Epistle to the Romans St.Paul makes no reference to St.Peter. The First Epistle of Peter comes from Babylon according to the plain statement of the writer. Peter could hardly have been in Rome until after the Epistle to the Romans was written since he apparently stopped over in Corinth after St.Paul was there, as St.Paul states in his First Epistle to the Corinthians.

There are, as we have noted, references in Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians that indicate that Peter had visited Corinth and preached there for awhile. Apparently Peter took his wife with him on his journey as we learn in First Corinthians 9:5. Having been in prison twice in the city of Jerusalem, Peter left Jerusalem and went into other parts of the world. His epistle notes that it was written in "Babylon". Many have wondered if this did not mean Rome which was frequently called "Babylon" by the early Christians.

The actual city of Babylon, however, still was of importance. It was a great center of Jewish colonists and was a powerful center when Peter ministered there for a time. The Eastern churches trace their lineage to Babylon, and hence to St. Peter, to this day.

In Acts 12:17 we are told that Peter "went to another place". We do not know this was Babylon, nor, if he went, how long he stayed. But the tradition of the Eastern churches is united that he did indeed go to Babylon, from which he wrote his first epistle. There was no need to use "Babylon" as a symbol of Rome as there was later when St.John wrote the Book of the Revelation. John was writing literature deliberately designed to pass the Roman censors (No, I do not think so. He wrote straight up-front about "prophecy" - no need to be censored by anyone – Commentary] but obviously Peter was not.

According to Galatians 2:9, a decision had been reached by the Apostles in Jerusalem to the effect that Paul and his fellow-workers were to go to the Gentiles, while the missionaries from Jerusalem (probably meaning Peter and his workers) went to the circumcised (that is, the Jews). Thus Peter was identified from the beginning with the Jewish party within Christianity as Paul was identified with the Gentile party, though there are many evidences that both men went over the line and dealt with people of the other group. One should not imagine, however, that Peter considered himself the opponent of Paul, despite Paul's arguments as recorded in Galatians. Peter, himself, no doubt stood nearer to Paul than did the other members of the Jerusalem church. There is absolutely no evidence that Paul ever recognized the "primacy" of Peter in his relationship to Paul. And in Corinth, Paul did not permit a "Cephas party" any more than he did any other party whatever.

PART TWO

All About PETER

DID ST.PETER EVANGELIZE THE AREA TO THE NORTH OF ROME?
WAS HE IN BRITAIN?

In his exhaustive but not generally accepted study of early Christianity, George F.Jowett outlines the various speculations and traditions about the Apostle Peter. In his book the "Drama of the Lost Disciples" he creates a scenario based upon various apocryphal and doubtful sources:

"Peter fled direct to Britain. This is affirmed by Cornelius in Lapide in his work 'Argumentum Epistolae St.Pauli ad Romanos', in which he answers the question as to why St.Paul does not salute St.Peter in his Epistle to the Romans. He replies: 'Peter, banished with the rest of the Jews from Rome, by the edict of Claudius, was absent in Britain.' Peter, acting as a free-lance missionary, stemming from Avalon, preached in Britain during the Caradoc/Claudian war. While in Britain he became well acquainted with the members of the two branches of the Royal Silurian House of Arviragus and Caractacus. He knew the children of Caractacus years before they went into Roman captivity. Years after, when the British family became well established in Rome, he was naturally attracted to the home of the Pudens at the Palatium Britannicum. The visits of both Peter and Paul, with the family of the Pudens, is referred to in Scripture. Other ancient records state that the children of Claudia and Rufus Pudens were raised at the knees of Peter and Paul and other disciples, particularly naming St.Paul, for reasons stated in a former chapter. There is plenty of evidence to show that Peter visited Britain and Gaul several times during his lifetime, his last visit to Britain taking place shortly before his final arrest and crucifixion in Nerds circus at Rome. In Gaul, Peter became the Patron Saint of Chartres, by reason of his preference to preach in the famous Druidic rock temple known as 'The Grotte des Druides.' This is considered to be the oldest Druidic site in Gaul, on which is built the oldest cathedral in

France. Of his visits in Britain we have the corroboration of Eusebius Pamphilis, A.D.308, whom Simon Metaphrastes quotes as saying:

'St.Peter to have been in Britain as well as in Rome.' Further proof of Peter's sojourn in Britain was brought to the light of day in recent times when an ancient, time-worn monument was excavated at Whithorn. It is a rough hewn stone standing 4 feet high by 15 inches wide. On the face of this tablet is an inscription that reads: 'Locus Sancti Petri Apvstoli' (The Place of St.Peter the Apostle).

The eminent Dean Stanley, writing in his works of the beloved Apostle, claims that the vision that came to St.Peter, foretold his doom: 'Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hast chewed me (2 Peter 1:14), appeared to St.Peter on his last visit to Britain, on the very spot where once stood the old British church of Lambedr (St. Peter's), where stands the present Abbey of St.Peter, Westminster. Shortly afterwards Peter returned to Rome, where he was later executed. The first church dedicated to Peter was founded by King Lucius, the British King, who was the first by royal decree to proclaim Christianity the national faith of Britain in Winchester A.D.

158.

The church was erected A.D.179, to the affectionate memory of St. Peter, in commemoration of his evangelizing labours in Britain. It is still known as 'St.Peter's of Cornhill' and bears the legend on its ageworn walls relating the historic fact and dates by the order of King Lucius, the descendant of Arviragus, preserved to this day for all to see and read" (p.174,175).

Jowett may be suspected of placing too much reliance on late or doubtful documentation, but there are some who agree with him, notably J.W.Taylor who observes:

"Two other traditions of first-century Christian missions, but belonging to a slightly later period, demand some attention as also bearing on Western Christianity. The first is the tradition of 'St.Maternus', and is connected with all the old country of the Treviri and Tungri beyond the Alps.

Here, and especially at Trier (or Treves), the Romans had formed important colonies some fifty years before the coming of Christ; and although, as in Britain, there were frequent uprisings against the power of Rome, the Romans maintained their supremacy for two hundred years or more. Nowhere so far north are the Roman remains and ruins so rich, so fine, and so remarkable as they are in Treves today. And the first Christian mission to Treves is

represented as partly Roman and partly Hebrew, as coming direct from Rome by the authority of St.Peter, and in the course or channel of Roman colonization. In some of these points it differs entirely from those we have been considering. The tradition also has other points of very considerable interest. It runs as follows:

Three Saints-Eucharius, Valerius and Maternus all of whom had been pupils of St.Peter at Rome, were sent by him to Trier to preach the gospel of Christ. Eucharius was appointed as bishop, and Valerius and Maternus as his assistants. Maternus was of Hebrew birth, and came from the little town of Nain in Palestine, being 'the only son of his mother', whom Christ had raised from the dead. But no special honour was at this time accorded him. He was the least of the three missionary disciples, one of the 'personal witnesses' who, as long as they lived, accompanied the other evangelists in most of their distant journeys. But though ready to take the lowest place among his Greek and Roman companions, Maternus appears to have been most active in his apostolic labours. For while all three-Eucharius, Valerius and Maternus - are associated with the foundation of the church at Trier and Cologne (the scene of their chief labours at Trier being a little outside the present city, on the site of the old St.Matthiaskirche), Maternus alone is represented as pushing forward and reaching the farthest settlement of Tongres, where he is said to have built a little church which he dedicated to the Blessed Virgin - the first church beyond the Alps dedicated to her name and memory ('Ecclesia Tungrensis prima cis Alpes beatae Mariae Virgini consecrata')." ("The Coming of the Saints," J.W. Taylor, p.61).

One could wish that Taylor was on firmer and more widely confirmed historical ground. But there certainly is no reason why Peter could not have visited Great Britain. Many believe he did. Like most other Christians in the world, the British believers of the early Middle Ages sought to claim a number of Apostles as having had some association with their forebears. The more one studies the early history of Britain, the more possible this claim appears. Those who have a classical education (that is, studies in the Latin Classics) often apparently tend to draw most of their impressions from the War Chronicles of Julius Caesar. They are perhaps forgetting that "The Gallic Wars" is not only history but also Caesar's personally slanted political propaganda. The Britons offered stout and intelligent resistance to the Roman conquest as Caesar found out to his dismay, something primitives could not have done.

Archaeological discoveries in Britain confirm that a viable civilization had developed there as far back as the time of the Phoenicians whose traces have been found in England. It is Caesar who has pictured them as painted savages very much like American Indians before Columbus. This impression is absolutely wrong!!

Perhaps the civilization of Britain was not as far advanced as Taylor and Jewett would like to believe. (Oh, yes it was , very much so, even obviously more than McBirnie wants to believe - Comment). But the use of the wheel and the knowledge of metallurgy which existed in Britain long before the time of Caesar (circa 60-40 B.C.) clearly indicates a civilization far in advance, for example, of that of the Aztecs at the time of the conquest of Cortez (1519 A.D.) who used neither wheels nor iron. Considering this relatively advanced civilization it is not difficult to believe that some of the Apostles visited England. Did they not believe that theirs was the commission to take the gospel to the ends o f the earth? Whether they did or not go to England is not provable, but it is not unlikely or impossible.

ST.PETER AND ROME

The common tradition that St.Peter founded the church at Rome is unverifiable. Paul could hardly have named so many Roman Christians in the last chapter of Romans if there had not been churches there long before any possible visit of St.Peter. Danielou observes however:

"Was Paul's the only mission to the West? The Acts tell us that in 43, after the death of James, Peter left Jerusalem 'for another place' (Acts 12:17). He is lost from sight until 49, when we find him at the Council of Jerusalem. No canonical text has anything to say about his missionary activity during this time. But Eusebius writes that he came to Rome about 44, at the beginning of Claudius's reign (HE II, 14, 81). It seems certain that Rome was evangelised during the period from 43 to 49.

Suetonius says that Claudius expelled the Jews in 50, because they were growing agitated 'at the prompting of Chrestos.' This shows that discussions between Jews and Judaeo-Christians were taking place, leading to conflicts which came to the ear of the emperor. In fact at Corinth in 51 Paul met some converted Jews driven from Rome by Claudius: Aquila and Priscilla. In 57 Paul addressed the community of Rome, already considered important. In 60 he found communities established in Puteoli and in Rome." ("The Christian Centuries," Jean Danielou, p.28).

However, as we have pointed out, St.Peter was probably in Babylon from A.D.44 to 49 rather than in Rome. We cannot imagine the silence of the Acts if St.Peter had been in Rome during that time. In any case this period (A.D.44-49) seems to be the only time which St.Peter could have been in Babylon, which was located on the great Roman highway as the next great city to the east of Antioch.

PETER DIED IN ROME

There is no serious attempt by any reputable modern scholar to find the presence of Peter in Rome before Paul wrote the Book of Romans to the band of Christians that had already grown to some size in that capital city of the first century world. On the other hand Peter had to die and be buried somewhere and Christian tradition has been in agreement from the earliest times that it was actually in Rome that Peter died. No less a Protestant theologian and historian than Adolph Harnack wrote that, "to deny the Roman stay of Peter is an error which today is clear to every scholar who is not blind. The martyr death of Peter at Rome was once contested by reason of Protestant prejudice." The Protestant theologian H. Lietzmann, has come to the conclusion that the testimony from the year 170 concerning the graves of the two Apostles at Rome must be correct. That is, that the two Apostles (Peter and Paul) were actually buried in two places in Rome. Perhaps the latest authoritative word which has been written is by Oscar Cullmann. In his book, "Peter, Disciple, Apostle, Martyr," he presents an argument based upon First Clement 5:24, in which he inferred from this text that the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul took place in Rome.

RECENT EXCAVATIONS OF ST.PETER'S BASILICA IN ROME

Since the end of the Second World War great interest has been focused upon the excavations under the church of St.Peter in Rome. It has now been officially announced by the Pope that the grave of Peter has been found. Scholars await full publication of all the results of the excavations before agreeing. Nevertheless, the general tendency of scholarship today seems to be moving in the direction of accepting the Roman stay of Peter. It is possible that Revelation 11:3-13 contains a cryptic account of the martyrdom of Paul and Peter in Rome. That this passage is both historic and prophetic is evident. The historical aspect of it may be a reference to the death of Paul and Peter in Rome, though this text seems to point primarily to a future fulfillment.

(That text in Revelation 11 has NOTHING to do with Peter or Paul - it is as McBurnie says, a "prophecy" for the yet future, during the last 42 months of this age - Commentary)

Near the close of the gospel of John there is a hint given as to the manner of Peter's death. It agrees with the tradition which has been long with us that Nero had Peter crucified head-downward on the Vatican Hill. It says, "As long as you were young, you girded yourself and went wherever you chose, but when you have become old, you will stretch out your hands and another will gird you and carry you where you do not want to go." It is universally recognized that these words are intended as a prediction of the martyrdom of Peter for the following verses tell us that these words speak of the kind of death that Peter was going to die to glorify God. The phrase "stretching out of the hands" (John 21:18) may indicate the manner of execution, which is crucifixion.

Finally, it would be well to note that in the entire scope of the very earliest Christian literature there is complete silence concerning the death of Peter. We certainly do not even have the slightest reference that points to any other place besides Rome which could be considered as the scene of his death. And in favor of Rome, there are important traditions that he did actually die in Rome. In the second and third centuries when certain churches were in rivalry with those in Rome it never occurred to a single one of them to contest the claim of Rome that it was the scene of the martyrdom of Peter.

In *The Christian Centuries* Danielou shares an allusion to St. Peter's visit to Rome:

"A certain Paron puts his house (aedes) at the disposal of St. Peter, as well as its inner garden, which could hold five hundred persons." (p.166)

Perhaps we can get a realistic impression about St. Peter's final days in Rome from Jewett:

"Maliciously condemned, Peter was cast into the horrible, fetid prison of the Mamertine. There, for nine months, in absolute darkness, he endured monstrous torture manacled to a post. Never before or since has there been a dungeon of equal horror. Historians write of it as being the most fearsome on the brutal agenda of mankind. Over three thousand years old, it is probably the oldest torture chamber extant, the oldest remaining monument of bestiality of ancient Rome, a bleak testimony to its barbaric inhumanity, steeped in Christian tragedy and the agony of thousands of its murdered victims. It can

be seen to this day, with the dungeon and the pillar to which Peter was bound in chains.

This dreaded place is known by two names. In classical history it is referred to as Gemonium or the Tullian Keep. In later secular history it is best known as the Mamertine. At this time it is not out of place to pause in our story to describe this awesome pit, if only to provide us who live so securely today with a slight reminder of what the soldiers of Christ suffered for our sake, so we may be quickened the better to appreciate the substance of our Christian heritage.

The Mamertine is described as a deep cell cut out of solid rock at the foot of the capitol, consisting of two chambers, one over the other. The only entrance is through an aperture in the ceiling. The lower chamber was the death cell. Light never entered and it was never cleaned. The awful stench and filth generated a poison fatal to the inmates of the dungeon, the most awful ever known. Even as early as 50 B.C. the historian Sallust describes it in the following words:

'In the prison called the Tullian, there is a place about ten feet deep. It is surrounded on the sides by walls and is closed above by a vaulted roof of stone. The appearance of it from the filth, the darkness and the smell is terrible.'

"No one can realize what its horrors must have been a hundred years later when Peter was imprisoned in its noisome depths. "n this vile subterranean rock the famed Jugurtha was starved and went stark raving mad. Vereingitorix, the valorous Druidic Gaulish chieftain, was murdered by the order of Julius Caesar. It is said that the number of Christians that perished within this diabolic cell is beyond computation - such is the glory of Rome. One can re-read the denouncing words of the noble Queen Boadicea, with profit. She branded them for what they were. These people of the Roman purple, who scorned all their enemies as barbarian, were the greatest and most cruel barbarians of all time.

"How Peter managed to survive those nine long dreadful months is beyond human imagination. During his entire incarceration he was manacled in an upright position, chained to the column, unable to lay down to rest. Yet, his magnificent spirit remained undaunted. It flamed with the immortal fervour of his noble soul proclaiming the Glory of God, through His Son, Jesus Christ. History tells us the amazing fact that in spite of all the suffering Peter was

subjected to, he converted his gaolers, Processus, Martinianus, and forty-seven others.

It is a strange and curious circumstance that the chair, or throne of Pius IX, at the Vatican Council, was erected directly over the altar of Processus and Marinianus. (sic) Peter, the Rock, as he predicted, met his death at Rome by the hands of the murderous Romans, who crucified him, according to their fiendish manner. He refused to die in the same position as our Lord, declaring he was unworthy. Peter demanded to be crucified in the reverse position, with his head hanging downward. Ironically enough, this wish was gratified by the taunting Romans in Nero's circus A.D. 67. ("The Drama of the Lost Disciples," George F.Jowett, p.176).

THE LEGENDS OF ST.PETER AND ST. PAUL

Legends, unlike traditions, have at best only grains of truth in them and those grains may be impossible to find. However, there is a persistent legend regarding St.Peter and Simon the Sorcerer which, at least has its beginnings in the historical account in the book of Acts where St.Peter denounced Simon for trying to purchase the Holy Spirit. The legend about the aftermath is as follows:

"The magician, vanquished by a superior power, flung his books into the Dead Sea, broke his wand, and fled to Rome, where he became a great favorite of the Emperor Claudius, and afterwards of Nero. Peter, bent on counteracting the wicked sorceries of Simon, followed him to Rome. About two years after his arrival he was joined there by the Apostle Paul. Simon Magus having asserted that he was himself a god, and could raise the dead, Peter and Paul rebuked his impiety, and challenged him to a trial of skill in the presence of the emperor. The arts of the magician failed; Peter and Paul restored the youth to life and on many other occasions Simon was vanquished and put to shame by the miraculous power of the Apostles. At length he undertook to fly up to heaven in sight of the emperor and the people; and, crowned with laurel, and supported by denons, he flung himself from a tower, and appeared for a while to float thus in the air, but St.Peter, falling on his knees commanded the denons to let go their hold, and Simon, precipitated to the ground, was dashed to pieces." ("Sacred and Legendary Art," Anna Jameson, p.209).

The same book records the early church Father's beliefs in the stories of St.Peter and Simon the Magician:

"There can be no doubt that there existed in the first century a Simon, a Samaritan, a pretender to divine authority and supernatural powers; who, for a time, had many followers; who stood in a certain relation to Christianity; and who may have held some opinions more or less similar to those entertained by the most famous heretics of the early ages, the Gnostics.

Irenaeus calls this Simon the father of all heretics. 'All those; he says, 'who in any way corrupt the truth, or mar the preaching of the Church, are disciples and successors of Simon, the Samaritan magician: Simon gave himself forth as a god, and carried about with him a beautiful woman named Helena, who he represented as the first conception of his - that is, of the divine-mind, the symbol or manifestation of that portion of spirituality which had become entangled in matter.' (Ibid., p. 209).

So notable a figure as St.Peter would of course have more legends created about him than the Simon the Magician story. For example:

"The Apostle Peter had a daughter born in lawful wedlock, who accompanied him in his journey from the East. Being at Rome with him, she fell sick of a grievous infirmity which deprived her of the use of her limbs. And it happened that as the disciples were at meat with him in his house, one said to him, 'Master, how is it that thou, who healest the infirmities of others, dost not heal thy daughter Petronilla?' And St.Peter answered, 'It is good for her to remain sick': but, that they might see the power that was in the word of God, he commanded her to get up and serve them at table, which she did; and having done so, she lay down again helpless as before; but many years afterwards, being perfected by her suffering, and praying fervently, she was healed. Petronilla was wonderfully fair; and Valerius Flaccus, a young and noble Roman, who was a heathen, became enamored of her beauty, and sought her for his wife; and he being very powerful, she feared to refuse him; she therefore desired him to return in three days, and promised that he should then carry her home. But she prayed earnestly to be delivered from this peril; and when Flaccus returned in three days with great pomp to celebrate the marriage, he found her dead. The company of nobles who attended him carried her to the grave, in which they laid her, crowned with roses; and Flaccus lamented greatly."

The legend places her death in the year 98, that is thirty-four years after the death of St.Peter; but it would be in vain to attempt to reconcile the dates and improbabilities of this story." (Ibid., p.215).

We are on firmer historical ground in the records of the church Fathers regarding the death of St.Peter himself:

"Thus Nero publicly announcing himself as the chief enemy of God, was led on in his fury to slaughter the Apostles. Paul is therefore said to have been headed at Rome, and Peter to have been crucified under him. And this account is confirmed by the fact, that the names of Peter and Paul still remain in the cemeteries of that city even to this day. But likewise, a certain ecclesiastical writer, Caius by name, who was born about the time of Zephyrinus bishop of Rome, disputing with Proclus the leader of the Phrygian sect, gives the following statement respecting the places where the earthly tabernacles of the aforesaid Apostles are laid. 'But I can show,' says he, 'the trophies of the Apostles. For if you will go to the Vatican, or to the Ostian road, you will find the trophies of those who have laid the foundation of this church. And that both suffered martyrdom about the same time.'

Dionysius bishop of Corinth bears the following testimony, in his discourse addressed to the Romans. "Thus, likewise you, by means of this admonition, have mingled the flourishing seed that had been planted by Peter and Paul at Rome and Corinth. For both of these having planted us at Corinth, likewise instructed us; and having in like manner taught in Italy, they suffered martyrdom about the same time. This testimony I have superadded, in order that the truth of the history might be still more confirmed." ("Ecclesiastical History," Eusebius, p.80).

There is much evidence that St.Peter chose St.Mark as his secretary or amanuensis.

"Peter's claim to literary fame rests more firmly on his relation to the Gospel of Mark. Papias of Hierapolis recorded the fact that 'Mark, the interpreter of Peter, wrote down carefully what he remembered, both the sayings and the deeds of Christ, but not in chronological order, for he did not hear the Lord and he did not accompany him. At a later time, however, he did accompany Peter, who adapted his instruction to the needs [of his hearers], but not with the object of making a connected series of discourses of our Lord. So Mark made no mistake in writing the individual discourses in the order in which he recalled them.' "On this authority it is believed that Mark served as translator for Peter when he preached in Rome. As Peter told and retold his experiences with Jesus, Mark interpreted them again and again to Christian groups. This frequent repetition gave Mark an almost verbatim memory of Peter's recollections. After the death of Peter, Mark, realizing the value of Peter's

first-hand account, recorded what he remembered so clearly in the document we know as the first of the Gospel records. Matthew and Luke obviously used Mark's Gospel in the writing of their lives of Jesus. [Not so, God can inspire whoever to write however, one fellow copying from another is human reasoning, and bears no weight – Commentary].

In this manner Peter became the source for our earliest Gospel and thus to a large extent supplied the material for the first written record of our Lord. If this reconstruction of events is accurate, Mark's Gospel can be considered Peter's personal remembrance of his life with Jesus. As such it remains one of Peter's greatest contributions to the Christian Church." ("The Twelve Christ Chose," Asbury Smith, p.21,22).

"Peter was led to the top of the Vatican Mount near the TYBUR and crucified with his head downwards. His body was embalmed by Marcellinus the Presbyter after the Jewish manner, then buried in the Vatican near the Triumphal Way. Over his body a small church was erected. It was destroyed by Heliogalachis." ("The Lives and Deaths of the Holy Apostles," Dorman Newman, p.20).

Dorman Newman (1685) apparently had sources unavailable to us which possibly cast more light on St.Peter's burial:

"His [Peter's] body was removed to the cemetery in the Appian Way, 2 miles from Rome where it rested obscurely until the Reign of Constantine [who] rebuilt and enlarged the Vatican to the honor of St.Peter.

The appearance of St Peter was as follows: His body was slender of a middle size inclining to tallness. His complexion pail [sic] and almost white. His beard curled and thick but short. His eyes black but flecked with red due to frequent weeping. Eye brows thin or none at all." (Ibid.21).

The Roman history, Augustus to Constantine, (p.188) contains an interesting insight regarding controversies about the propriety of the early Christians veneration of Apostolic burial places.

"The Montanist Proclus argued that the tombs of the four daughters of Philip, all prophetesses in New Testament times, were still to be seen at Hierapolis in Asia. Gaius replied that he could point out the 'trophies' of the Apostles (Peter and Paul) who founded the Roman church; they were on the Vatican hill and by the Ostian Way.

This interest in tombs was fairly widespread among Asian Christians and was certainly present at Rome as early as the middle of the second century. It did not spring into existence at that time, for in the New Testament itself we read of the burial of John the Baptist and of the martyr Stephen. Ignatius of Antioch expected wild beasts to be his tomb, but this was a special case. Polycarp of Smyrna was carefully buried, even though a reference to an annual commemoration in the late second century may be an interpolation in the story of his martyrdom." ("Augustus to Constantine, The Thrust of the Christian Movement into the Roman World," Robert M. Grant, p.166).

The head of St.Peter is said to be entombed in the Cathedral of St.John Lateran. The guidebook furnished the pilgrim there makes the following statement regarding this traditional resting place, but it gives no explanation of how the head of St.Peter came to be there

"The central Altar is called the Papal Altar, because only the Pope can celebrate Mass there. Behind the grille, aloft, in bust of silver gilt, are preserved the relics of the heads of St. Peter and St.Paul." ("The Cathedral of the Pope," J.B. de Toth, pp.18,19).

MODERN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES OF ST.PETER'S RELICS

The most recent story concerning the burial of St.Peter was given in the "National Geographic Magazine" (December, 1971, p. 872). This account, which we quote by permission, provides the latest Catholic archaeological and ecclesiastical conclusions regarding the burial place of St.Peter. This report is interesting not only because of its conclusions, but because it provides an authoritative description of the steps by which those conclusions were reached.

"Tradition holds that he was crucified upside down in Nero's Circus near Vatican Hill. His body was given to his friends, and he was buried close by. ...When Julius II pulled much of it down and began the church that is there today, the tomb of St.Peter was lost to view. Historians thought Peters bones were gone, his tomb sacked long before by Saracens.

...in 1939, while excavations were being made for Pius XI's tomb, Pius XII gave orders that the digging was to be extended in a search for the tomb of St.Peter. This 'village' was one of the great discoveries. The houses and

simpler tombs under them dated from the first to the third centuries A.D. They proved beyond doubt that Constantine had built St.Peter's over a cemetery. But an even more exciting discovery was involved. A Roman presbyter named Gains, who lived in the second and third centuries, had seen a grave memorial to St.Peter, and had mentioned it in a letter, a fragment of which has come down to us. Right under the papal altar, early in the excavations, a small ruined monument was found. This could well be the memorial Gains had seen. At its foot was a slab like a gravestone let into the ground. The excavator: raised it. They found a grave, but it was quite empty. Some bones were discovered nearby. For several years they were believed to be the bones of Peter, but anthropological study established that they were actually the bones of more than one person.

INSCRIPTION LEADS TO A STARTLING FIND

"That would have been that, except for one obstinate and learned woman, Margherita Guarducci. She is a professor at the University of Rome, and she deciphers ancient inscriptions.

She spent six years studying the scribblings made by Christian pilgrims on two old walls above the empty grave. One graffito on the older wall, when deciphered, delivered an electrifying message: 'Peter is within.' In the other wall was a recess lined with marble. To her it was clearly an ossuary, a niche for someone's bones. Had any been found?

The professor got hold of a workman who seemed to remember that something had been found there years ago, but he thought it was a piece of wall with a graffito. Undaunted, she searched St.Peter's storage rooms. There in a box marked for graffiti, she found bones.

The bones, she learned were indeed from the ossuary in the ancient wall. Ten years before, a Monsignor, during his daily inspection of the excavations had put the bones in a plain wooden box and deposited it in Storage.

POPE PAUL RESOLVES A SCHOLARLY DISPUTE

"Professor Guarducci had the bones examined by Professor Venerando Correnti, an anthropologist of the University of Rome, who, as she puts it, 'entirely bore out what could be expected for the bones found in the only niche built by Constantine in his monument to St.Peter.'

It was plain to her what had happened. When Constantine had erected the first St.Peter's, he had cautiously moved the bones of the saint from his grave to this biding place, a few feet away, to protect them from deterioration and grave robbers. That the bones Professor Guarducci found are those of St Peter, she has no doubt They are the bones of a man of 60 or 70, and in a box with them were bits of earth and shreds of purple-and-gold cloth. The age tallies with Peter's traditional age at the time of his crucifixion. Tradition says that he was buried in plain earth. And when Constantine had the bones removed to the niche, it would have seemed only fitting to have had them wrapped in precious purple-and-gold cloth. Scholars disputed these conclusions; some still do. But Pope Paul VI settled the question for the Catholic world. Speaking in St. Peter's on June 26, 1968, he announced that the bones of the saint had been found. Today the bones are back in the niche of the tomb, hidden from public view." (National Geographic, "St.Peter's" by Aubrey Menen, Vol.140, No.6, December, 1971, p.872, 873).

It was this writer's privilege to be granted permission late in November, 1971 to study and photograph the burial place of St. Peter's bones deep beneath the huge basilica of St Peter's.

Beyond any doubt this huge church building is indeed built upon a very extensive and well preserved first century A.D. Roman cemetery, and the photographs reveal the name of Peter clearly inscribed in ancient Latin in the place where the Apostle's bones were discovered.

Edgar J. Goodspeed quotes Clement and Eusebius concerning the last hours of St.Peter's life

"Peter's parting words to his wife as she was being led out to martyrdom are recorded by Clement of Alexandria in his 'Miscellanies' and repeated by Eusebius in his 'Church History':

"They say that when the blessed Peter saw his own wife led out to die, he rejoiced because of her summons and her return home, and called to her very encouragingly and comfortingly, addressing her by name, and saying: O thou, remember the Lord!" ("The Twelve," Edgar J. Goodspeed, p.157).

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COMMENT:

The evidenced from many quarters is indeed that Peter did preach and teach in Rome, but no evidence supports Peter as the founder of the Christian Church in Rome. He was, as like the apostle Paul, put to death in Rome. His remains, like those of Paul were in Rome for a number of centuries. BUT, and there is a large "but" - just about everyone wants to forget what the historian BEDE wrote on the matter. I quote from "St.Paul in Britain" by R.W.Morgan:

"Bede was a very earnest adherent of the novel papal Church, introduced A.D.596, by Augustine into Britain, but the honesty and simplicity of his character has rendered his history in many respects a very inconvenient and obnoxious record to the said Church. What became of the remains of St.Peter and St.Paul? At Rome they STILL PRETEND TO EXHIBIT THEM, but Bede - and it must be remembered he is a CANONIZED saint in the Roman calendar - EXPRESSLY STATES that the remains of the bodies of the apostles Peter and Paul, the martyrs St.Lawrence, St.John, St.Gregory, and St.Pancras, were, at the solicitation of King Oswy to Pope Vitalian, REMOVED from Rome to ENGLAND, and deposited at CANTERBURY A.D. 656, Pope Vitalian's letter to Oswy being extant. (Bede's History., lib. iii. c. 29). THEIR REMAINS, then, if any, REPOSE IN BRITISH SOIL."

So much for Papal Rome, then when you think what they tried to do with the "Shroud of Turin" as the burial cloth of Jesus, you should not be surprised, they would want you to believe the physical remains of bones of Peter and Paul are in Rome. But now you have seen the "rest of the story!"

THE TWELVE DISCIPLES

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 1:23)

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.

SIMON PETER

Other Names

- * Simeon bar Jona (Simon, son of Jona) •
- * Cephas ("rock" or "a stone")
- * Simon Peter
- * Simon

General Information

- * 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 and 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)

Encounters with Jesus

- * 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.

Stories

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)

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JAMES, SON OF ZEBEDEE

Other Names

- * Son of Zebedee
- * Boanerges (Son of Thunder) "James the Elder"
- * "James the Great"

General Information

- * 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 1. The only one of the twelve disciples who died for his faith that was recorded in Scripture. (Acts 12:2)

Personality and 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)

Encounters with Jesus

- * 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.

Stories

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.

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JOHN

Other Names

* Sun of Zebedee

* Boanerges (Son of Minder)

* "The Beloved Disciple" (The disciple whom Jesus loved)

* "The Evangelist"

* "The Revealer"

General Information

* 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 James. (Matthew 4:21)

* Partner with Peter. (Luke 5:10)

- * One of the pillars of the Jerusalem church. (Galatians 2:9)
- * Healed and preached. (Acts 3-4; 8)
- * Exiled to the island of Patmos. (Revelation 1:1,9)
- * Wrote the Gospel of John, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Revelation.

Personality and Character

- * Vengeful and fiery. (Luke 9:54)
- * Judgmental. (Mark 9:38)
- * Selfish. (Mark 10:35-37)
- * Bold, loving and compassionate after Pentecost. (Acts 4:13; 1 John 4)

Encounters with Jesus

- * One of the three disciples in the core group of disciples. (Mark 5:37; 9:2; 13:3; 14:33)
- * Suggested that driving out demons could only be performed by those who follow Jesus and his disciples. (Mark 9:38)
- * 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)
- * Reclined next to Jesus during the Last Supper. (John 13:23)
- * Was given the responsibility at the cross to take care of Mary, Jesus' mother. (John 19:26, 27)
- * Ran ahead of Peter to see Jesus' empty tomb and expressed faith by "seeing and believing." (John 20:2-8)
- * Witnessed the miraculous catch of fish on the Sea of Galilee after Jesus' resurrection. (John 21:2-7)

Key Lesson

God's love, evident in Jesus Christ, saves, transforms, and unites all believers.

Stories

Some stories suggest that John was released from exile on the island of Patmos and returned to Ephesus (Turkey today).

Stories suggest that John died in Ephesus around AD 100.

Symbols of John sometimes include the eagle (Revelation 4:7) and a book.

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ANDREW

Other Names

- * "Protokletos" (First Called)

General Information

- * Son of Jona. (John 1:42)
- * Born in Bethsaida (John 1:44)
- * Lived in Capernaum with Peter. (Mark 1:29)
- * Fisherman. (Matthew. 4:18)
- * Brother of Simon Peter. (Matthew 4:18)
- * Disciple of John the Baptist. (John 1:35-40)
- * Listed as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4;

Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16)

- * The name Andrew derives from Greek, meaning "manly."

Personality and Character

- * Enthusiastic about Christ. (John 1:35-42)
- * Inquisitive. (John 1:35-38)
- * Resourceful. (John 6:8,9)

Encounters with Jesus

- * First to follow Jesus. (John 1:35-40)
- * Called to be a fisher of men. (Matthew 4:19)
- * Sent out on a mission to the Jews to preach "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. (Matthew 10:5-8)
- * Informed Jesus that several Greeks wanted to see him. (John 12:20-22)
- * Told Jesus of the boy with five loaves of bread and two fish. (John 6:8, 9)
- * Was present when Jesus appeared to the disciples after the Resurrection. (John 20:19-25)
- * Was present for the Great Commission when Jesus sent his disciples to all nations. (Matthew 28:16-20)

* Witnessed Jesus being taken up into heaven. (Acts 1:8,9)

Key Lesson

Go out and eagerly share the good news about Jesus Christ.

Stories

Some suggest that Andrew preached in Greece, Asia Minor, and Russia
A seventh-century story suggests that Andrew was crucified on an X-shaped cross by a Roman proconsul.

The symbol for Andrew is sometimes the X-shaped cross.

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MATTHEW

Other Names

- * Levi
- * Levi the son of Alphaeus

General Information

- * Son of Alphaeus. (Mark 2:14)
- * From Capernaum. (Mark 2:1-17)
- * Tax collector in Galilee. (Matthew 9:9)
- * Possible brother of James son of Alphaeus. (Mark 3:18)
- * Listed as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4;

Acts 1:13)

- * Wrote the Gospel of Matthew
- * The name Matthew derives from Hebrew, meaning "gift of God."

Personality and Character

- * Penitent. (Matthew 9:9; 10:2)
- * Hospitable. (Matthew 9:10)

Encounters with Jesus

- * Matthew left his tax collector booth to follow Jesus. (Matthew 9:9)
- * Matthew invited Jesus over to dine with him and his corrupt friends. (Matthew 9:10)
- * Sent out on a mission to the Jews to preach "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. (Matthew 10:5-8)
- * Was present at the Last Supper (Matthew 26:20)

Key Lesson

Jesus Christ is for everyone, even sinners and outcasts.

Stories

Some stories suggest that Matthew ministered to Persia, Macedonia, Syria, Parthia, Media, and Ethiopia bringing the good news to kings.

Some stories suggest that Matthew died a martyr.

The symbol for Matthew is sometimes a bag of coins in reference to his occupation as a tax collector before he encountered Jesus.

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THOMAS

Other Names

- * Didymus (Twin)
- * Judas Thomas
- * "Doubting Thomas"

General Information

- * He was a twin. (John 20:24)
- * Listed as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16)
- * Inquisitive. (John 14:5)
- * Doubtful. (John 20:24, 25)
- * Courageous. (John 11:16)

* Faithful. (John 20:24-29)

Encounters with Jesus

* Courageously encouraged disciples to go to Bethany. (John 11:16)

* Asked Jesus how to know where Jesus was going. (John 14:5)

* Doubted Jesus' resurrection saying he would have to touch his wounds in order to believe. (John 20:25)

* Affirmed that Jesus was Lord and God. (John 20:28)

* Witnessed the miraculous catch of fish and ate breakfast with Jesus after his resurrection. (John 21:2-7)

Key Lessons

Jesus can overcome doubts and lead believers to faithfulness.

Stories

Stories suggest that Thomas traveled to India and founded the Christian church there.

Some suggest Thomas was killed by a spear for his faith, and was buried in India.

Some say Thomas was a carpenter.

Symbols for Thomas include the spearhead and the T-square.

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JAMES, son of ALPHEAUS

Other Names

* James the son of Alphaeus

* "James the Younger"

* "James the Less"

General Information

* Son of Alphaeus. (Mark 3:18)

* Possible brother of Matthew (Levi) the tax collector, also the son of Alphaeus. (Mark 2:14)

- * Listed as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matt. 10:3; Acts 1:13)
- * James the son of Alphaeus is often confused with James the brother of Jesus (who wrote the book of James) or James the brother of Joseph.

Personality and Character

- * Unknown.

Encounters with Jesus

- * Selected as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4; Luke 6:14-16)
- * Sent out on a mission to the Jews to preach "the kingdom of heaven is at hand, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. (Matthew 10:5-8)
- * Was present at the Last Supper. (Matthew 26:20)
- * Was present when Jesus appeared to the disciples after the Resurrection. (John 20:19-25)

Key Lesson

All followers of Jesus can still accomplish the work of God without being in the limelight.

Stories

Some suggest that James, son of Alphaeus, belonged to the revolutionary group known as the Zealots. Some say that James was arrested by the Jews, thrown off the Temple, and then beaten to death by a club.

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THADDAEUS

Other Names

- * Jude
- * Juda the son of James
- * Lebbaeus

General Information

- * Son of James. (Luke 6:16)
- * Listed as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4; Acts 1:13)
- * The Aramaic meaning of both Thaddaeus and Lebbaeus is the same, "beloved" or "dear to the heart."
- * The name "Judas" derives from the Hebrew name Judah, meaning "praise."
- * Jude is sometimes confused with Judas the brother of Jesus, Judas Barsabbas, and Judas Iscariot.

Personality and Character

- * Inquisitive. (John 14:22)
- * Confused. (John 14:22)

Encounters with Jesus

- * Selected as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4; Acts 1:13)
- * Sent out on a mission to the Jews to preach "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. (Matthew 10:5-8)
- * Asked Jesus how he would reveal himself to his followers and not to the world. (John 14:22)
- * Was present at the Last Supper. (Matthew 26:20)

Key Lesson

Jesus will reveal his truths to believers who follow him.

Stories

Some suggest that Thaddaeus belonged to the revolutionary group, the Zealots.

Some scholars believe that Thaddaeus authored the book of Jude, although most believe the author is Judas the brother of Jesus.

The symbol for Thaddaeus is sometimes a gold ship with silver sails before a red horizon, which is a reference to the ship he took on missionary journeys.

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SIMON the ZEALOT

Other Names

- * Simon the Cananaean

General Information

- * Was a Zealot. (Matthew 10:4; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13)
- * Listed as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4; Acts 1:13)
- * The name Simon derives from the Hebrew name Shimon, meaning "hearing."
- * The word "Cananaean" derives from an Aramaic word meaning "zealous one."

Personality and Character

- * Patriotic. (Matthew 10:4)
- * Loyal. (Mark 3:18)
- * Passionate. (Luke 6:15)
- * Sacrificial. (Acts 1:13)

Encounters with Jesus

- * Selected as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4; Acts 1:13)
- * Sent out on a mission to the Jews to preach "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. (Matthew 10:5-8)
- * Was present at the Last Supper. (Matthew 26:20)
- * Was present for the Great Commission and Jesus' Ascension into heaven. (Matthew 28:16)

Key Lesson

One should be willing to sacrifice his or her politics to follow Jesus. One story suggests that Simon was the bridegroom at the wedding in Cana.

Some stories suggest that Simon was a missionary to Persia.
The symbol for Simon is sometimes a book resting on a fish, which is a reference to Simon fishing for people.

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JUDAS ISCARIOT

Other Names

- * "Judas the Betrayer"
- * Judas the son of Simon

General Information

- * Judas was the treasurer for the group of disciples; was a thief. (John 12:5,6; 13:29)
- * Judas betrayed Jesus, felt remorse, threw the blood money in the temple and hanged himself: The chief priest used the money to purchase the potter's field, fulfilling prophecy. (Matthew 27:3-10)
- * Judas purchased the Field of Blood and fell headlong and "burst open..." (Acts 1:18-20)
- * Judas was replaced by Matthias who was added to the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:26)

Personality and Character

- * Greedy. (Matthew 26:14-16)
- * Deceitful. (Matthew 26:25)
- * Treacherous. (Matthew 26:47-50)
- * Remorseful. (Matthew 27:3-5)

Encounters with Jesus

- * Selected as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:4; Luke 6:15)
- * Jesus referred to Judas as the devil. (John 6:70,71)
- * Criticized Mary for anointing Jesus with expensive perfume. (John 12:4-8)

- * Conversed with Jesus during the Last Supper. (Matthew 26:23-25; John 13:27,28)
- * The devil entered his heart at the Last Supper. (John 13:2)
- * Betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. (Matthew 26:14-16; 47-51)

Key Lesson

Not all who claim to follow Jesus are faithful to him and his goals.

Stories

Judas was possibly from Kerioth in Judea.

Some scholars suggest that Judas was a member of the Zealot sect known as the Sicarii, who were dagger-bearing assassins.

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PHILIP

Other Names

- * None

General Information

- * Born in Bethsaida. (John 1:44)
- * Well versed in Scripture. (John 1:45, 46)
- * Listed as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16)
- * The disciple Philip is often confused with Philip the evangelist found in Acts.
- * The name Philip derives from Greek, meaning "he who loves horses."
- * Philip probably spoke Greek. (John 12:20,21)

Personality and Character

- * Practical. (John 6:7)

- * Helpful. (John 12:20, 21)
- * Literal and confused. (John 14:8)

Encounters with Jesus

- * The third disciple Jesus called. (John 1:43)
- * Brought Nathanael (Bartholomew) to Jesus. (John 1:45,46)
- * Jesus tested him regarding the feeding of the multitude. (John 6:5-7)
- * Informed Jesus that several Greeks wanted to see him. (John 12:20-22)
- * Asked Jesus to show him the Father. (John 14:8,9)
- * Was present at the Last Supper. (Matthew 26:20)

Key Lesson

All the knowledge in the world does not compare to the truth found in Jesus.

Stories

Tradition suggests that Philip lived and preached in Scythia (Ukraine today). Some stories suggest that Philip was crucified on a tall cross at Hierapolis of Phrygia (Turkey today).

Symbols for Philip sometimes include loaves of bread (John 6:5-7) and a tall cross.

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BARTHOLOMEW

Other Names

- * Nathanael

General Information

- * Born and/or raised in Cana of Galilee. (John 21:2)
- * Well versed in the Hebrew Scriptures. (John 1:46)
- * Listed as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew, 10:2-4; Acts 1:13)
- * The name Bartholomew derives from Greek, meaning "son of Tolmai."

* The name Nathanael derives from the Hebrew, meaning "God has given"

Personality and Character

- * Skeptical. (John 1:46)
- * Honest. (John 1:47)
- * Faithful. (John 1:49)

Encounters with Jesus

- * Jesus told Nathanael that he was an honest Israelite and informed him that he saw him sitting under the fig tree. (John 1:47,48)
- * Nathanael said that Jesus was the "Son of God" and "King of Israel (John 1:49)
- * Jesus enlightened Nathanael with what to expect (John 1:50,51)
- * Witnessed the miraculous catch of fish and ate breakfast with Jesus after his resurrection. (John 21:2-7)

Key Lesson

Believers are called to test all things with Scripture and remain true to its principles.

Stories

Some suggest that Bartholomew ministered to Asia Minor and India and the Armenian church claims Bartholomew as their founder. Tradition suggests that Bartholomew was flayed alive in Armenia. The symbol for Bartholomew is sometimes a blade.

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