



THOMAS

The Search for the
TWELVE APOSTLES

William S. McBirnie Ph.D.

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CHAPTER IX : THOMAS

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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 NINE

THOMAS

ST.Thomas was also known as Didymas. The word means "twin," but we do not know anything about the brother or sister who was his twin. He was a native of Galilee and by trade, a fisherman.

The few Biblical references which single him out from among the Twelve for special attention seem to indicate that he was a questioner or doubter. Even to this day he is known as "doubting Thomas." Thomas possessed a nature which contained within it certain conflicting elements exceedingly difficult of reconciliation, possessed little natural buoyancy of spirit, and was inclined to look often at life with icy coolness or despondency. Yet, Thomas was a man of indomitable courage and entire unselfishness. He combined a perpetual faith in the teaching of Jesus mingled with a sincere love for Jesus the teacher. He is referred to in detail by the Gospel of John alone, though his election to the Twelve is recorded in Matthew 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15 and Acts 1:13.

John records that when Jesus, despite immanent danger at the hands of hostile Jews, declared his intention of going to Bethany to help Lazarus, Thomas alone opposed the other disciples who sought to dissuade him, and protested, "Let us also go: that we may die with him." (John 11:16) Was this courage or a fatalistic pessimism? Perhaps, in a strange way, it was both.

On the eve of the Passion, Thomas put the question, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" (John 14:5) In this he revealed an insensitivity to what Jesus had taught which came from an unwillingness to believe.

After the Crucifixion, Thomas was not present when the Risen Christ first appeared to the disciples. Later he arrived and upon hearing of the resurrection was stubbornly unconvinced. Said Thomas, "Except I shall see the print of the nails ... I will not believe." (John 20:25)

Paradoxically, for one who did not believe in the resurrection, Thomas remained in the company of the other Apostles until eight days later when Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst. Addressing Thomas he invited him to come and examine his wounds and to "be not faithless, but believing." Whereupon Thomas prostrated himself and uttered the expression, "My Lord and my God." He was reproved by Jesus for his previous unbelief:

"Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John 20:24-29) John, who has given us the greatest amount of detail about Thomas and who had probably known him from boyhood, since they were of the same craft and city, mentions that Thomas was present when Jesus manifested himself while the disciples were fishing on the Sea of Tiberias.

The constant picture of Thomas is that of a personality intent to gloom and doubt, yet a believer just the same. He had never what the Bible calls "a wicked heart of unbelief." Instead he was a man who struggled against his doubts and was ready to abandon them when he could.

It is well for us that we have the picture of "doubting Thomas" in the Biblical record for, as has been commonly noted by the commentators, "Thomas doubted that we might have no doubts."

THE MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES OF THOMAS

A great many legends have grown around the far-reaching ministry of this Apostle. Among those which must be rejected is the attempt to identify him with Jude, the son of James, and as a twin brother of the Messiah. Another legend makes a woman named Lysia, the twin sister of Thomas. (ISBE, p.2973) However, in the light of traditions, which have a great deal of history to back them up, we need not worry about the myths, but may rather confidently reconstruct the actual missionary journeys of St. Thomas. In fact, it may be said that we really know more about St. Thomas than we do about almost any other Apostle with the exception of John and Peter. It is our intention to examine in detail this traditional history and to note the high quality of the documentation which stands behind it.

It is evident that Thomas visited Babylon. Because the tradition of the western churches revolved around Constantinople and Rome, it is astonishing how little is known, even by many church historians, about the many other vital Christian movements which began during Apostolic times. These movements quickly spread eastward, and therefore owed nothing to Western Christianity.

Some of the eastern churches boast that their hierarchical organizations date prior to those established in Constantinople and Rome. This may be more of a presumption than a historical fact since the hierarchy was a late development everywhere. But the traditions are clear; there was an Apostolic movement eastward and Thomas was a central figure.

THE TRADITION OF THE CHURCH OF THE EAST

The official name of the Church of the East is "The Holy Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East." Its publications claim, "It was founded by the Apostles, St.Peter, St.Thomas, St. Thaddeus and St.Mari of the Seventy. In the early centuries of Christianity there was only one Church. The affairs of the Church were managed by Bishops in their respective areas. There were also chief Bishops known as Patriarchs. Writes Mar Yacob Manna, a Uniate Bishop of the Roman Church, in his book "Margy Peghyany"

"Places where Patriarchates were organized by the holy Apostles are the following mothers of all cities; the first, Babylon. It is the metropolis, yea, the mother of all cities, and therefore was the Head of the Assyrian Kingdom. Then Alexandria, Antioch, Rome, and Constantinople." Of these only Babylon was at that time outside the Roman Empire of the West. So the Babylon Patriarch soon came to be known as Patriarch of the East. In the words of the Rev.Enoch Jones of the American Episcopal Church, "the Patriarchate of the East can claim to be the oldest Patriarchate." His Holiness Maran Mar Eshai Shimun is the 119th Patriarch in this glorious line. It may also be noted that the Church of the East is variously called by various historians.

Some of the popular appellations are Assyrian Church, Nestorian Church, Chaldean Syrian Church, etc." (Souvenir of India, The Church of the East, p.49)

"...The Church of the East traces its origin directly back to the original Apostles. One of its chapels founded by the Three Wise Men on their return

from Bethlehem, is still in use today in the town of Resaieh, in Northern Iran. The Patriarch attended that chapel as a boy." (Ibid., p.53)

A noted special volume was published to commemorate the visit to India of the Patriarch of the Church of the East. It contains many references to the Apostolic tradition of that church body and St.Thomas.

"...After establishing churches and ordaining clergy in the Middle East, St.Thomas came to this country as deputed by his Lord. Here, too, he instructed thousands and thousands of people in the true faith of our Lord, baptised them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, set up churches for their worship and ordained the necessary clergy to cater to their spiritual needs.

Afterwards he endured various persecutions and consequently martyrdom for the belief and justice of our Lord, by a lance thrust by miscreants deputed by King Mizdi." (Souvenir - India, p.19)

"More than one thousand and nine hundred years ago, the holy Apostle St.Thomas, after establishing the first Christian Church among his own people in ancient Babylon, turned to India, led by the Holy Spirit, and with an evangelical zeal traversed this subcontinent preaching the good news and baptising those who believed in Him. His words had 'fallen into good ground, bearing fruit bringing forth a hundredfold' and spreading to countries all over Asia. But by the vicissitudes of history, through the centuries, this Church, founded on the blood of martyrs, has become almost extinct, leaving a scattered remnant" (Ibid., Foreword)

Dr.Michael Ramsay, Archbishop of Canterbury, acknowledges in a letter the above claims, printed in the same volume, in the following words:

"...Had there been time during my visit to India I would have greatly welcomed an opportunity of visiting your ancient Church of the East in India, with your proud claim of having been founded by the great Apostle St.Thomas himself." (Ibid., Messages, p.17)

Traditions of the Syrian Indian Church

Dr.Edgar J. Goodspeed bears witness to the tradition of Syrian Indian Church as follows:

"It is a striking fact that the so-called 'Acts of Thomas' relate the mission of Thomas to India, and they were written early in the third century, as modern authorities (Harnack, M.R.James) agree. This goes far to confirm the legend of the Syrian Indian church, that Thomas did indeed not only cross Parthia with his message but actually penetrated India with it! These Acts have some links with the first-century Indian history, also." (The Twelve, Edgar J.Goodspeed, p.97)

Traditions of The Nestorian Church

On the occasion of this writer's visit to Iran in 1971, he held conferences with a number of noted Christian authorities. Among them was His Excellency Yohannan S.Issayi, the archivist of the Chaldean Catholic Library at Teheran. He was furnished a book by a church historian, John Stewart, Ph.D. (Narsai Press, Trichur, Kerala, India, 1928, 1961). In the introduction Stewart writes: "The message must have been carried to the furthest confines of the Asiatic continent with almost the rapidity of a prairie fire. It is evident St.Thomas arrived in India no later than 49 A.D." (Introduction, p.27)

Speaking of the Nestorians and their Apostolic origins Stewart says, "The center of this marvelous church was first in Edessa and then in the Persian province of Abiabene. There was a large and widespread Christian community throughout the whole of central Asia in the first centuries of the present era. Countries such as Afganistan, and Tibet were centers of Christian activity." (Introduction, p.27)

The Traditions of The Chaldean Catholic Church

The learned and controversial Roman Catholic Cardinal Tisserot writes: "Speaking of Persia the Chaldean said, The Apostle Thomas accompanied by Jude were primary Apostles." (Dictionaire De Theologie Catholique, A. Vacant, E. Mangenot, E. Amann, p.162. Published 1931, Paris Librarie, Letoueny Et Ave. 87, Boulevard Raspail)

The Traditions of the Mar Thomar Syrian Church of South India

The Metropolitan Juhanon Mar Thomar, the head of the Mar Thomar Syrian Church of South India, in an interview with Christian Life Magazine (November 1954, page 20) said, "According to tradition the history of the Mar Thomar Syrian Church goes back to the Apostle Thomas who landed, we are

told, at Malabar, South India in A.D.52 and founded several Christian churches.

This is supported only by early and strong traditions and that is all we can say. Shut off by mountains on one side and the sea on the other, the Christians at Malabar lived, more or less, a life of isolation. Doctrinal controversies of the western church did not concern them. Unaware of these controversies they welcomed with open arms any Christians from foreign countries and consequently were influenced by various eastern churches."

The Records of the Coptic Church Historians

While this body of Christians has not taken an official stand on the life of St.Thomas, the noted historian Aziz S. Atiya speaks on the St.Thomas tradition:

"The congregations of South Indian Christians have always prided themselves on a long-standing tradition that their Christianity is apostolic and that it was introduced into Malabar by the Apostle Thomas, after whom they call themselves.

The literary origin of this tradition is found in the apocryphal Acts of Judas-Thomas ascribed to the famous Edessene writer Bardesanes (154-222) towards the end of the second or the beginning of the third century. It is said that a certain Abbanes, a trade envoy to Syria was commissioned by the Indian King Gondophares to seek an able architect from that country to build a palace for him. The tradition states that he was directed by Our Lord Himself in a Jerusalem market to St.Thomas, who accompanied him back to India. There St.Thomas agreed with the king to undertake that task in winter instead of during the usual summer building season. At heart the saint really contemplated a celestial and not a material palace. As he squandered the royal funds in giving to the poor, the king seized him and put him in prison. At that time the king's brother, Gad, died and at his burial witnessed the untold splendour of the celestial palace promised by the saint, then miraculously came back to life to recount his wondrous vision. The king and his brother therefore released the saint and accepted baptism at his hand. The remaining parts of the Acts contain even more fabulous miracles until in the end, the Apostle committed the church to the care of a deacon named Zenopbus (or Xanthippus) and went away to preach the Gospel in other parts where he earned the crown of martyrdom. After his burial, a Syrian co-religionist transported his body back to Edessa without the knowledge of the local king,

who eventually wanted to try to cure his sick son by means of the saint's relic. Upon opening the grave, they found the body to be gone, but earth from the tomb performed the miracle and healed the ailing prince, and the whole royal family was converted to Christianity.

Two schools of thought have arisen in regard to this apocryphal tale. The first impulse of the scholar was to refuse outright the whole episode as altogether unhistorical. Such was the reaction of the old school. More recent thought has tended not to discard the idea of St. Thomas's apostolate to India, though still repudiating the legendary nature of the Acts. It has already been pointed out that the sea route to South India was well used in Roman times for the purpose of the pepper trade, and that Roman gold and silver coins from the early centuries of our era have been discovered in Malabarese soil. Syrians had reached India, which is almost identical in the literature of the East Syrians with our modern India. Moreover, startling numismatic evidence has established the existence of both King Gondophares and his brother Gad as historic figures and not simply legendary characters. Their names have been found on excavated coins and in a Gandhara inscription fixing their rule as about 19-45 A.D. in Scytho-India in the Indus valley. Vestiges of St. Thomas Christians are said to persist in secret parts of northern India, for example at Tatta near the mouth of the Indus. It is thought that the Apostle was driven from the Indian Parthian empire by the descent of the Kushan invaders in the year 50 A.D. and that he sailed to the island of Socotra, whence he reached South India on a passing trade ship. Bishop Medlycott contends that the climatic conditions specified by the Acta Thoma apply more to South India than to the Punjab, and that the court life of Gondophares benefits a maharaja's household more than a Parthian royal palace.

We may conjecture that St. Thomas the Apostle could have joined an already existing colony of Jews, Greeks and Syrians at Muziris-Cranganore on the shore of Malabar.

Whatever the outcome of these arguments, it is clear that Christianity was planted in Malabar at a very early date, certainly before the end of the second century, as testified by Pantaenus." (A History of Eastern Christianity, Aziz S. Atiya, p 361-363)

Modern Historical Confirmation of First Century Travel to India

While the following news item has nothing to do with St. Thomas, as such, it confirms the fact that there was much traveling from the Roman Empire to

India in the first century. It consists of a story which appeared in the L.A. Times (August 25, 1971, Part 1A). The story was headlined, "Ancient Jewish Colony in India Disappearing."

COCHIN, India-The synagogue here celebrated its 400th anniversary in 1968 and visitors included Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Jews from as far away as the United States. Now there is no rabbi.

The white Jews along the Malabar Coast once numbered tens of thousands. Now there are only 80. The Jews of Cochin came to India in AD 72, driven from Jerusalem by Roman legions. Now many - a critical number - are returning to Israel.

The Cochin synagogue - others closed when the congregations returned to Israel - contains many historic treasures. Among them are the copper plates given by the local ruler in AD 379 to the Jewish community, conveying a large land grant.

The reader will note several details of the above story which confirm the likelihood of the historicity of the traditions of early Christianity in India. The fact that a colony of Jews came there in A.D.72 proves that the Jews of the first century knew about this part of the world and that travel of even large groups was possible. There was no question of an exploration of an unknown continent. Further, the continuity of the Jewish community demonstrates how a Christian community could also continually exist from the first century until the present in the same area. The references to the copper plates is similar to several stories about this means of granting and certifying political and property rights in ancient times.

Modern Scholarship

There is one great work of scholarship which reveals a very thorough study of the St. Thomas tradition in India, which seems to confirm, its historicity. We are greatly indebted to the Roman Catholic scholar, A.M. Mundadan, who wrote his doctoral dissertation on St. Thomas at a German University in 1980, and later expanded it into a book which the writer purchased at the Vatican Bookstore in Rome early in 1971. The book is entitled "The Traditions of the St. Thomas Christians." It was printed in India and written in English. It reveals the author's superb ability at research and presents a truly enormous amount of documentation. We have excerpted the following information from

this book. One could only wish that we had as much information about all the other apostles as Dr.Mundadan has provided about St.Thomas.

Dr.Mundadan deals with arguments regarding the Apostolate of St.Thomas in India:

Quote:

"The Portuguese arrived in India at the end of the fifteenth century. When they came they certainly possessed some vague information concerning the apostolate of St.Thomas in India. Not long after their arrival they began to hear reports about the existence of what was described as the 'house' and 'tomb' of St. Thomas in Mylapore on the Choromandel Coast. But during the first decade or two the Portuguese officials were so busy on the Malabar Coast and in Goa that they could give practically little attention to matters concerning Choromandel. It was only in the early twenties of the sixteenth century that they made earnest efforts to explore Choromandel and Mylapore and the 'house' of St.Thomas.

For a review of the respective positions taken by different scholars on this question we may refer the readers to a learned article by Hambye S.J. in The Clergy Monthly. He classifies these scholars into four groups: the first of these groups, in which is included the Bollandist Peeters S.J., denies any kind of Indian apostolate of St.Thomas; the second group is formed of those who support the North Indian apostolate of the Apostle but deny or disregard the South Indian apostolate; those who are strongly for the North Indian apostolate but keep an open mind, ready to weigh the pros and cons of the possibility of the South Indian apostolate belong to the third class; the fourth group of scholars, while trying to combine both the North Indian and South Indian apostolates, consider the South Indian apostolate more reliable.

Our source of knowledge for the Indian apostolate of St.Thomas is a tradition because we do not possess any written account of it contemporary to the apostolate as we have in St.Luke's 'Acts of the Apostles' of St. Paul's activities and of some of St. Peter's activities. The earliest written record about St. Thomas' preaching in India is the romantic apocryphal Acts of St.Thomas, written in Syriac towards the end of the second century or by the beginning of the third century. From the third century onwards we find frequent allusions to the Parthian or Indian apostolate of St.Thomas in the writings of the Church-Fathers and other ecclesiastical writers. Beginning with the fourth century the tradition is constant and unanimous in all the Churches.

The contents of the western tradition, whether it is single or combined, may be summarised thus: Thomas the Apostle preached the Gospel in Parthia and India, converted many, including members of some royal family, suffered martyrdom there, and was first buried in India itself; later his mortal remains were transferred to the West (to Edessa) where they were honourably deposited and venerated. The main source for this tradition is, no doubt, the Acts of St.Thomas in which India is named the field of St.Thomas' activity.

The third century writers up to the council of Nicaea assigned the field to Parthia. But the post-Nicene writers consider it India. This difference is the main basis for Hambye to distinguish a double origin for the western tradition. The Indian tradition is not so clearly uniform; it varies, as we go from source to source and from place to place. The general trend may be summarised here as follows: St.Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles of our Lord came direct from the Near-East and landed in Cranganore about 52 A.D.; he converted high caste Hindu families in Cranganore, Palayur, Quilon etc.; consecrated priests from some of these families; built some seven churches, erected crosses; then passed over to the eastern coast and suffered martyrdom there; his tomb is in Mylapore on the coast. The western tradition is generally taken as based on the Acts of St.Thomas. Thus the authors who deny any kind of historic value for this work, deny absolutely the Indian apostolate of St. Thomas; while those who assert the North Indian apostolate attribute some historic value to the Acts. We are rather inclined to think that the Acts cannot be the only source of the western tradition, which is constant and unanimous from the beginning of the fourth century, especially since the Acts are acknowledged by certain Fathers already in the fourth century as apocryphal. There must have existed already before the composition of the Acts some element in the oral tradition about the apostolate of St.Thomas, which probably formed the nucleus or the point of departure for the romantic Acts. In establishing this historical nucleus the double trend in the western tradition, suggested by authors, if well explored, may be a step forward.

Although the Portuguese, from the early years of their arrival in India, had begun to hear about the tomb of St.Thomas on the Choromandel Coast, it seems that it was only in 1517 some of them actually entered Mylapore to visit it.

The entire relics are known to have been removed from India to Edessa and later to Ortona in Italy where now they rest.

According to the Acts of Thomas already before 200 A.D. the bones of the Apostle must have been removed to the West: long after the martyrdom and burial of St.Thomas a son of Mazdai the ruler of the place where he was martyred falls sick; he then gets the tomb of the Apostle opened to heal his son with the relics, but the bones were not found, 'for one of the brethren had taken them away secretly and conveyed them to the West'. St.Ephrem recognises the relics, so much venerated at his time in Edessa, as having been carried there from India by some merchants. To them a Pontiff assigned a feast and a king built a shrine. 'St.John Chrysostom merely says that the site of St Thomas' tomb is as much known as the sites of tombs of St.Peter, St.Paul and St.John but he does not give any definite indication as its location. The 5th century 'Martyrologium Hieronimanum' assigns July 3 as the commemoration day in Edessa of the translation of the body of St.Thomas, who suffered in India.

Gregory of Tours (594 A.D.) gives an account of the monastery of St.Thomas in India based on the report he had heard from a monk called Theodor who had visited that monastery. The 6th century *Passio Thomae* says that the body of St.Thomas after his martyrdom was buried in honour, and great prodigies took place at the tomb. At the request of the Syrians, the Roman Emperor Alexander [sic] who had defeated the Xarse of Persia, ordered the body to be brought from India to Edessa and kept in 'locello argenteo quod pendit ex catenis argenteis.' Mufazzal ibn Abil-Fazail (1358 A.D.), a Mohammedan historian, in his history of the Mamlouk Sultans wrote: 'From there [Ceylon] the pilgrims go to visit the monastery of Mar Touma, which possesses the eternally living hand of one of the disciples of Our Lord, the Messiah: in the monastery there is a vaulted niche, in which is found the hand, and an oil flowing from the hand.' We are quite justified in saying with Figredo that the Portuguese did not discover the tomb. It was known to exist and they were informed about it by European travellers, Armenian merchants and the Christians of Malabar.

Thome Lopes, who accompanied V.da Gama on his second journey to India in 1503 says that, among other events reported by them, the Christians who came to meet Gama told the Portuguese how they were conducting a big pilgrimage to the tomb of St.Thomas who was buried near their country, and who worked many miracles. The four Chaldean bishops, who arrived in India in 1503/4 and who had intimate contacts with the Portuguese, reported to their Patriarch: '...the House of the holy Apostle Thomas had begun to be inhabited by some Christians who are thinking of its restoration. But it lies at a distance of about 25 days' journey from the said Christians, and it lies on the sea shore in a town

called Mailapur in the province of Silan, which is one of the provinces of India.'

Another factor to be mentioned in this connection is that the 16th century Portuguese authors lacked the modern techniques of a critical method of approach to those problems which they had to deal in connection with the findings. That this is especially manifested by their somewhat naive and credulous attitude towards the alleged miracles, legends and pious stories. In spite of all this we are convinced that what they record deserves credence as a whole; the general un-desirable influences can be eliminated by a sound and critical mind.

The House

"According to the unanimous tradition of the natives it was 1460 or 1470 years then after the holy house in Mylapore was built. It was miraculously built by the Apostle himself. According to Correa the house was called by the natives 'the house of the holy man.'

All around the house was a plot of ground well fenced with very high brushwood. The documents call the house indifferently 'house' or 'church.' It was very big and lay in a ruinous state. Gomez gives us the following description of the house. 'It is made in the fashion of our churches and lie East-West; it has three doors: one at the entrance, another in the middle and the third in the principal chapel. All the doors are lined with sheets of iron and diamond-shaped studs of iron; the doors are of wood worked out with skilful workmanship'. The house was 17 ells long and 11 broad, according to D.Fernandez. Correa says more precisely that from the principal doors to the entrance [sic] of the chapel there was a distance of 12 ells and the chapel itself was 5 ells. It had two side doors and three naves divided by wooden pillars of fine workmanship. These pillars supported the top beam which was also of fine work. Above the wood-work there were walls of mortar reinforced with stones and reaching the tiles roof. Outside the doors were kept water troughs for holy water.

This is the main plan of the house, which, according to all authors, was made in the fashion of the Portuguese churches except for the fact that there was nothing but crosses inside the church, and no images.

According to D.Fernandez the central chapel with its tower was the one built by the Apostle. From this statement it would appear that the side chapels and naves were later additions.

The Chapel

"According to what the Portuguese heard from the natives the body of St.Thomas, who died on a mountain at a distance from the house, was brought to the house and lay buried at that time in the chapel on the righthand (on the Gospel side). In the chapel on the Epistle side lay buried a disciple of the Apostle. Both these chapels do not seem to have been larger than five and a half ells, just large enough to enclose the bodies. As to the identity of the disciple buried in the lefthand chapel (on the righthand of the person looking), the authors seem to diverge in opinion. According to Gomez, it was 'St.Mathias, a companion of the Apostle.' For D.Fernandez and Correa he was the king of the place, a converted Christian.

The Apostle was wounded in the cave on the Little Mount but in his death agony, he got out of the cave and dragged himself to the Big Mount where was the principal oratory, and where also presumably were his disciples. There, wounded mortally, as he was, he clasped a stone cross and recommended his soul to his Master.

The traditions gathered by the Portuguese may be said to be threefold, according to their sources: 1. the Malabar tradition (what appears to have been told them by the people of Malabar, especially the Christians of St.Thomas); 2. the Chaldean tradition (what had been gathered from Chaldeans and Chaldean books); 3. the Mylapore tradition (what the people of the Choromandel Coast told the Portuguese). But it is often difficult to distinguish the purely Malabar tradition from the Chaldean one. Many of the traditions which the Jesuits found among the Thomas Christians were in books of Chaldean origin. The Abuna who gives testimony in 1533 openly declared that what he attested was heard in his own country and in Malabar.

"That the Christians of St.Thomas possessed such folk-songs commemorating the life, deeds and praises of St.Thomas is attested to by many authors. In 1578 Francisco Dionysio, S.I., writing about the Apostle and the community founded by him, introduces his narration with these words: 'What is written below is known from the information supplied by old people; it is the common and unanimous belief of all; they hold it as a well handed-down tradition; they have put these things in their books and their songs.' Maffei, after having

described the Apostles journey, miracles, death etc., says: 'All these were told to the Portuguese by the Indians not only from oral tradition but also from written annals. The Malabar children are wont to sing in folk-songs the praises and the martyrdom of Thomas.'

The Itinerary of the Apostle

"The Apostle St.Thomas was sent by order of Christ to the parts of India etc. He was accompanied by two other Apostles, St.Bartholomew and Judas Tadeus. Thomas with J.Tadeus went first to Babylon, and passing Bacora went over to Qualexquadaqua where J.Tadeus settled himself, converted many into Christianity and built houses of prayer. At the time Abuna was giving the testimony this place belonged to the Muslims and Arabs and there were no Christians nor any house of prayer there. St.Bartholomew passed over to Persia and lay buried in Tarao in a monastery in Tabris, the land of Xequismael; there were still many Christians and houses of prayer. St.Thomas leaving Judas Tadeus went to Socotora and then to Mylapore and China, in Cabalia he converted many and built a house of prayer. From there he returned to Mylapore and lived on a hill one and a half leagues [sic] away from the place where afterwards was built his house. Amador Correa who described the 1564 feast of the Thomas Christians, says that this feast was in commemoration of the day on which St.Thomas came to the end of his journey in a ship, 2 leagues away from Cranganore. Roz who knew the Chaldean tradition from the Chaldean books and the local tradition, oral or written, tells us that St.Thomas sold himself to a lord, ambassador of the king of Bisnaga in order to come to India and preach the Gospel. He preached and baptized many in Cambaya and the lands of Mogor, Socotora, Malavar and Bisnaga reaching even China and great China according to the Chaldean breviary of St.Thomas. There are vestiges in those places even today of Christians. The Apostle also preached to the Cafres.

Apostolate

"St.Thomas preached the gospel and baptized people in all the places he went and founded churches. According to a stone inscription which the Christians of St.Thomas read and interpreted for Roz, the Apostle converted 3 principal kings of India: that of Bisnaga called by them Xoren Porumal, that of Pandi called Pandi Perumal and that of all Malabar called Xaran Perumal. Fr.Guerreiro found in a Chaldean book that the Apostle had converted six kings and three emperors: the emperors correspond to Roz's three principal

kings. The Pandi kingdom, according to Guerreiro, corresponded to the then existing kingdom of Cape Comorin.

The same source further attested that on the Choromandel Coast there had been many churches in older times, all founded by the Apostle. He began eight archbishoprics in those parts where he preached. The names of those archbishoprics, as they were written in Chaldean, were difficult to be identified. Only the following could be clearly identified: Hindu, i.e., Malabar, Socotora, Cambaia, Mogor, China, and Mahachina which should be, according to the author, Cataio.

The Chaldean Abuna told the inquirers of 1533 that the Apostle was murdered with a lance by a low caste. Barros has the following version. The Apostle was murdered while preaching to the people near a tank. At the instigation of the Brahmins he was stoned by some people and he fell down. As he lay there almost dead a Brahmin struck him with a lance and the saint breathed the last. According to Dionysio the Apostle was martyred with a lance while praying on a mountain about a league from the town and this was done at the order of the king of the place. Roz read from a stone cross inscription that the Apostle died on the 21st of December, in the 30th years of the promulgation of the Gospel.

Diego Couto who, as we saw, tried to combine the traditions about the place of the Apostle's death, gives more details about the manner of the death of the Apostle. The envious Brahmins who had been discredited before the king by the virtue of St. Thomas, went to kill him. Hearing that he was in the cave near the Little Mount (which at the time of the Apostle was called Antenodur), they stood near the slope of the mountain, where there was a narrow opening to let in a little light, and looking through it they found the Apostle on his knees with eyes closed, in a rapture so profound that he appeared to be dead. The Brahmins thrusting the lance through the opening wounded him mortally. It is not proved where exactly the place was but all authorities are in accord in saying that it was on the slope of a mountain. The wound was about half a span deep. When the saint sighed, all the murderers ran away and he in his death agony got out of the cave and dragged himself to the Big Mount, and there he died.

"As to the possibility of St. Thomas preaching in India, whether in North or South India, nobody can have any serious doubt. It is repugnant to think that Christianity was preached from the beginning only in the Roman empire and

all the twelve Apostles went westwards to the parts of the Roman empire. At the dawn of Christianity there were trade routes connecting the West and the East, routes very well frequented. The land routes reached parts of N.India while the sea routes reached the coasts of Malabar and other parts of South India. Hence no one can sensibly deny the possibility of one or another of the twelve Apostles having reached India and preached Christianity there.

"The next step is to fix what part of India is meant by this tradition. The Acts apparently points to the North-West India. But this does not necessarily mean that the original content of the tradition, which probably is the historical nucleus of the Acts, also pointed towards the same direction. For the early Christianisation of North India we do not possess any actual evidence as we have for that of South India. The South Indian claim to the apostolate of St.Thomas is supported by two monuments. One is the community of Thomas Christians who claim their origin as Christians from the Apostle Thomas, as had been demonstrated in the previous pages and also as will be demonstrated in the next chapter. The second monument is the tomb of Mylapore concerning which we have seen so much in this first part of the book. As it had been noted above, almost in every century (from the time of the Acts of Judas Thomas) there is groping for the tomb of the Apostle in 'India'. As time went on there was progress in identifying it first with Calamina and then with Myluph and so on. The clear 'terminus ad quem' of this progress is the tomb in Mylapore, which is definitely identified as the tomb of the Apostle by the thirteenth century. It is remarkable that no other place inside or outside India ever claimed so definitely the possession of the tomb.

Whatever be the conclusion from these facts as to certainty, or high probability, of the South Indian apostolate of St.Thomas, and as to the origination from the Apostle of the Christians of St.Thomas, we should think that we are entitled to say at least this much: in the light of these facts the position of those who deny the South Indian apostolate of St.Thomas is much more difficult to demonstrate than that of those who assert it.

As for the relics, it is very probable, as has been suggested earlier, that the early Portuguese explorers did not know anything about the alleged translation of the relics to Edessa and later to Ortona and hence they believed that they discovered the whole body of the Apostle in the tomb. But it is very clear that they did not actually discover the whole body from their own testimony. However, their belief persisted. From all this what we may probably conclude is that there existed at one time or other a community of Christians on the

Choromandel Coast, which owing either to some natural calamities or to some antagonism of the other inhabitants of the place (this antagonism need not necessarily be a religious persecution) left that coast and incorporated themselves with the Christian community of Malabar.

We have already seen that a certain Syrian merchant named Thomas of Cana is connected with the origins or rather the early history of the community of St. Thomas Christians. This man, who apparently had a very great influence in the community, is one of the figures which, to some extent, obfuscate the tradition concerning the Apostle of the same name. However we shall see that the Malabar tradition either as it is recorded by the Portuguese or by the local accounts, oral or written, is always careful to distinguish Thomas, the Apostle from Thomas of Cana. After the death of Thomas the Apostle, the Malabar Church was left without a preacher and leader, and after 93 years there were no priests at all. At that time a pagan magician called Manikabashar appeared; he went to Mylapore and worked wonders by his magic; seduced many Christians from the true faith. Those who remained faithful took refuge in Malabar and were kindly received by the believing brethren there. After that the 160 Christian families were for several long periods left without priests and leaders; divisions also sprang up among them at different times for various reasons. Some of them left the orthodox faith but others persevered. 96 families lapsed while 64 persevered.

In a vision one night the Metropolitan of Edessa saw the sad plight of the Malabar Christians and the next day narrated his vision to the Catholicos of the East. The latter, on hearing his dream, sent messengers to all the churches, monasteries and towns under his jurisdiction and summoned all the Christians before him. Great multitudes, with their respective bishops and merchants gathered near the Catholicos who addressed them and told them of the vision. One of the faithful, a certain merchant Thomas of Jerusalem told the Catholicos that they had heard about Malabar and India from strangers. The Catholicos ordered him to visit Malabar and report to him. Thomas, accordingly, departed and arrived in Maliamkara, where he saw the Christians of St. Thomas. They narrated to him everything. After consoling them he returned home and reported to the Catholicos everything about themselves. The Catholicos was ready to sacrifice even his life for the Christians of Malabar. Thomas returned to Malabar with the bishop who had had the vision, priests and deacons, men, women and children from Jerusalem, Bagdad and Nineveh. They all landed at Maliamkara in 345 A.D.

The native Christians joyfully received them and after having taken council with one another, all proceeded together to 'Sharkun', the king of all Malabar. The latter complied with all their wishes, gave them as much land as they wanted; and conferred upon them the royal honours and inscribed the grant and the honours on copper plates which were still preserved among the Christians at the time of this writing. Then they returned and built a church and a town. The church was erected in the land of Kuramaklur, which was given by the king to them. The newly built town stretched from East and 472 families dwelt in it with authority.

From that time onwards Syrian Fathers used to come to the town by order of the Catholicos of the East, because it was from him that the Syrians used to go to other parts of the world until they were superseded. These Syrian Fathers governed the dioceses of India and Malabar. In 813 the Syrian Fathers Mar Saper and Mar Parut, accompanied by the illustrious Sabrisho came to India and reached Kullam. They went to the emperor, the Shaldbirti, and obtained land from him on which they erected a church and a town in the district of Kullam; and to Kullam, Syrian bishops and Metropolitans used to come by order of the Catholicos who sent them.

There is evidence that there were specialized people and educational centres for the training of the clergy, perhaps for only a select few. Thus Joseph the Indian could tell the Venetians: They (the Christians of St.Thomas) have excellent doctors; study of letters; they have the books of the prophets just as we....

Goes follows suit: Their doctors teach the Old and New Law, especially the prophets in public schools. Some of them are well versed in the Law. Dionysio from his own personal knowledge wrote that the Thomas Christians had many doctors who interpreted the Sacred Scriptures; that they esteemed St.John Chrysostom much; that they had many apochryphal histories.

That the Christians had in their possession many books had been already alluded to. Joseph the Indian said in Venice that the Christians of Malabar had many books of the doctors besides the Bible and the Prophets. Goes says, 'They have the same books of the Old and New Law as in the Canon of the Roman Church, written in Hebrew and Chaldean ... They have the books of the doctors which expose the Law...'

Some of the better educated among the priests were specially trained to preach. Goes says that there were preachers among them who ordinarily

preached to them during the whole year. Dionysio tells us how the preaching was performed. These Christians love sermons, and sermons are delivered to them by those cathenars who know something. Their method of preaching is to narrate stories one after another without any regard to sequence or to the suitability of the occasion. They enjoy preaching for two or three hours at a stretch.

According to Dionysio there were no special vicars or curates in any church but all cathenars held equal rights in administering sacraments and burying the dead etc. However, an old priest was held in greater respect. The income was equally distributed among them.

Joseph the Indian said in Venice: 'The temples of the Christians are made in our (the Western) fashion, except for the fact that they have only crosses in their churches. At the summit of the church also there is a cross. They have no bells.' All are agreed as to the fact that in the church there were no images but only crosses. Penteado wrote to the king in 1518/18: They have crosses in their churches on the altars as well as engravings, but no images or engraved outlines of profiles and faces. They are astonished to hear that we have images because they say that St. Thomas had prohibited them. Our men have begun to introduce images (faces) and they see it.

Penteado was told by the Christians that they had only a general confession and that they confessed to God in a clear voice all together. What Carneiro and his companions observed was that they did not go to confession before receiving communion. Further, confession among them was not frequent, and it appeared that some who went to confession did so because of their social communication with the Portuguese. Dionysio wrote in 1578 that previously confession among them was not considered necessary and on their death beds they received the sacrament without confessing; but at the time of his writing, confession and communion had been introduced among them.

The account of Joseph the Indian and of Goes are identical when they say that the Christians had no extreme unction but in its place the sick were blessed by the priest." (Traditions of St. Thomas Christians, A. M. Mundadan, p.38-173)

End Quote

Comments By Various Scholars on the Life of St.Thomas

In the book "Traditions of the St.Thomas Christians" from which we have excerpted at great length, there is a foreword by Georg Schurhammer, S.J., written in Rome, December 1, 1965 which treats the question of the Mylapore tomb of St.Thomas, and its traditions, and points to a new argument for the authenticity for the tomb. It was originally reported before a conference at the University of Freiburg in Breisgau:

"The bricks in the oldest existing portion in the southern wall of the tomb are about 15.5 inches long, 8 inches wide and 3 inches thick. Mr.A.Longhurst, Superintendent of the Archaeological Department, Southern Circle, of India, who inspected the tomb in 1921, declared that these bricks were of great antiquity, because they were of the kind found in the Buddhist stupas, only that those were larger: 20 x 10 x 3 Inches. Twenty-four years later, in 1945, excavations were made south of Mylapore in Arikamedu near Pondicherry and, for the first time in India, a Roman trading station was discovered, founded in the beginning of the first century A.D. In the oldest layer the buildings were of wood and the ceramics found were of the first century. In the second layer the buildings, begun about 50 A.D. and abandoned before the end of the first century, were of bricks, and the bricks of these buildings were similar to those of the tomb of St.Thomas in Mylapore, of the average size of 15.5 x 8 x 3 inches(The bricks of the buildings, added in the second century have all already a different size."

Asbury Smith (op. cit., p.103-107) reports an interesting insight from the "Acts of St.Thomas the Apostle to India":

"There is an ancient tradition that Thomas carried the Gospel to India. The Acts of Saint Thomas the Apostle to India, a manuscript that goes back to the second or third century, is the oldest written record in support of this tradition. In 'The Acts of Saint Thomas' the apostles are shown as dividing the world among themselves for evangelistic activity. When Thomas was assigned India, he protested, 'I cannot go there because of the fatigue of the body on the journey, for I am a Hebrew. Jesus then appeared to Thomas, urging him to go to India, but he continued to resist, saying, 'I would that Thou wouldst send me into another country, for unto the country of India I cannot go:

'It was then that our Lord showed himself to Abbanes, a merchant from India, and sold Thomas to him as a slave. Thomas recognizing himself as Jesus' slave, yields, and thus came to India as a slave of Abbanes.

Until a few decades ago no record existed of a king named Condaforus and this story was considered entirely legendary. But recent excavations have established that a king by the name of Gondaforus did reign in North India during the time Thomas might have lived there. Coins and inscriptions have been unearthed bearing Gondaforus' name. This leaves to be explained the presence of Thomas in North India when the Christians who bear his name seem always to have centered in South India. Dr.J.N. Farquhar explains this by saying that Thomas remained in North India until war destroyed Gondaforus and his kingdom, and then he went to South India. Hazel E. Foster thinks that 'this reconstruction of what may have happened has a good historical underpinnings as have the various stories regarding the origin of other ancient churches.'

Bishop Philipose Mar Chrysostom of Kottayam, a delegate to the World Council of Churches, expressed the opinion of the Indian Christians when in September, 1954, he said to a small group in Washington, D.C.: 'Yes, I feel sure that Saint Thomas founded our church. Surely Thomas would have preached the Gospel somewhere. Since India is the only country that claims him; he must have preached in India and founded the Mar Thoma Church.'

"In 1952 the Syrian Christians celebrated the 1900th anniversary of the arrival of Thomas in their country. In connection with this celebration the World Council of Churches held three important meetings. The Study Committee and the Central Committee met at Lucknow and the World Council of Christian Youth met at Kottayam.

Aside from the tradition that Thomas founded the Church in India little is known of the early history of this ancient Syrian Church. Unfortunately when the Portuguese arrived in India they destroyed the church records, hoping thereby to destroy what they considered a heretical brand of Christianity. Thomas, tradition says, died a martyr's death on a mountain now called Mount Thomas in Mylopur, a suburb of Madras. His death was accomplished by piercing with a lance. A shrine erected by the Portuguese marks the sacred site.

A hymn of praise recorded in 'The Acts of Thomas' expresses the great honor given the church by the Syrian Christians:

'The church is she in whom is the splendor of royalty. She is pleasant of aspect and lovely. Beautiful is she to him that looketh upon her. Her garments are

like unto flowers of every kind, and the odor thereof cometh forth and anointeth the head.... Truth is upon her head, and joy with her feet'

"The Acts of Thomas gives a description of the all-night service used by Thomas to receive Condaforus into the Christian Church:

"They brought oil and lighted many lamps, for it was night. Then the Apostle rose up, and prayed over them with his voice, saying, Peace be unto you, O my brethren. Now they heard the voice only, but they did not see his form, for as yet they had not received baptism, and the Apostle took the oil and poured it over their heads, and recited prayers over them, and he answered and said, Let the name of Christ, which is over all things, come, Let the name which is holy, and exalted, and perfect in mercy, come, Let thy mercy come, Let that which is a hidden mystery come, Let the mother of the seven mansions come, and let thy rest be in the eighth habitation."

End Quote

Mundadan, already quoted, describes the recent history of the tomb of St.Thomas:

"In the four hundred years between 1523 and 1903 the tomb in Mylapore was broken open three times for one reason or other: in 1523 the first Portuguese excavation took place; in 1893-1896 the present Gothic cathedral was built; in 1903 the tomb was widened westward when the present crypt was built in commemoration of the tri-centenary of the erection of the Mylapore diocese." (Mundadan, op. cit, p.11)

Dorman Netmwn, though not a modern scholar, wrote about the Apostle Thomas in 1685.

Newman was, within his limits, a careful and critical scholar. As far as we know only one copy of his book exists and that is in the British Museum Library:

"the Apostolical assigned to St.Thomas was Parthia. Afterwards he preached the gospel to the Medes, Persians, Carmans, Horcany, Bactria, and neighboring nations. In Persia he met with the Wise Men whom he baptized and took along with him. Thence he preached in and passed through Aethiopia and came to India. Though he was afraid, a vision assured him of the divine presence to assist him. The Portugals assure us that St.Thomas came first to

Socotara, an island in the Arabian Sea, thence to Cananor where having converted many he travelled further into the east. He returned to Carmandal where he began to erect a place of Christian worship until prohibited by the Priest and Prince of the Country. But upon conviction of several miracles the work went on and the Sagamo (King) himself embraced the Christian faith. The Brachmans (sic) [BRAHMANS, i.e. Sacrificial priests, E.N. BR. v 14, p.396] who perceived that this would spoil their trade, (i.e. profession) and in time extirpate the religion of their country, thought it time to put a stop to its growing and resolved in council to put the Apostle to death.

Thomas habitually met with his followers in a tomb not far from Carmandal. The Brachmans and their followers pursued him to that place. While he was intent in prayer, they ran him through with darts, sondes, and dispatched him with a lance. His body was buried in the church he had built.

While one of the Viceroys of Portugal resided in these parts there were brought unto him certain brass tablets, whole inscriptions that none could read, till at last by help of a Jew they were found to contain nothing but a donation made to St. Thomas of a piece of ground for the building of a church. They tell of a famous cross found in St. Thomas his chapel wherein there was an unintelligible character which a learned Brahmin rendered to this effect; That Thomas a Divine person was sent to whole countries by the Son of God, in the days of King Sagamo, to instruct them in the things of the true Cod, that he built a church and performed admirable miracles but while upon his knees in prayer was thrust through with a spear and that the cross stained with his blood was left as a memorial of these matters." ("The Lives and Deaths of The Holy Apostles," Dorman Newman, pp. 75-80)

THE BURIAL PLACE OF ST. THOMAS

It has been, it would seem, rather well established that Thomas was buried in Mylapore, India, now a suburb of Madras. In her interesting devotional book, "By Post To The Apostles," p.62, Helen Homan refers to the history of the treatment of the remains of St. Thomas, evidently from the Catholic Encyclopedia.

She says it is accepted as fact that some of the bones of St. Thomas were transported to Edessa in Mesopotamia. She describes how the Crusaders evidently carried them to the island of Chios and tells how later Manfred, Prince of Taranto carried them by ship to Ortona, in Italy where they were

placed in a great Cathedral. After this the Turks sacked Ortona and rifled the tomb for suspected treasure, but after this the Italians restored all they could.

Mary Sharp in "A Traveller's Guide to Saints in Europe," (p. 207) reports the results of her research concerning the relics of St.Thomas. "They are," she says, "reputed to be at Goa and Meliapore in India, and at Ortona, Italy. The finger is in the church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome." She adds, "In the church of Mylapore (now Meliapore) is a stone cross - The Thomas Cross of the sixth to eighth century, which is said to mark the place where his body was buried until taken to Edessa in the fourth century."

She concludes, "However wild the stories about St.Thomas in his Acts, the names of Gundaphor and Gad, the Indian rulers he is said to have encountered, have recently been shown to exist, as they issued coins which have survived."

A Guide Book published by The Church of the Holy Cross (Santa Croce) entitled, "The Sessorian Relics of the Passion of Our Lord" by Bedini, claims that in this church:

"...is preserved the index finger of St.Thomas. Some say that this relic has been in Santa Croce from the time of St.Helen. In the basilica there is an altar dedicated to St.Thomas. The reliquary, which was remade after the French revolution, is shaped like a chalice at the bottom. Above the knob two palms, the symbol of the martyrdom of the apostle, entwine in the shape of a crown surmounted by a cross with rays. In the centre of the crown is inserted an oval case with both sides of crystal. In the middle of the case arises a holder in the shape of a finger with two openings in the side. Through the openings the phalanges of the venerated Finger can be clearly seen." ("The Sessorian Relics of the Passion of Our Lord," D. Balduino Bedini, pp.62-3)

It is evident that Thomas, who as a disciple was pessimistic and filled with doubt, became a vigorous missionary. The weight of scholarship has grown so great, concerning his mission to Babylon, Persia and India, that it must be accepted as probable. The stories of Thomas, like those of several others of the Apostles, provide a record which throws much light on the world of the first century beyond the borders of the Roman Empire. In turn, as the history of the first century in that area is brought to light by contemporary scholars, it throws much light on the life of St.Thomas.

Our views of history are entirely too provincial in many instances. The Romans ruled a great deal of the "known" world, but we must not conclude

that there was no civilization beyond the borders of that empire. The story of the life of St.Thomas has proved this. We are forced to the conclusion that there are many authentic strands of Apostolic Christianity which have survived to this day that are not traceable to the evangelization and ecclesiasticism of the Western churches. In studying the history of the East one gets the feeling somewhat akin to that visiting a "new" planet and discovering that Christianity has been there all along.

The one great insight about St.Thomas himself, which comes to us from the history of "St.Thomas in Babylonia and India," is that he was a fearless evangelist and a great builder of churches. Those people in the modern world who would accept Christianity but who would reject the church (i.e., assembly or local congregation) as the central human instrument in the strategy of God have divorced themselves from the Apostolic tradition. Were the Apostles to return to earth today, they would have little time for those who imagine there can be a churchless Christianity. Such "Christianity," if we even dare call it that, is incapable of survival.

If we would have Christianity survive, our first loyalty must be to the One whom St.Thomas called "My Lord and my God", and secondly to the only divinely ordained institution on earth, the local assembly or congregation of His people. No one can estimate how many millions of Christians came to believe in Christ because of St.Thomas. They are beyond counting.

The churches which St.Thomas founded in India have kept Christianity alive and extended the faith which survives there to this day.

Both the churches and the Apostolic faith with which St. Thomas identified himself were, of course, subjected to change, decay and even corruption. Human beings inevitably produce these effects. But to this day missionaries in India report that the pure message of the New Testament is still welcome, and is still effective among the St.Thomas Christians there.

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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