

introducing the 12 disciples of jesus



“AND HE CALLED TO HIM HIS TWELVE DISCIPLES AND GAVE THEM AUTHORITY OVER UNCLEAN SPIRITS, TO CAST THEM OUT, AND TO HEAL EVERY DISEASE AND EVERY AFFLICTION.” MATTHEW 10:1

Matthew 10 is the first time in the Gospel where Jesus refers to his select group of 12 disciples. We've seen crowds of people following Jesus throughout the Gospel thus far, but now Jesus gathers around himself a smaller inner circle and begins to teach them about life and ministry. The number 12 is highly significant and is surely a tie to the 12 tribes of Israel. Just as Moses led the 12 tribes through the wilderness and to the edge of the Promised Land, so now Jesus leads the 12 tribes as they usher in the new kingdom. This group is a surprising mix of personalities, backgrounds, and political leanings, from fishermen to tax collectors, doubters to zealots. Where today's mentality is simply, “agree to disagree,” Jesus brings these 12 together and unifies them in a way that transcends all of their differences, which is also what we see in the church when it is at its best.

simon (peter)

Former fisherman from Bethsaida, a town near the sea of Galilee. The most well-known disciple. The name ‘Peter’ means “rock,” and it is to Peter that Jesus says, “On this rock I will build my church,” (*Matt. 16:18*). Peter authored two New Testament books, 1 and 2 Peter. Peter would later become a martyr in Rome.

thomas

Nicknamed “Doubting Thomas” because of the scene in John’s Gospel where Thomas demands to see the wounds of Jesus’ crucifixion in order to believe in the resurrection (*John 20:24–29*). Believed to have been martyred in India.

andrew (peter's brother)

From Bethsaida. Andrew and Peter were formerly disciples of John the Baptist and both were fishermen (*Matt. 4:18-20*). Andrew was the very first disciple to be called to follow Jesus.

matthew

Former tax collector, believed to be the author of the first Gospel, Matthew.

james son of zebedee

James and his brother, John, were both from Galilee and both former fishermen (*Matt. 4:21–22*). James is believed to have been the first of the 12 disciples to be martyred.

james son of alphaeus

Very little is known about this disciple, though he may have been the brother of Matthew.

john (james' brother)

Former disciple of John the Baptist. Accredited with writing five books of the Bible, including Revelation and the fourth Gospel. John was the only disciple to not die a martyr. He’s also commonly referred to as the “disciple Jesus loved.”

thaddeus

Also known as ‘Judas,’ but not the same as Judas the Betrayer. Thaddeus is only mentioned in Matthew. Tradition claims Thaddeus met his death by beheading.

philip

Philip was from Bethsaida. Not much is known about this disciple. Tradition says he was martyred in Greece.

simon the zealot

The Zealots were a group of fanatics in the first century, known for their intense hatred of Rome and their violent attempts to overthrow them. Simon would eventually become a martyr for his faith.

bartholomew

Was brought to faith through Philip. Also referred to as “Nathaniel.”

judas iscariot

The Betrayer. Judas is the one who would turn Jesus over to the authorities for just 30 pieces of silver.