

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
Red Bud, Illinois
Adult Bible Class
“Jesus’ Twelve Apostles: Up Close and Personal”

V. James (the Less, the Minor), Jude or Judas (Thaddaeus), Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot

A. James (the Less or the Minor)

Matthew 10, Mark 3, Luke 6 and Acts 1 all refer to this apostle as the son of Alphaeus. While Matthew’s father has this same name, which could mean these two were brothers, there is no other evidence that one man was the father of both Matthew and this James. This James is only mentioned in the Bible in listings of the twelve apostles.

Mark 15:40 refers to “Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses” as being at the foot of the cross of Jesus (as does Matthew 27:56). Literally the title for this James is “the Less” which might mean younger in age but could also mean “small in stature.” Mark 16:1 and Luke 24:10 have this Mary as one of the women who went to Jesus’ tomb on Easter Sunday. Yet John 19:25 refers to her as the wife of Clopas, not Alphaeus (though this could be the same man with two different names, both Greek versions of the Hebrew name Halphai or Chalpai). This man could be one of the two that Jesus appeared to on the road to Emmaus on the day of His resurrection. There is not enough evidence to make any identification certain. His symbol is a red shield and a silver saw. His day in the church year is May 1.

B. Jude or Judas (Thaddaeus)

Luke refers to this disciple in Luke 6 and Acts 1 as Judas, son of James. Matthew and Mark refer to him by the name Thaddaeus. Other manuscripts of Matthew and Mark have the name Lebbaeus.

See John 14:21-24. The setting is the night before Jesus’ crucifixion when He is with the Twelve in the Upper Room to celebrate the Passover meal.

Verse 21: How does Jesus show that faith and works go together? _____

Verse 22: How does John identify this Judas? _____

What does Judas want Jesus to do? _____

Verse 23: What is Jesus’ promise to those who love Him and obey His teaching? _____

How does the Father and the Son make their “home” with us? _____

Revelation 3:20 (Jesus’ words to the church of Laodicea) “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with Me.”

The revelation of Jesus is one given to the eyes of faith and loving obedience. The “home” of verse 23 takes us back to Jesus’ promise of a place in our heavenly Father’s house.

Christian tradition says that Jude traveled with Simon as a missionary. He is symbolized by a ship whose mast is in the shape of a cross to refer to his missionary journeys. The color of the shield is red, the ship is gold, the sails and ropes are silver. His day in the church year is October 28.

C. Simon the Zealot

Simon is listed with the other eleven apostles in Matthew 10, Mark 3, Luke 6, and Acts 1. In each case he is given this nickname, “the Zealot.” He is not mentioned anywhere else in the New Testament.

The Zealots were a Jewish revolutionary party that was violently opposed to Roman rule over Palestine. They were strong in the rural areas and the highlands of Galilee. They sought to defeat the Romans militarily. Perhaps Simon first followed Jesus thinking that He would be a victorious general leading the Jews in victory over the Roman army.

Simon succeeded Jesus’ half-brother James as the leader of the Christian church in Jerusalem. A fish on a book is the symbol of Simon. The fish refers to his success in fishing for men through the gospel. Sometimes a saw or a battle-ax appear on the shield to symbolize his death. He was either sawn in two or beheaded. He shares October 28 with St. Jude as his day in the church year calendar.

D. Judas Iscariot

See John 6:68-71.

John does not give a listing of the Twelve Apostles as the other gospel writers do. The Greek word that Jesus uses in verse 70 is diabolos. This means “slanderer, accuser.” Already in verse 64 John mentions that Jesus knows who will betray Him. Each time the other gospel writers first mention Judas (Matthew 10:4; Mark 3:19; and Luke 6:16), they identify him as the one who betrayed Jesus (or “traitor”). “Iscariot” is probably a Hebrew term that means “the man of Kerioth.” This town of Judah is mentioned in Joshua 15:25.

See John 12:1-6.

It is easy for us to sympathize with Judas’ concern here: “How much will it cost?” is a common question that we ask when some action or project is proposed in the church. “Couldn’t that money have been used for a better purpose?” is a criticism that we make when something is done with which we disagree. If this perfume were worth 300 denarii (a denarius being the day’s pay of a common worker), then this would cover a year’s salary (considering days off for the Sabbath day and other holy days). In our day and age at minimum wages with a five-day work week, this perfume would be worth about \$12,500.

What is John’s explanation for Judas’ concern about this money? _____

This is the only place in the New Testament where Judas is spoken poorly of other than his betrayal of Jesus. Judas was the one who took care of the money that was contributed to the group to cover their personal expenses (Luke 8:2-3). In Matthew and Mark’s gospels others criticized this action as wasteful. Mark connects this act with Judas’ plotting along with the chief priests in order to betray Jesus to them.

See Matthew 26:14-16, 20-25, 47-49.

Why was someone like Judas needed by the Jewish leaders for them to arrest Jesus?

_____.

Thirty silver coins was the price of a common slave at that time.

Zechariah 11:12-13 I told them, “If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, kept it.” So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me, “Throw it to the potter”—the handsome price at which they priced me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord to the potter.

Verse 21: With what shocking statement did Jesus interrupt this solemn occasion?

_____.

Verses 22 and 25: What difference is there in the questions of the eleven other disciples and Judas’ question to Jesus? _____

Jesus’ words in verses 23 and 24 serve as a last-minute warning for Judas. They focus our attention on the upcoming suffering of Jesus. They show us that Jesus will not be surprised by this betrayal for He is in full control of the situation. Finally, they furnish the disciples an opportunity to examine themselves. Do we ever have, and make use of, an occasion to betray Jesus in our own lives?

Psalms 41:9 Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.

Luke 22:3 and John 13: 2 and 27 point out that it was Satan, the devil, who entered Judas and moved him to betray Jesus.

Verse 47: The crowd from the Jewish leaders came equipped with swords and clubs to arrest Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Judas’ signal, now so famously known, was meant to make sure the right man was arrested.

See Matthew 27:3-5 and Acts 1:15-20.

Verse 3: Is Judas’ remorse the same as repentance? _____ (There is a difference between being sorry for being caught and sorry for doing what you did. Perhaps, human speaking, Judas’ purpose in betraying Jesus [force Him to use His power against the Romans, raise a revolt among the people, etc.] was not fulfilled and now he knows that an innocent man will be put to death.)

Compare verse 5 with Acts 1:18. How can the differences be explained? _____

_____.

Judas Iscariot is symbolized by a blank yellow shield. Other symbols include a money bag and thirty pieces of silver. He has no day set aside for him in the church year calendar.