

## The Twelve Apostles of the Lamb



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## Chapter Ten



### The Apostles James the Less, Jude Thaddaeus and Simon the Canaanite

James the Less was the brother of Matthew. His family lived in Capernaum in Galilee. James was the youngest son of Alphaeus and Mary. His family was quite blessed with the spirit of God. His mother and father were faithful followers of Jesus. *Alphaeus also went by Cleopas: Luke 24:18 & John 19:25*

There is little known about James the Less. Information passed down through centuries of tradition states that he was a religious “zealot” before called to be an Apostle. Traditions are questionable, however, if not supported by Scripture. A zealot in Jesus’ day was a Jew who revolted against the Roman government for its aggression against Israel. Zealots eventually resorted to violence against the Romans, but this violence would have taken place after James had left their cause to follow Christ. If James was a zealot, he would have been very angry with Matthew for becoming a publican who collected taxes from the Jews to give to the hated Roman government.

James the Less wrote the book of James which emphasizes the balance of faith and works in a Christian’s life. “*Faith, if it hath not works, is dead.*” *James 2:17* We can learn much about James the Less by reading his practical and wise admonitions on character development. *See Expanded Comments on the Book of James*

Another item about James passed down through tradition is that he may have travelled to Spain to preach to the Jews in bondage there. It is said that he then travelled back to Jerusalem where he was stoned to death for preaching Jesus to the Jews.

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The privilege to be called an Apostle and to witness the life, death and resurrection of the Lord made James an able teacher to his fellow Christians throughout his ministry. Certainly, he must have been a firm foundation for the Church, because his writing in the Book of James reveals great spiritual insight and wisdom. Though we know little of him, we know that the Lord chose James the Less to be an Apostle, and Jesus loved and prayed for him. *John 17:11-12*

Another Apostle of whom little is known is Jude Thaddaeus. He is not to be confused with the Apostle Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus. Jude Thaddaeus must have been of a very different character than Judas, for Jude Thaddaeus (also known as Lebbaeus) means “*dear heart.*”

There are very few references to Jude Thaddaeus in the New Testament beside those that list him as an Apostle. In John 14:22 when the Apostles were sharing the last Passover with Jesus, Jude Thaddaeus asked Jesus, “*Lord, how can it be that you will show yourself to us and not to the world?*” Jesus said to Jude and the other Apostles, “*Those who truly love me and keep my Father’s commandments will understand my sayings.*” Jesus revealed himself and his mission only to the humble in heart. “*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see [and understand] God.*” *Matt. 5:8 and Reprint 5149* Jesus also wanted the Apostles to know that he and his

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Father would stay close to them and would guide and protect them. *John 14:23* Jesus was comforting Jude Thaddaeus and the other Apostles, because he knew that the next day he would no longer be with them physically, but would be put to death.

One reference listing Jude as an Apostle, speaks of him as the son of James. *Luke 6:16 NAS* This was probably the Apostle James, brother of the Apostle John who were the sons of Zebedee. He couldn't have been the son of James the Less or Jesus' younger brother James, for both were too young to have a child the age of an Apostle. So if Jude is the son of the Apostle James the Great, then Zebedee was his grandfather and John was his uncle. Also, since Jude's father was Jesus' cousin, this would make Jude related to Jesus. It is clear, even today, that the Heavenly Father often calls to discipleship from within families. This should encourage us to witness to others in our families who as yet have not accepted the message of truth.

Jude Thaddaeus is the writer of the Book of Jude. *Reprint 3044:4* We recall the words of Jesus to Jude, "*Those who truly love me and keep my Father's commandments will understand my sayings.*" This is exactly the theme of the Book of Jude where he encourages the followers of Jesus to keep themselves in the love of God by keeping God's words. The book of Jude is a very short, but powerful book of the Bible.

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History of the Church in Armenia claims that it was the Apostles Jude and Nathanael who preached to this country. Armenia eventually became the first country to claim Christianity as its national religion in 301 A.D. But even with this national claim of Christianity, the Armenian government was at first violently angry with the preaching of Jude and Nathanael and was responsible for putting both to death.

Whether this history is true or not, the Apostle Jude was a faithful servant of the Lord, for he is listed with the other faithful Apostles as having received the gifts of the holy Spirit at Pentecost. *Acts 1:13* The Lord blessed only those who would use these gifts wisely, for they were given to the Apostles to establish the early Church throughout the earth. As an Apostle loved and prayed for by his Master, Jude would have been faithful to his responsibilities.

Another faithful Apostle of whom very little has been recorded in Scripture is Simon the Canaanite. Canaanite is more properly translated “zealot.” *Luke 6:15 & Acts 1:13* As defined earlier, a zealot was a patriotic Jew willing to rebel against the Roman government. But since a zealot was also a fanatic and eventually resorted to violence, Simon would



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have left this cause when he gave up all to follow Jesus. Jesus always preached nonviolence. *Matt. 5:39, 43-44 & Matt. 26:52*

It is claimed that Simon was crucified for the sake of Christ and that before he died, he had preached even as far as England. But again, unless it is written in the Scriptures, we are uncertain if this is true. But of this we are sure, that Simon, along with the other Apostles witnessed the miracles and teachings of Jesus and the miracle of his resurrection. They were with him at the Last Passover and in the Garden of Gethsemane. They would have been present at the time Jesus appeared to Thomas. *John 20:26* All but Judas were listed as receiving the holy Spirit at Pentecost, and all were sent out as witnesses of the Gospel of Christ throughout the earth. *Acts 1:8 & 13*

It was a privilege to be called an Apostle, and all three of these men were given the title which means “*he that is sent.*” Each of these three had special powers given to them to establish the early Church. God was not unwise in selecting any of His chosen Apostles for Jesus. It is certain that by God’s power and grace, James the Less, Jude Thaddaeus and Simon the Canaanite were firm foundations of the Church and faithful to their calling as *Apostles of the Lamb.*

