

SIMON, GIVEN THE NAME PETER or CEPHAS, 'THE ROCK' - A FISHERMAN

Peter worked among the Jews. Along with the Apostle Paul, he may have been executed around AD64 during the persecutions of Emperor Nero, or later in AD67. Apparently he was crucified, head-down, at his own request.

ANDREW, BROTHER OF SIMON PETER - A FISHERMAN

Andrew was originally a disciple of John the Baptist. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, claims are that Andrew preached in Achaia (southern Greece) and Scythia (Ukraine and southern Russia - St. Andrew is the patron saint of Russia), and was crucified at Patras in Achaia. A later tradition describes him as being crucified in a spread-eagled position - hence the St. Andrew's cross of Scotland.

JAMES, SON OF ZEBEDEE - A FISHERMAN

During the persecutions of Herod Agrippa I, King of the Jews, in c AD44, the apostle James was beheaded - 'put to the sword' (Acts 12:1-2 following). Before his death, James the Greater as he is known to distinguish him from James, son of Alphaeus, preached in Jerusalem and Judea, modern Israel.

Acts 12:1-2 - "It was at this time (of great famine, possibly around AD44) that King Herod laid violent hands on some of the Church members. James, John's brother, he executed with the sword"

JOHN, BROTHER OF JAMES and SON OF ZEBEDEE - A FISHERMAN

According to John's Gospel (19:26-27), it was probably John who took Mary, the mother of Jesus as his adopted mother. He preached in Jerusalem, and later, as bishop of Ephesus, south of Izmir in western Turkey, worked among the churches of Asia Minor. During the reigns of either Emperor Nero (AD54-68) or Domitian (AD81-96), he was banished to the nearby island of Patmos, now one of the Greek islands in the Aegean Sea. He was subsequently freed and died a natural death at Ephesus c AD100.

PHILIP

Philip preached the Gospel in Phrygia (west central Turkey) before dying or being martyred there at Hieropolis.

The apostle should be distinguished from Philip the "deacon" or Evangelist, who preached to the people of Samaria and baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts 8:4-8,26-39.

BARTHOLOMEW, also NATHANAEAL

The missionary work of Bartholomew is linked with Armenia (present day Armenia, eastern Turkey, northern Iraq, north western Iran) and India. Other locations include Egypt, Arabia, Ethiopia and Persia (Iran). Traditionally he met his death by being flayed or skinned alive, and then beheaded. Derbent, north of present day Baku on the Caspian Sea may have been his place of martyrdom. Alternatively he may have suffered this cruel fate in what is now India.

THOMAS DIDYMUS - 'DOUBTING THOMAS'

Thomas may have labored for the Gospel in Parthia (including modern Iraq and Iran), but stronger traditions link him with southern India. Indian Christians from the west coast Kerala area claim they were evangelized by Thomas, who was later speared to death near Madras on the east coast. Mount St. Thomas, close to Madras is associated with his name.

MATTHEW, also LEVI - TAX-COLLECTOR/PUBLICAN

Nothing definite is known of Matthew's career. After preaching in Judea, different traditions place his missionary work and possible martyrdom in Ethiopia or Persia.

JAMES, SON OF ALPHEUS

Known as James the Less, to distinguish him from James the Greater, son of Zebedee, but more likely because of his smaller stature than his relative importance. He, and Jude following, should not be confused with James and Jude (or Judas), the half-brothers of Jesus. Most commentators treat them as separate sets of brothers.

Tradition claims he first worked in Palestine (Israel) before preaching and martyrdom in Egypt.

JUDE, also THADDAEUS

Jude is also confused in some sources with Jude, one of the brothers of Jesus. He may have preached in Assyria (eastern Iraq) and Persia (Iran), before joining with Simon the Zealot and being killed with him in Persia.

SIMON THE ZEALOT or PATRIOT

Simon is referred to both as the "Cananaean" and the "Zealot". The titles may refer to him being "zealous", or to his membership of one of the Jewish revolutionary movements known as Zealots. Nothing else is known about him.

One tradition is that he first preached in Egypt, before joining Jude and travelling to Persia, where both were martyred. Simon may have been crucified or hacked to death.

MATTHIAS

As a disciple from the time of Jesus' baptism through to his death and resurrection, and possibly one of the 72 sent out to preach and heal, Matthias was chosen by prayer and the drawing of lots to replace Judas Iscariot as the twelfth apostle, Acts 1:15-26. No more is heard of him in the New Testament, and the various traditions are made more confusing because of the similarity of his name to Matthew's.

He may have preached and been martyred in Ethiopia, Other traditions place him in Judea, and later Cappadocia (eastern Turkey) and the Caspian Sea area.

PAUL OR SAUL OF TARSUS

Paul travelled widely, made at least three major missionary journeys, wrote many letters of which thirteen still exist, and his life and work is touched upon in a variety of ways in his letters. On returning to Jerusalem after his third journey, he was arrested and during his subsequent trials, as a Roman citizen "appealed to Caesar" for judgment - all covered by Acts 21-26. Chapters 27 and 28 then describe Paul's voyage and journey to Rome in fascinating nautical detail. Thereafter his life, and death is a matter of conjecture and tradition.

For some two years after his arrival in Rome, he was under house-arrest, before possibly being executed in the persecutions of Emperor Nero that followed the burning of Rome in AD64. However, there are strong traditions that on appeal to the Emperor on what was a Jewish religious charge, he was acquitted. He remained free for perhaps three years, revisiting Ephesus and other churches, and even going as far as Spain, before being re-arrested and sentenced to death. In his cell, he wrote his last letter - the Second Letter to Timothy - before execution around the year AD67.

Tradition is he was beheaded at a place now called Tre Fontane in Rome, and that the church of St. Paul stands over his grave.

The apocryphal "Acts of Paul" comes from the second century. They describe Paul as "a man small of stature, with a bald head and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with eyebrows meeting and nose somewhat hooked, full of friendliness; for now he appeared like a man, and now he had the face of an angel!"