

**The Seven Churches and
Church History (70-100 A.D.)
The Destruction of Jerusalem**

G. The Deaths of the Apostles:¹

1. Simon (Peter): From Sand to _____

The Acts of Peter, a second-century apocryphal text, suggests that Peter was crucified upside down at his own request. This was because Peter felt unworthy to die in the same manner as Jesus. Peter, one of the original apostles, met his death in Rome, reportedly at the hands of Emperor Nero around 64 AD, shortly after the Great Fire of Rome.

Jesus had previously foretold Peter's death when He said, "when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go" (John 21:18). John later elaborated, explaining that Jesus spoke these words to signify the manner in which Peter would glorify God through his death (John 21:19). This prophecy implies that Peter would experience a martyrdom that echoed the sacrifice of Jesus and was indicative of his unwavering commitment to his faith.

2. Andrew: From the Shadows to a _____

According to the apocryphal text "Acts of Andrew," this apostle was martyred by crucifixion in the Greek city of Patras around 60 AD. Similar to his brother Peter, Andrew felt unworthy to die in the same manner as Jesus. Therefore, he was tied to a cross, but unlike the traditional Roman cross, it was arranged in the shape of an X rather than a T. This unique method of crucifixion reflected Andrew's humility and his desire to distinguish his own death from that of the Savior. The choice of an X-shaped cross, often called a saltire or St. Andrew's Cross, has since become a symbol associated with Andrew and his martyrdom, emphasizing his piety and reverence in facing his fate.

3. James, Son of Zebedee: From Ambition to _____

James was the first of the twelve disciples to have died. We learn about the death of James, the brother of John, in the book of Acts. According to Acts 12:1–2, King Herod arrested members of the early church, intending to persecute them. James, one of the apostles, was executed by the

¹ <https://bibleask.org/how-did-the-twelve-disciples-die/>

sword at Herod's command. Herod's motive for this action appears to have been to appease the Jewish leaders, who held strong disdain for the growing Christian movement and likely saw the killing of prominent apostles as a means to suppress it. Historians and biblical scholars generally agree that James met his death in Jerusalem around 44 AD, reflecting the intense hostility the early church faced from both Jewish and Roman authorities during that time.

4. John (brother of James, Son of Zebedee): From Elitist to _____

Tertullian, a prominent Christian writer from the second and third centuries, documented that before the Romans exiled John, they brought him into a coliseum and immersed him in a barrel of boiling oil. Remarkably, John emerged from the ordeal unharmed, leading to the conversion of the entire coliseum to Christianity. This miraculous event underscored the profound faith and influence of John, who was one of the original apostles and a close disciple of Jesus.

Later, during the persecution of Christians under Emperor Domitian in the mid-90s, John was exiled to the island of Patmos. It was there that he received the vision which would later be recorded in the Book of Revelation. After spending time in isolation, John eventually died a natural death as an elderly man. He was the only one of the twelve disciples that did not experience death from martyrdom. His life and contributions, including his experiences during persecution and exile, have since become a testament to the unwavering faith and resilience of early Christian leaders.

5. Philip: From Realist to _____

The "Acts of Philip," a narrative text from early Christianity, provides a detailed account of the martyrdom of Philip. According to this document, Philip was instrumental in leading a proconsul's wife to the Christian faith. This conversion, however, incurred the ire of the proconsul, who sought revenge against Philip for influencing his spouse.

In retaliation, the proconsul arranged for Philip's execution. The precise details of Philip's martyrdom may vary in different traditions, but it is widely agreed that he faced persecution and death as a result of his commitment to spreading the teachings of Christianity. The Acts of Philip underscores the intensity of opposition that early Christian missionaries often faced, as well as the steadfastness and dedication of those who proclaimed their faith despite the risks.

6. Nathaniel Bartholomew: From Bigot to _____

Foxe's Book of Martyrs, a historical account that chronicles the persecution of early Christians, asserts that in India, Bartholomew faced a harrowing end. According to the text, Bartholomew was subjected to brutal mistreatment at the hands of the local idolaters. Their impatience and hostility led them to beat him severely and ultimately crucify him.

This account emphasizes the fierce opposition early missionaries encountered when spreading the teachings of Christianity. Such persecution was not only physical but also ideological, as idolaters viewed the spread of Christian doctrine as a direct threat to their own religious practices and beliefs. Despite the harsh and inhumane treatment, the steadfast faith of Bartholomew in the face of such adversities reflects the profound commitment and resilience characteristic of early Christian leaders.

7. Thomas: From Doubts to _____

The apocryphal "Acts of Thomas" provides an account of the martyrdom of Thomas in Mylapore (modern Chennai), India. According to this tradition, Thomas faced a grim fate at the hands of his adversaries. He was reportedly executed by being stabbed with spears by a Hindu priest.

Syrian Christian tradition, in particular, holds that Thomas was martyred in Mylapore on July 3, 72 AD. This date and account emphasize the deep-rooted connection between Thomas and the Indian Christian community. The martyrdom of Thomas is often seen as a symbol of his unwavering commitment to spreading the gospel, even in the face of persecution. It also highlights the rich and complex history of the spread of Christianity in India and the enduring legacy of apostolic influence in that region.

8. Matthew the Tax Collector: From Means to _____

In Foxe's Book of Martyrs, the life and martyrdom of Matthew is detailed. It is recorded that Matthew's missionary work spanned Parthia (included Iran and Iraq) and Ethiopia, regions where he spread the teachings of Christianity. According to this account, in Ethiopia, Matthew endured martyrdom by being slain with a halberd (a combination axe and spear) in the city of Nadabah in the year 60 AD.

This narrative highlights the extensive reach of Matthew's ministry and the challenges he faced in preaching Christianity in diverse and sometimes hostile territories. Matthew's death in Ethiopia, a place with a rich Christian heritage, serves as a reminder of the profound impact of his missionary work and his ultimate sacrifice in the name of his faith.

9. James, Son of Alphaeus (The Less) From Anonymity to _____.

Hippolytus, a respected theologian who lived during the second and third centuries, documented the death of James the son of Alphaeus. According to his writings, James was actively preaching in Jerusalem when he faced violent opposition from the Jewish community. This hostility culminated in his martyrdom by stoning. Hippolytus further noted that James was buried near the temple in Jerusalem, highlighting the significance of his final resting place in close proximity to the religious center where he had dedicated his ministry.

The burial of James near the temple also reflects the reverence and respect held for him by his followers and the early Christian community, recognizing his contribution to the spread of the Christian faith and his unwavering commitment to his mission.

10. Thaddaeus: From Analyst to _____

Luke, in his Gospel (Luke 6:16) and the book of Acts (Acts 1:13), refers to Judas as “Judas son of James,” effectively replacing the name Thaddeus with this alternative designation. This shift highlights the variations in naming conventions that can be found across different texts in the New Testament. On the other hand, John specifically mentions Thaddeus, calling him “Judas (not Iscariot)” (John 14:22), underscoring a distinct identity from Judas Iscariot.

According to “The Golden Legend,” Simon and Jude, two of the apostles, faced martyrdom when they commanded demons to leave idols, which incited the ire of religious leaders. The narrative describes how the idolators responded by violently attacking the apostles, resulting in their deaths. However, the account adds that a powerful thunderstorm followed, striking the temple and turning the bodies of the two apostles into coal. The king, recognizing the divine retribution, honored them by transferring their bodies to the city and establishing a grand church in their honor.

11. Simon the Zealot: From Activist to _____

There are various accounts detailing the death of Simon the Zealot. Moses of Chorene, a historian from the fifth century, recorded that Simon the Zealot was martyred in Iberia (Spain).

Additionally, “The Golden Legend” recounts Simon’s martyrdom in Persia in 65 AD. The Ethiopian Christian tradition claims that he was crucified in Samaria. In the sixteenth century, Justus Lipsius mentioned that he was sawed in half, in a similar fashion to some earlier prophets.

12. Matthias

This is the disciple who was selected by the other apostles to replace Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:12-26). The narrative of Matthias, who was chosen

to be an apostle to take Judas' place, reflects the continuation of the early church's mission despite the betrayal by one of its members.

According to one tradition, Matthias was martyred in Ethiopia, where he was stoned to death by cannibals. Another tradition suggests he was stoned to death by Jews in Jerusalem and then beheaded. Both traditions contribute to our understanding of the diversity of experiences and martyrdom endured by the apostles and early followers of Jesus.

- 13. Paul: From Religion to _____**
- A. Jesus Himself set the standard for being an apostle, those He had _____. Acts 1:2**
 - B. The eleven apostles after the death of Judas chose _____. Acts 1:21-26**
 - C. The one chosen by God to replace Judas was _____. Gal 1:1; Rom 1:1**
 - D. Paul had the _____ of Apostleship. Eph 4:11**
 - E. Those with the Gift were also _____. Eph 2:20**
 - F. Paul's claim to Apostleship was verified by the other _____ of the First Century. 1 Cor 14:32**
 - G. It appears that there are only 12 who were given the Gift of Apostleship because the New Jerusalem's _____ stones were named for each of them. Rev 21:14**
 - H. Other people were sent out with _____ "as apostles" to carry out specific functions, like Barnabas and Timothy.**