THE APOSTLES
Their Lives and Messages
Lesson One

Disciples and Apostles
Disciple

• **Definition of a Disciple**
  – A disciple is a learner.
  – From *mathetes* (Gr.) and *discipulus* (Lat.)
Characteristics of Disciples

• A new identity
  – Christ stated that people would treat His followers worse than they treated Him (Matt. 10:24–25).
  – When trained, a disciple will be like his teacher (Luke 6:40).
Characteristics of Disciples

• A new way of life
  – Christ has priority over...
    • Family (Matt. 8:21)
    • Home (Matt. 8:20)
    • Personal gain (Matt. 19:21–22)
  – A disciple must be willing to endure hardship and death (Luke 14:27).
Characteristics of Disciples

• A new **purpose**
  – A true disciple will **abide** in God’s Word (John 8:31).
    • Allowing God’s Word to transform the heart
    • Teaching God’s Word to others
Examples of Disciples

• Moses’ Disciples (John 9:28)
• John the Baptist’s Disciples (Luke 7:18)
• Jesus’ Disciples (John 6:66; Acts 6:1)
Apostles

• Definition of Apostle
  – “Sent one”
  – A messenger or delegate who is dispatched on a mission (Strong’s Concordance)
  – From apostolos (Gr.)
Apostles (cont.)

- *Apostolos* Denoted God’s Messengers
  - Christ (Heb. 3:1)
  - Jewish preachers (Luke 11:49)
  - Missionaries (2 Cor. 8:23)
Qualifications for God’s Special Apostles

• A Witness to the Resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 9:1)

• A Follower and Disciple of Christ (Acts 1:21–22)
  – From Christ’s baptism to His ascension

• One Chosen Directly by God (Matt. 10:1–2)
God Gave Special Gifts

- To Christ’s Apostles (Matt. 10:5–15)
- To Apostles in the Early Church (Acts 19:11; 1 Cor. 12:27–28)
Duties of All Apostles

- To Witness (Rom. 10:14–15)
- To Authenticate Doctrine (1 John 4:1–6)
- To Remain Loyal to God (2 Tim. 2:1–7)
- These Duties Are for Every Believer
Lesson Two

Andrew
Andrew’s Background

- From *Bethsaida*, on the Northwest Shore of the Sea of Galilee (John 1:44)
- Brother of *Simon Peter*
- A Disciple of *John the Baptist* (John 1:35, 37)
Andrew’s Faith

• His Discovery of the Messiah
  (John 1:41)
  – Andrew identified Jesus as Messiah.
  – He brought Peter to see the Messiah.

• His Call to Discipleship
  (Matt. 4:18–19)
Andrew’s Ministry

• Brought His Brother to the Lord (John 1:41)
  – He found Simon immediately after he spent time with Jesus.

• Brought a Young Boy to the Lord (John 6:8–9)

• Brought Greeks to the Lord (John 12:20–22)
Andrew’s Continuing Witness

- Carried the Gospel into Southern Russia (Eusebius)
- Died a Martyr’s Death by Crucifixion on an X-Shaped Cross (Foxe)
Sharing Jesus with Others (Rom. 10)

• Definition of Witnessing
  – Witnessing means to tell others about something you have experienced.
  – Example: a witness in court
Motives for Witnessing

• To share the gospel with those who have never heard (Rom. 10:14–15)
  – Our sin condemns us to hell (Rom. 6:23).
  – Christ is the only true way of salvation (John 14:6).
Motives for Witnessing

• To fulfill Christ’s commission (Matt. 28:16–20; Acts 1:8)
• To glorify God (John 17:20–26)
Methods for Witnessing

• Witnessing requires intentional communication.

• Relying on behavior to share the gospel isn’t enough.
THE APOSTLES Their Lives and Messages
Lesson Three

Simon Peter the Fisherman
Peter’s Background

• Name and Family
  – Hebrew Name—Simeon
  • Greek form—Simon
  – Brother—Andrew
  – Father—Jonah, sometimes spelled Jonas (Matt. 16:17)
Name and Family (cont.)

• **From Bethsaida** (John 1:44)
  – Had a north country accent
    (Mark 14:70)

• **Later Lived in Capernaum**
  (Mark 1:21, 29)
  – City where Peter’s mother-in-law lived
    (Mark 1:29–30)
Name and Family (cont.)

- A Fisherman
- Religion and Education
  - Followed Jewish Law (Acts 10:14)
  - No formal education (Acts 4:13)
Peter’s Call

• To Meet Christ (1:41–42)
  – Christ gave Simon a new name—Cephas, meaning “Rock”
    • "Peter" comes from the Greek word petros, meaning "rock."
    • Christ told Peter that he would be foundational in building the church (Matt. 16:18–19).
Peter’s Call (cont.)

• To Discipleship (Luke 5:1–11)
  – Peter personally witnessed two miracles.
    • Mother-in-law healed (Luke 4:38–39)
    • Unusually large catch of fish (Luke 5:4–11)
  – Peter was a close disciple (Mark 9:2).
Peter’s Conflicted Trust

• **In Christ’s Mission**
  – Peter’s misunderstanding of Christ’s kingdom (Matt. 19:27)
  – Peter’s refusal to believe Christ’s death (Matt. 17:21–23)
Peter’s Conflicted Trust (cont.)

• In Christ’s Identity
  – Jesus washing Peter’s feet (John 13:6–16)
  – Peter’s denial at Christ’s arrest (Matt. 26:69–75)
Peter’s Conflicted Trust (cont.)

• In Christ’s Power
  – Peter’s walking on water
    (Matt. 14:22–33)
  – Peter’s disbelief at Christ’s resurrection
    (John 20:8–9)
Peter’s Conflicted Trust (cont.)

• Dealing with Doubt
  – The key to this struggle isn’t found in trying harder or ignoring our doubts—it lies in meditating on God’s character.
THE APOSTLES
Their Lives and Messages
Lesson Four

Simon Peter the Rock
## Peter’s Character Transformation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Fisherman (Gospels)</th>
<th>The Rock (Acts 1–2)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Haughty, bold</td>
<td>Humble, confident</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-motivated</td>
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<td>Quick to speak</td>
<td>Quick to suffer for Christ</td>
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Causes for Change

• The Resurrection of Christ (Matt. 28)

• Christ’s Post-Resurrection Meeting (Acts 1:3)
Causes for Change (cont.)

• A Week of Prayer
  (Acts 1:4, 13–14)

• The Holy Spirit’s Indwelling
  (Acts 2)
Peter After Pentecost

• Focused on Christ’s Resurrection (1 Pet. 1:3).
Christ’s Resurrection

• It signifies God’s acceptance of Christ’s sacrifice (Rom. 4:25).
• It gives us hope for the future (1 Cor. 15:12–22, 49).
• It establishes Christ’s victory over sin (1 Cor. 15:56–57).
Peter After Pentecost (cont.)

- Knew the **Scriptures** (Acts 2:16, 25; 3:24)
- **Led** (Acts 1:12–26)
- Showed **Boldness** (Acts 4:13)
Peter’s Ministry

• Had a Worldwide Burden to Preach the Gospel (Acts 10:34–35)
• Wrote Letters to Early Churches
• Died at Rome by Upside-Down Crucifixion (Foxe)
Marks of Spiritual Maturity (2 Pet. 1:3–11)

- Virtue, or Goodness
- Knowledge
- Self-control
- Patience
- Godliness
- Kindness
- Love
THE APOSTLES
Their Lives and Messages
James’s Background

• Lived in Galilee

• Fisherman by Occupation
James’s Background (cont.)

• Family
  – Brother—John (Mark 1:19)
  – Father—Zebedee (Mark 1:20)
  – Mother—Salome (Mark 15:40; Matt. 27:56)
    • She followed Christ and witnessed His crucifixion
James’s Leadership

• **A Close Disciple**
  – Witnessed parts of Christ's ministry that other disciples didn't
  – Assigned a special surname by Christ (Mark 3:17; John 1:42)

• **More Prominent Than John**
James’s Character

• Received a Special Name from Christ
  – *Boanerges* (Gr.)—“Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17)

• Known for Zeal
Two Kinds of Zeal

• **Vengeful Zeal** (Luke 9:54)
  – Retribution for a perceived wrong
    • When the Samaritan village rejected Christ, James and John wanted to destroy the village.
  – This zeal lacked **love**.
Two Kinds of Zeal (cont.)

• **Ambitious Zeal (Matt. 20:20–28)**
  – Ambition is a strong desire to achieve a personal goal.
    • James and John desired places of honor in God’s kingdom.
    • At one point, all the disciples had argued about who was the greatest (Luke 9:46). Jesus used a child to demonstrate the kind of attitude the truly great must have—humility.
Two Kinds of Zeal (cont.)

- Ambitious Zeal (cont.)
  - This zeal lacked knowledge.
    - They did not understand what they requested because they didn’t understand Christ’s teaching.
James’s Ministry

- Served in the Early Church
- Beheaded by Herod (Acts 12:2)
- James was the first of the Twelve Disciples to die for Christ.
The Apostles: Their Lives and Messages
Lesson Six

John
John’s Background

• Brother of James
  – Less prominent than James

• Hebrew Name—Jonah
  – Means “dove”
  – Denotes peace and gentleness

• Greek Name—Johanin
  – Means “The Lord is gracious”
  – Suits John’s character
John’s Character

• During Christ’s Ministry
  – Enthusiastic—one of the “Sons of Thunder”
  – Ambitious—desired honor for himself
John’s Character (cont.)

• After Christ
  – Humble
    • John the “servant” (Rev. 1:1)
  – Desired to honor Christ
John’s Faith

• Followed Christ Immediately (Mark 1:20)

• One of the First to Believe Christ’s Resurrection (John 20:4–9)

• One of the First to Recognize Christ (John 21:1–7)
A Lesson in Love

• Christ Taught John Love and Truth
  – John encouraged Christians to reflect love to each other (1 John 4:7–11).
  – John gave warnings about error and false teaching (1 John 4:1–6).
John’s Ministry

• Wrote John, 1st, 2nd, 3rd John, and Revelation

• Preached in Asia (Eusebius)

• Founded Churches (Foxe)

• Exiled to Isle of Patmos

• Escaped a Violent Death (Foxe)
THE APOSTLES
Their Lives and Messages
Lesson Seven

Philip

The Apostles
Philip’s Background

• From Bethsaida (John 1:44)
Philip’s Character

- Relied on Personal Experience
- Struggled with Faith
Philip’s Call

- Christ Chose Philip Personally (John 1:43)
- Philip Identified Christ as the Prophesied Messiah (John 1:45)
Philip’s Faith

• The Test of Feeding over 5,000 People (John 6:5–6)
  – Philip calculated how much food they could buy (v. 7).
Philip’s Faith (cont.)

• The Greeks Who Came to See Jesus (John 12:20–22)
  – Philip’s uncertainty
  – Philip’s caution (v. 22)
Philip’s Faith (cont.)

• Christ Shows the Father (John 14:4–11)
  – Philip wanted physical evidence (v. 8).
Philip’s Faith (cont.)

- Two ways to see the Father (John 14:10–11)
  - Through Christ’s words (Matt. 11:27; John 10:30)
  - Through Christ’s works (John 5:19–23)
Philip’s Faith (cont.)

• Christ Challenged Philip to Believe
Philip’s Ministry (Acts 8)

- Preached in Samaria (vv. 4–8)
- Witnessed to the Ethiopian Man (vv. 26–40)
THE APOSTLES
Their Lives and Messages
Lesson Eight

Nathaniel
Nathaniel’s Background

• From Cana, in Galilee (John 21:2)

• Name Means “God Has Given”
  – Also known as Bartholomew
  – Always listed with Philip (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14)
Nathaniel’s Background (cont.)

• Family
  – Father—Talmai
    (Bar—Talmai = Bartholomew)
Nathaniel’s Character
(John 1:45–51)

• **Knowledgeable** (vv. 45–46)
  – Knew the Messiah was prophesied to come out of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)
  – Jesus was born in Bethlehem, although He grew up in Nazareth.
Nathaniel’s Character (cont.)

- Honest, Without **Deceit** (v. 47)
  - Trusted a Messiah, not the **Law**
  - Asked an **honest** question (John 1:46)
Nathaniel’s Ministry

• Preached in India
Lesson Nine

Matthew
The Publicans

• Jews Who Collected Tax for the Romans

• Bad Reputation from overtaxing the people and pocketing the difference (Luke 3:12–13)
Bad Reputation

- **Leeches**—lived off of other people’s resources
- **Sinners**—practiced dishonesty and theft
- **Social outcasts**—no one wanted to associate with them
- **National traitors**—allied with Rome and oppressed their own people for personal gain
Matthew’s Background

• Matthew’s Father—Alphaeus

• Jewish Name—Levi
  – A descendant of the Levites, the Hebrew tribe that served as priests
Matthew’s Character

• Loved Money
  – He wanted riches even if it meant throwing away family, country, conscience, and religion.
  – Money itself is not evil, but loving money is responsible for all sorts of evils (1 Tim. 6:10). Loving money brings sorrow and causes people to abandon their faith in God.
Matthew’s Call

• **Its Solemnity**
  – Matthew would have to sacrifice what he loved.

• **Its Mercy**
  – Christ treated Matthew with compassion.
Matthew’s Call (cont.)

• Its Promise
  – Matthew sacrificed little in comparison to what he gained in Christ.

• Its Transforming Power
  – Matthew invited his friends to meet Christ.
Matthew’s Faith

• Incorruptible Treasure in Heaven (Matt. 6:19–34)
  – Valuing the spiritual over the material
  – Trusting God, not money, to provide for our needs
Matthew’s Faith (cont.)

• The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Most Valuable Pearl (Matt. 13:44–45)
  – Leaving everything behind to pursue that which is most valuable of all—Christ
Matthew’s Ministry

• Wrote the Gospel of Matthew
  – Offered a unique, Jewish perspective of the Messiah’s kingship
• Provided details that the other Gospel books omit
  – The visit of the wise men (Matt. 2)
  – Jesus’ royal genealogy through Joseph (1:1–17)
  – Details of the Sermon on the Mount
THE APOSTLES
Their Lives and Messages
Lesson Ten

Thomas
Thomas’s Background

• Nickname Meaning “Twin”
• Greek Name: Didymus (John 20:24)
Thomas’s Love for the Lord

• Willing to *Die with Christ* (John 11:6–16)
  – Responded with loyalty and courage
  – Lacked understanding of Christ’s purpose
Thomas’s Love for the Lord (cont.)

• Desired to **Follow** the Lord (John 14:1–6)
  – Expressed his confusion about Christ leaving
  – Didn’t understand Christ’s words
Thomas’s Faith
(John 20:25–28)

• His Declaration of Belief (v. 28)
Thomas’s Ministry

• Preached in Parthia, a region of northwest Iran (Eusebius), and India (Foxe)
THE APOSTLES
Their Lives and Messages
Lesson Eleven

Simon the Zealot
The Zealots

• Jewish Terrorists Who Fought Political Subjugation
Simon’s Background

• Simon’s Name
  – Known as “the Zealot” or “Zelotes”
  – Canaanite from *kananaios* (Gr.), meaning “zealous”
Simon’s Character

• Looked for a Messiah to **Overthrow** Roman Oppressors

• Hoped that Christ Would **Physically** Free Israel (Acts 1:6)
Simon’s Faith

- His Surprising Decision to Follow Christ
  - Christ’s teaching on paying taxes (Matt. 22:15–22)
  - Christ’s teaching on fighting by the sword (John 18:10–11)
Simon’s Ministry

- Listed with the Other Apostles After Christ’s Resurrection (Acts 1:13)
- No Longer a Zealot (Luke 6:15)
  - Simon “who was called the Zealot”
THE APOSTLES
Their Lives and Messages
Lesson Twelve

Judas Iscariot
Judas’s Background

• Name
  – Hebrew name—Judah, “Praise the Lord”
  – Judas is now synonymous with “traitor”
Judas’s Background (cont.)

• City
  – From Kerioth, in Judea
    • The Moabites, who founded Kerioth, opposed God.
    • Judas was in the minority among many disciples who came from Galilee.

• Family
  – Father—Simon (John 13:2)
Judas’s Discipleship

• Listed with the Apostles (Matt. 10:4)
• Deliberately Chosen by Christ (John 6:70)
  – Jesus prophesied that Judas would betray Him (John 17:12).
  – Judas’s actions were prophesied in the Old Testament (Jer. 19:1–13; Zech. 11:12–13).
Judas’s Greed

- Moralized His Criticism
- Tried to Disguise His Greed with a False Concern for the Poor (vv. 5–6)
- Did Not Think Jesus Was Worth Such a Generous Gift
Judas’s Betrayal  
(John 13:21–30)

- Controlled by Greed  
  (Matt. 26:14–16)

- Stopped Loving the Lord

- Consumed with Remorse  
  (Matt. 27:3–10)
THE APOSTLES
Their Lives and Messages
Lesson Thirteen

James the Less and Judas Thaddaeus
James the Less

• Known as “the Less”
  – Mikros (Gr.)
    • Short in height
    • Younger in age
    • Low in rank or influence
James the Less (cont.)

• Family
  – Father—Alphaeus (Matt. 10:3)
  – Mother—Mary (Matt. 27:56; Mark 15:40)
    • Followed Christ and witnessed His crucifixion (Mark 15:40)
  – Brother—Joses (Mark 15:40)
Judas Thaddaeus

• **Background**
  – Two Names
    • Judas (Luke 6:16)
    • Lebbaeus (Matt. 10:3), meaning “man of heart”
    • Surname—Thaddaeus, meaning “large-hearted, courageous”
Judas Thaddaeus (cont.)

• **Family**
  – Father—James (Luke 6:16)

• **Discipleship**
  – Only one recorded statement (John 14:22)
    • Judas Thaddaeus asked why Christ would show Himself to the Apostles but not to the world.
    • Christ said that He would show Himself to the person who loved Him and kept His commandments.
Lessons from James and Judas

• **Everyone Is Important to God**
  – God uses all kinds of people.
    (1 Cor. 1:26–31)
  – All credit belongs to God.
Lessons from James and Judas (cont.)

• The Bible Glorifies God
  – Resist the temptation to worship people.
  – Don’t attribute God’s work to people’s abilities.
  – The apostles chose to glorify God, not themselves.
Lessons from James and Judas (cont.)

• God Notes Obscure Service
  – People may forget you, but God won’t.
THE APOSTLES
Their Lives and Messages
Lesson Fourteen

Paul
Paul’s Background

• Family
  – Little known about Paul’s family
  – Was unmarried
    • Singleness allowed Paul greater flexibility in ministry.
Paul’s Background (cont.)

• City
  – Born in Tarsus (Acts 22:3)
Paul’s Background (cont.)

• Education
  – Learned from Gamaliel and studied Jewish Law (Acts 5:34; 22:3)
    • Chose to enter the service of the High Priest (Acts 9:1–2)
  – A tentmaker by trade (Acts 18:2–3)
Paul’s Background (cont.)

• Name
  – Hebrew name—Saul
  – Roman name—Paulus
  – Used interchangeably, though "Paul" appears more often in his writings
Paul's Call

• On the Way to Persecute Christians in Damascus (Acts 9:1–2)

• Called Directly by God (Acts 9:5–6)
Paul’s Faith

• Believed Christ (Acts 9:17–18)
• Shared His Testimony (Gal. 1:11–24)
Paul's Ministry

• Preached the Gospel (Rom. 15:20–21)
  – He had a burden for preaching to people who had not yet heard the gospel.
Paul's Ministry

• **Tested Doctrine (2 Cor. 11:12–15)**
  – He corrected unbiblical doctrine that crept into the early churches.
Paul's Ministry (cont.)

• Remained **Loyal** to God
  – Beatings (Acts 16:37; 21:32)
  – Imprisonment (Acts 16:25; 23:18; 24:27)
  – Slander (1 Cor. 4:9–13)
Paul's Ministry (cont.)

- Persecution from religionists (Acts 21:27–28)
- Threat of death (Acts 26:21)
- Personal struggles (2 Cor. 12:7)
- Abandonment (Phil. 4:15; 2 Tim. 4:10)
Paul's Qualifications as an Apostle

- Saw the Post-Resurrection Christ
- Chosen Directly by Christ
- Received Teaching Directly from Christ
- Fulfilled the Duties of an Apostle
Paul’s Spiritual Gifts

- Healing (Acts 14:10; 28:8)
- Prophecy and Visions (Acts 9:3–7, 12; 22:17; 2 Cor. 12:1–5)
- Supernatural Ability to Speak in Other Languages (1 Cor. 14:18)
Purpose of These Spiritual Gifts

• To Preach Christ
Cessation of the Revelatory Gifts

- God No Longer Gives Direct Revelation (Rev. 22:18–19)
- God’s Word Is Sufficient (2 Tim. 3:16)
Paul’s Death

• Eventually Beheaded by Nero, the Roman Emperor
THE APOSTLES
Their Lives and Messages
Lesson Fifteen

Christ's Messengers Today
Following Christ

• Knowledge Alone Doesn't Save Us (John 3:1–21)
• We Choose to Believe Him (Rom. 4:3, 5)
• God Changes Our Lives (2 Cor. 5:17)
God's Messengers

- All Christians Are "Sent Ones"—Apostles (Acts 1:8)

- Qualifications of God's Messengers
  - Salvation
  - Spirit-control
God's Messengers (cont.)

• God Does Not Disqualify Us Based on...
  – Nationality (Eph. 2:11–22)
  – Gender (Gal. 3:28)
  – Training or education (1 Cor. 1:20–21)
  – Social status (1 Cor. 1:26)
  – Past sins (1 Cor. 6:9–10)
God's Commission

- **Preach the Gospel** (Matt. 28:18–20)
- **Test Doctrine** (Acts 17:10–11)
- **Remain Loyal to God** (Jude 20–25)