

# Apostles

Philip, Thomas, Nathaniel,  
Thaddeus, James, Matthew & Simon

## Note from Kathy

*I believe when you finish this lesson today you will once again be in awe of our God. He used ordinary people then, and he uses ordinary people today. God will help you develop any skills you need to do the work he has called you to do. Our physical body is such a wonderful picture of the body of the believers. We need each member to do what they were uniquely created to do. Hang in there. You are doing things of eternal value!*



## Observation

Use your Bible or the Bible verses provided at the end of this chapter to answer the questions below.

1. Last week we looked at four of the twelve apostles. This week we will take a look at seven more. Let's begin with Philip. As Jesus began his ministry in the area of Galilee he met Philip and invited him to follow him. Read John 1:43-46. What do you learn about Philip?
2. In John 6 we read the story of Jesus feeding the huge crowd with only 5 loaves and 2 fish. Jesus asked Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" Read John 6:6-7. Why did Jesus ask Philip this question, and what was Philip's answer?
3. Scripture tells us that Judas Iscariot carried the purse for Jesus and his disciples. Did Philip ask Judas how much money they had to possibly feed the crowd?

What does Philip focus on?

It is not wrong to count the cost before attempting a large task. But it shows a tremendous lack of faith when you fix your eyes on that instead of our gracious Father's power and provision. Notice the difference between the young boy and Philip. The disciple could not see past the size of the problem. Remember, little is much when God is in it! What was the young boy's response to his huge need?

4. In John 1:45-51 Philip found Nathaniel and told him some very good news. What was that news?

What was Nathaniel's response?

Jesus did not waste time and energy getting offended at Nathaniel's remarks. He knew that Nathaniel had an honest desire to know the truth. Nathaniel would be willing to go to the trouble to investigate the claims presented. Jesus demonstrated his great love and plan for Nathaniel. Did Jesus' words change his thinking?

What was Nathaniel's response?

Several of the disciples had other names in the scriptures. Nathaniel (Hebrew name) is thought to be the same person as the disciple Bartholomew (Aramaic name).

5. Thomas' name appears several times in the New Testament, but there are three particular events we want to focus on. The first occurred shortly after Jesus received word that his friend Lazarus was sick. Mary and Martha are at their home in Bethany expecting Jesus to come and heal their brother. Everyone around Jesus advises him not to go. There is tremendous hostility toward Jesus in Jerusalem; Bethany is only a few miles away. When Jesus prepares to go, what does Thomas boldly declare in John 11:16?
6. Later in John 14:1-6 we see Jesus comforting his disciples, after once again telling them he is going away. Jesus does not want them to be surprised when he returns to heaven. He tries to help them see that they can follow him. Thomas is confused by Jesus' words. What question does Thomas ask Jesus?

What wonderful truth does Jesus share with Thomas that is the very theme of the gospel?

In John 20:19-29 we once again read about Thomas, but this event earned him the nickname "doubting Thomas," which sadly has stuck with him. What does Thomas say it will take for him to believe that Jesus has been resurrected?

One week after saying these words Thomas is together with the other disciples and Jesus appears in the room, even though the scripture says the doors were locked. Jesus greets them with the words, "Peace be with you." What does he invite Thomas to do?

What is Thomas' response?

It is true, seeing is believing, but what can we learn about faith from Hebrews 11:1?

7. Read Matthew 9:9-13 and Luke 5:27-28. What do you learn about Matthew?

This line of work was ruthless. They would overcharge their own people and keep the difference. They had little concern for the suffering they caused.

8. In Luke 5:29-31 Matthew (Greek name) is referred to as Levi (Hebrew name), but it is the same man. What did this man do after meeting Jesus?

How might you describe this man before he met Jesus?

What kind of changes do you see in Matthew after he met Jesus?

9. Simon is mentioned in Matthew 10:4, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15 and Acts 1:13. Each time what is the one fact that we see mentioned over and over concerning Simon? Look up this word. What does this say about this man?
10. James the son of Alphaeus and Thaddaeus (also known as Judas son of James) are simply named among the disciples. There are no stories recorded of their great faith or faltering, only a mention as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

But, before we rush right past them or brush them off as inconsequential or insignificant, let's consider all they willingly laid down to follow Jesus. Read Matthew 16:24-26. What had these men sacrificed in order to follow Christ?

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## Application

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1. Like Philip, when we focus on the enormity of a problem and allow our focus to be on our limited resources, we will not see the possibility of God's blessings. What are you expecting God to do today? What will you attempt for him?
2. In John 12:20-22 we see some Greeks who had come to worship at the feast in Jerusalem. They found Philip and asked him if they could see Jesus. Even though these men were foreigners they knew that Philip knew Jesus. They recognized that he was part of Jesus' inner circle. Do others know you have been with Jesus—that you know him intimately?

Do they come to you when they want to meet Jesus?

3. Thomas' spiritual life is like many of us, some times of great faith and some times of real doubts. Any time we falter in our faith is not good. But it does not discount us for the work of God. Can you think of a time when your faith waivered and seemed almost non-existent?

God will not allow us to stay there. He will reach out to bring us back to him. What event brought you back to faith?

4. Matthew was a tax collector by trade before meeting Jesus. He sat at the gate and collected taxes for Rome from his own people the Jews. The taxes were already ridiculously high and often took most of what these poor people had. The fact that a Jewish brother was working in this position caused great animosity. But as if things were not bad enough the tax collectors were allowed by Rome to charge whatever they wanted above the tax. They could keep the difference. Have you ever taken more than what you were rightfully due?

Have you ever turned a blind eye to the suffering going on around you?

When you met Jesus did these things bother you? If so, what did you do to offer restitution?

5. Simon was known as Simon the Zealot. What did it mean to be a zealot at that time?

We may not know exactly why he was always referred to as Simon the Zealot, but I am sure it must have had something to do with his approach to all he put his hands to do and his mind to ponder. What are you zealous about?

Are you zealous when it comes to spiritual things?

6. James the son of Alphaeus and Thaddaeus may not have had stories we could look at and glean from, but they followed Jesus at a time when many opposed him with fervor. To be a follower of Christ's in that day was a dangerous decision. Has choosing to follow Christ cost you anything?

## Bible Verses for Reference

**John 1:43-46** - The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." <sup>44</sup>Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. <sup>45</sup>Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." <sup>46</sup>"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip.

**John 6:6-7** - He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. <sup>7</sup>Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

**John 1:45-51** - Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." <sup>46</sup>"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip. <sup>47</sup>When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit." <sup>48</sup>"How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." <sup>49</sup>Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel." <sup>50</sup>Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that." <sup>51</sup>He then added, "Very truly I tell you, you will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.'"

**John 11:16** - Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

**John 14:1-6** - "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup>My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup>You know the way to the place where I am going." <sup>5</sup>Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" <sup>6</sup>Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

**John 20:19-29** - On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>20</sup>After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." <sup>22</sup>And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." <sup>24</sup>Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." <sup>26</sup>A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>27</sup>Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." <sup>28</sup>Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup>Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

**Hebrews 11:1** - Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

**Matthew 9:9-13** - As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. <sup>10</sup>While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. <sup>11</sup>When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" <sup>12</sup>On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. <sup>13</sup>But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

**Luke 5:27-28** - After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, 28 and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

**Luke 5:29-31** - Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. <sup>30</sup>But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" <sup>31</sup>Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.

**Matthew 10:4** - Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

**Mark 3:18** - Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot

**Luke 6:15** - Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot

**Acts 1:13** - When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.

**Matthew 16:24-26** - Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup>For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. <sup>26</sup>What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?"

**John 12:20-22** - Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. <sup>21</sup>They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." <sup>22</sup>Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.