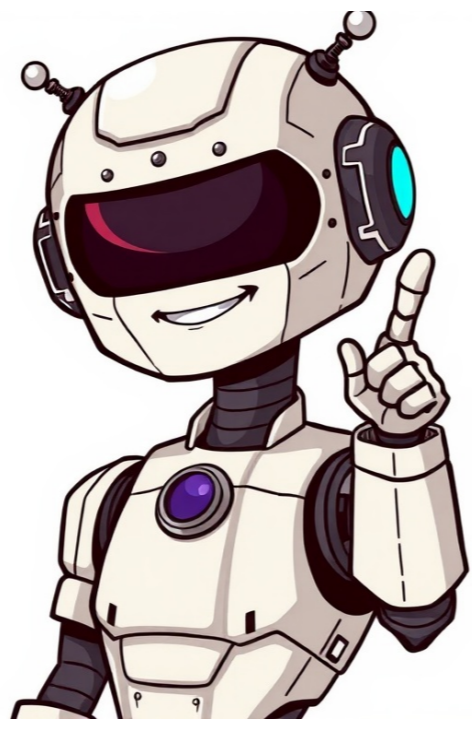


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Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article belong to the author and do not necessarily match my own. - Dr. Bart D. EhrmannIn the annals of history, the term "apostle" transcends linguistic nuances and theological discourse. It stands as a testament to a select group of 12 apostles who walked the dusty roads of ancient Judea, chosen by a charismatic teacher whose words would echo through centuries.From the shores of the Sea of Galilee to the cobble streets of Jerusalem, we unveil the story of the apostles of Jesus who bore witness to miracles, heard parables from the source, and ultimately, shaped the foundations of Christianity.Prepare to traverse the epochs, as we uncover the men who became legends, whose stories are intertwined with the inception of a religion that would leave an indelible mark on human history.Lets embark on a historic journey and uncover who were the 12 apostles/Define Apostle: Meaning Behind the EtymologyAs is the case with many historical inquiries, this one begins in the world of etymology. What does the word apostle mean? In other words, what is an apostle?The word has its roots in ancient Greek. It comes from the Greek word (Apostolos) which literary means one who is sent off or a messenger. The apostle is a noun derived from the verb (apostellin) which means to send off.In the Graeco-Roman world, the term denoted someone who was sent on a mission or dispatched with a message. In a more specialized sense, the term was used to describe an envoy, ambassador, delegate, or even (in a military context) a commander of a naval force.However, with the emergence of Christianity, the word apostle gained a slightly different meaning. In the New Testament, the term apostle is used primarily to refer to the twelve specially chosen disciples of Jesus Christ.The author of the Gospel of Matthew (10:1-2), for instance, notes that Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles (/But the word apostle was expanded after Jesus death to those who personally met the risen Jesus who then commissioned them to spread the good news of his death and resurrection. Paul and Barnabas, for example, were also called apostles (Acts 14:4).The expansion, however, had its limits! Despite their importance within the world of early Christianity, Timothy and Apollos arent called apostles. Precisely because they dont share with the rest of the group the experience of the risen Lord.Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, therefore, conclude: Apostles, then, are not officials of the church but officers of Christ for its upbuilding, and in this sense, they are comparable to the Old Testament prophets.That, of course, begs the question of the difference between apostles and disciples. The latter is a more broad term encompassing all those who followed Jesus while the former is a more distinct group of people. You may thus find of apostles as only males. However, in the early years of Christianity, things were not that simple. Writing to the community in Rome, the apostle Paul greeted Andronicus (male) and Junia (female) whom he called outstanding among the apostles (Rom 16:7). However, during the Middle Ages some scribes, not satisfied with the idea of a female apostle, changed the name to Junias to put it more bluntly, the disciples accepted Jesus message and chose to follow him during his public ministry. The apostles, on the other hand, were a designated group that Jesus himself sent out as missionaries to spread the good news.To find out more about this interesting difference between the apostles and disciples in the New Testament period, check out this article!Lets now turn our attention to the list of the apostles. Who were the 12 apostles? What can we know about them?Who Were the Apostles? List of the 12 Apostles NamesSynoptic Gospels list the names of Jesus' apostles. However, there are interesting variations. Check out the table depicting the 12 apostles that Jesus appointed:The Gospel of Mark (3:16-19)The Gospel of Matthew (10:2-4)The Gospel of Luke (6:13-16)Apostle James, the son of ZebedeeApostle John, the son of ZebedeeApostle James, the son of ZebedeeApostle John, the son of AlphaeusApostle James, the son of AlphaeusApostle James, the son of AlphaeusApostle Judas, the son of JamesThere is one major difference between these accounts. Luke includes Judas, the son of James instead of Thaddeus. Who is this apostle Judas and what is his relationship to Jesus? Is he the brother of Jesus identified with the Epistle of Jude?Some scholars believe that Judas is the same person as Thaddeus. In that case, the latter name would be a nickname inserted by both Mark and Matthew because Judas Iscariot tarnished that name.Others, however, are not that sure. John P. Meier, for instance, has argued against it. In his words: The replacement of Thaddeus by Jude if James finds no explanation in the theological program or stylistic preferences of Luke. Hence I think it most likely that Luke 6:14-16 represents a tradition of the names of the Twelve that is independent of the list in Mark 3:16-19. If we take that difference list of 12 apostles, we need to question the causes for this discrepancy. Unfortunately, we can only speculate. Menzies suggests a replacement of one name for another to place during Jesus ministry possibly because of the death of even apostles. E. Sanders proposes that Jesus was interested in the symbolism of the number 12 (twelve tribes of Israel). In that regard, he could have had more than 12 apostles but chose the number 12 for some convey theological symbolic message Jesus in Palestine would be evans of What about the other apostles Jesus' What can we know about them? TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE of the Historical Jesus!Think you know the Jesus of the Bible? Uncover the historical figure behind the texts! Holy Apostles: History, Tradition, and Legend!1) Apostle PeterThe apostle Peter is a prominent figure and one of the closest disciples of Jesus. He is initially introduced in the Gospels as a fisherman working with his brother Andrew on the Sea of Galilee (Mk 1:16). Jesus calls them to follow him and they accept it thus becoming Jesus first apostles.Among the 12 apostles, Peter is known for making the profound declaration of faith in Matthew 16:16. When Jesus asks the apostles Who do you say I am?, Peter is the one who finds the right words: You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.One of the most well-known episodes involving Peter, however, is his denial of Jesus three times during the night of Jesus' arrest (Mk 14:66-75; Mt 26:69-75; Mt 26:74-75; Lk 22:54-62; Jhn 18:15-18, 25-27).After Jesus' resurrection, there are several accounts of Jesus appearing to Peter specifically. In contrast to the Gospel accounts (Mt 28:1-9; Lk 24:1-8) where women first receive the news of Jesus resurrection, Paul emphasizes the role of the apostle Peter as the one whom Jesus first appeared (1 Cor 15:5). In the Book of Acts, Peter plays a crucial role in the early Christian community, especially in the events surrounding Pentecost and the initial spread of "good news" among the Jewish community in Jerusalem.Later tradition claims that Peter was killed by crucifixion but he requested that the cross be turned upside down as he believed that he wasnt worthy of being crucified as Jesus did. Needless to say, these later legends, as Dr. Ehrman explains in his book Peter, Paul, and Mary Magdalene, have no supporting evidence in the earlier sources.2) Apostle AndrewThe apostle Andrew is often mentioned as the brother of Simon Peter (also known as Peter). Their words go together in the Gospel of John, where they are both fishermen by the Sea of Galilee (Mark 1:16; Matthew 4:18; Luke 5:10).The author of Matthew (4:19) describes how Jesus called Andrew and Peter to follow him while they were fishing. He said "Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people. They, of course, immediately left their nets to follow Jesus.According to tradition, Andrew faced martyrdom by crucifixion. In the apocryphal Acts of Andrew, the apostle Andrew was bound to the Latin-shaped cross where he died a martyr. Later on a tradition developed according to which Andrew was crucified on an X-shaped cross - today known as the Saint Andrew's Cross.3) Apostle James, the son of ZebedeeThe apostle James was also a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee when Jesus came along. As soon as he heard his call, he decided to follow him (Mk 1:16-20; Mt 4:18-22).Furthermore, James is frequently mentioned as part of the inner circle of Jesus' disciples, along with Peter and John. These holy apostles are present at some key scenes from Jesus' life such as the Transfiguration and the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mk 14:32-42; Lk 22:39-46).Only Luke account gives us the powerful scene of Jesus sweating blood as he prays to God for strength. Did you know that scholars believe that this part of the text wasn't in the original Gospel of Luke? While copying the gospel, a later scribe changed the text! Joa Dr. Bart Ehrmann's new captivating course The Scribal Corruption of Scripture and find out more! According to the Book of Acts, the apostle James, the son of Zebedee, became the first apostolic martyr when Herod Agrippa ordered his execution (Acts 12:1-2).The Catholic Church believes that his remains (relics) are held in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain. Today, Santiago de Compostela is probably the most popular pilgrimage site within the Christian world.4) Apostle John, the son of ZebedeeThe apostle John, the son of Zebedee and the brother of James was also an important member of Jesus inner circle. He was a fisherman, just like his brother and they both accepted Jesus call to follow him. In the later Church tradition, the apostle John became known as the author of the Gospel and the Book of Revelation. However, most scholars reject the idea that he wrote the Gospel of John as he is believed to be a disciple of Jesus from the beginning of his ministry and a witness to his resurrection.Acts 1:23-26 describes what happened next: So they nominated two men; Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.Summing up Conclusion: 12 Apostles and Their SignificanceFrom the dusty shores of the Sea of Galilee to the cobble streets of Jerusalem, we embarked on a historical journey, unveiling the stories of the apostles of Jesus.As we delved into the etymology of the word "apostle," tracing its roots to ancient Greek, we discovered its evolution from a general term for messengers to a specialized designation for the twelve specially chosen disciples of Jesus Christ whom he sent out to spread the good news.The list of the apostles, as revealed in the Synoptic Gospels, sparked intrigue and presented interesting variations. Each name carried a weight of historical significance, each apostle a key figure in the inception of a religion that would leave an indelible mark on human history.The holy apostles, a designation that goes beyond mere titles, played pivotal roles in the unfolding drama of Jesus' ministry and the early Christian community: from the first call and the pivotal events such as the Last Supper through the tragic betrayal by Judas Iscariot to the appearances of the risen Jesus before their eyes. In conclusion, we've unveiled stories behind Jesus' closest disciples thus answering the question of who were the 12 apostles. But we've only scratched the surface of what lies beneath. If you want to know more about the origins of Christianity and the mystery surrounding the earliest biographies of Jesus, join the course The Unknown Gospels by Dr. Bart Ehrman! TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE of the Historical Jesus!Think you know the Jesus of the Bible? Uncover the historical figure behind the texts! Sunday Mornings10:30amRegis High Schoolentrance on 85th St./w Madison Park) From a Biblical standpoint, there is not a lot of information about what happened to the apostles after the Ascension of Jesus Christ into Heaven. It is known that they scattered after Jesus was arrested, and they were hiding together after His burial. When He rose from the dead, they gathered around Him to learn The Book of Acts tells the story of the initial growth of the church, which was driven by the Apostles. Before the baptism by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they were staying together in a room in Jerusalem.After Pentecost, the apostles began to go out into the ends of the earth to spread the Gospel. The ultimate fate of each one is not necessarily confirmed in the Bible. Some are and some are not. For those that are not mentioned in the Bible, there are some historical traditions, some of the more reliable ones are recorded in Foxes Book of Martyrs.Below is a list of the names of the twelve apostles and their fates. These are commonly accepted historical facts, with the ones verified by the Bible indicated. Please note it is difficult to historically verify some of these. According to tradition, this is what may have happened to each Apostle:Simon Peter: Spread the Gospel in Jerusalem and abroad, including Antioch. He died by crucifixion, and according to tradition, he asked to die upside-down. His death was prophesied by Jesus in John 21:18. Though he denied knowing Jesus three times before Jesus' crucifixion, Peter went on to be a pillar of the new Christian church. He is remembered as a passionate leader of the early church and a key figure in affirming that salvation through Jesus is for both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 15).Thaddeus also called Jude: Crucified at Edessa for his faith and missionary efforts. Known for spreading the Gospel in Mesopotamia and surrounding regions, he is traditionally recognized as the author of the Epistle of Jude, where he urged believers to contend for the faith and remain steadfast against false teachings.Bartholomew: Said to have translated the Gospel of Matthew and preached the Gospel in regions such as India and Armenia. He is believed to have faced a brutal martyrdom, being beaten before being crucified for his unwavering faith and missionary efforts. His dedication serves as a powerful testament to his commitment to spreading the message of Christ.Thomas also called Didymus: Traveled to Parthia and India, where he is credited with establishing Christian communities, particularly in southern India. He is believed to have been martyred by being speared to death for his faith. Thomas is remembered for his initial boldness about Jesus resurrection, which led to a profound declaration of faith, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).Simon the Zealot: Traveled extensively to spread the Gospel, going to Africa and possibly as far as Britain, according to tradition. He is believed to have been martyred for his faith, though accounts vary, with some suggesting he was sawn in half. As a former Zealot, Simons transformation into a devoted follower of Christ exemplifies the power of the Gospel to change lives and unite diverse individuals for Gods mission.John: Traveled extensively and spread the Gospel, becoming known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." He was sent to Rome, where, according to tradition, an attempt to boil him in oil failed miraculously, leading to his banishment to the island of Patmos. While in exile, he received the vision that became the Book of Revelation. 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