

## The Twelve Apostles

### Lesson 8

#### Study Notes

#### Philip: The Apostle Who Was Slow-Witted

&

#### Simon the Canaanite: The Apostle Who Was A Revolutionist

**Text: John 1: 43-45.**

***John 1:43 The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.***

Introduction: Philip is always listed as the fifth person in the list of the Apostles. While he may have not been as prominent as the first four men listed; nevertheless, he seems to be the head of the second grouping of the disciples. We must remember that God is of no respecter of persons so, Philip is not to be considered to be of less importance. Although Philip is mentioned in the four complete lists of the twelve (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13), it is interesting to observe that John is the only writer to tell us all that is to be said about Philip, yet he is the only one out of the four evangelists who does not quote the list. The first three evangelists give us his name and acquaint us with the fact that he was an apostle, but John loses sight of the dignity of the office that Philip filled and gives us a profile of the man himself with his own individualities and peculiarities. Though the facts respecting him are few, they are quite sufficient to study with profit as seen in (John 6:5-7; 12:20-23; 14:8).

***John 6:5-7 When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?6 And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.7 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.***

***John 12:20-22. And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:21 The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.***

*Note: Greek civilization had spread through the Mediterranean after the conquest of Alexander the Great in the fourth century B.C. and many people in the Middle East had adopted the Greek language, Greek culture, and Greek customs. They were known as "Hellenist" (cf, Acts 6:1). Perhaps Philip came from a family of Hellenistic Jews.*

***John 14:8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.***

#### **I. A Native of Bethsaida of Galilee.**

In John 1:44 we learn that Philip was of Bethsaida. When looking at Matthew 11:21 we see it was a city that had rejected the Lord Jesus; He would pronounce a woe upon the city.



***Matthew 11:21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.***

How true it is that faithful witnesses for Christ sometimes come from unlikely places. The important part of John's sentence is not only that Philip was born in Bethsaida but that it was the city of Andrew and Peter. Experiences sanctify events and places, and Bethsaida represented to Philip not only his dwelling place, but what is infinitely more, his friendships. Two saints of God lived in Bethsaida: the brothers, Andrew and Peter. They were the friends of Philip, and helped to prepare him for his apostolic calling.

Philip is the first we read of the apostles that Jesus himself actually sought and found and said to him "Follow Me" we know that Andrew, Peter, and likely James came to Jesus because of the preaching of John the Baptist in the wilderness. We often hear the expression "I found the Lord" and others say "the Lord found me" in reality they are both right; for it is the Lord who puts the desire in our hearts both to seek him and the joy of being found by Him. It is always God who moves in our direction first. Here we see the classic tension between sovereign election and human choice. Philip's call is a perfect illustration of how both exist in perfect harmony. The Lord found Philip, but Philip felt he found the Lord. Both things were true from the human perspective. But from the biblical perspective, we know that God's choice is the determinative one.

***John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.***

## **II. A Jew With A Gentile Name.**

We know that all the apostles were Jewish men; but the name Philip is a Greek name meaning "a lover of horses" and we are not given his Hebrew name in the scriptures. A singular feature is that we know the apostle by no other name. He must have had a Jewish name, for all the apostles were Jews. His father's name must have been in use as a family name, but the same has not been revealed to us. Wearing a Gentile name, however, made no difference to Philip's Messianic outlook.

We should point out that Philip the Apostle must not be confused with Philip, the deacon-evangelist in Acts who led the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ.

## **III. A Seeker Who Was Found.**

***John 1:43 The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.***

The first-person Jesus sought was Philip, and he became His disciple. Findeth implies a diligent and concentrated search. "Seek and ye shall find." Jesus sought and found Philip, but it is evident that Philip must have sought for Jesus also, for he said to Nathanael, "We have found him" (1:45). The seeking was mutual, and so also would be the joy of finding. We learn here that there is a law that once we come to know Christ, we have a natural and spiritual tendency to want to help others find out Jesus is as well.



#### **IV. A Convert Who Became a Soul-Winner.**

The new convert became an evangelist, for now saved, Philip served. Zealous to tell others the good news, he never lost a moment. He went out, not to bring the worst of his acquaintances, but the best, even the one Philip found reading his Bible and praying under a fig-tree. It was over his dear friend and companion that Philip's heart yearned.

***John 1:45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph***

May God help all of us who have been found by the Lord; not lose our zeal for wanting to see our friends and family come to know Christ as well.

#### **V. A Companion of One with a Brighter Mind.**

After Andrew brings Peter to meet the Messiah; he becomes the one of greater fame. When Philip finds Nathaniel, it would seem that Nathaniel is the more notable of the two. Philip was a plain man, slow in arriving at a decision, reluctant to act on his own initiative. Nathanael was cast in a different mold from that of his friend. He was of quick wit, alert intellect, seeing at a Hash the objections to any statement.

#### **VI. A Scholar Who Was Dull.**

In Philips mind Jesus fit the bill of the one Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

The question Jesus put to Philip concerning feeding the 5000 men besides women and children, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? Jesus would ask this question to prove Philip. The word "prove" means to try, or put to the proof. Philip needed to learn the lesson that when everything seemed impossible The Lord could make possible. He needed to set aside his materialistic, pragmatic, common-sense concerns and learn to lay hold of the supernatural potential of faith.

#### **VII. A Guide Who Could Not Lead.**

***John 12:20-22. And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:21 The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.***

With Philip having a Greek name quite possibly these came to him first because they felt he was approachable, and having some common ground of interest. For some reason Philip seeks the advice of Andrew as to what to do. Maybe the possibility that Christ would not accept these Gentile inquirers. I am led to believe that there are times in all of our lives we see short comings in our abilities for the work of Christ.

#### **VIII. A Disciple Who Lacked Spiritual Insight.**

***John 14:8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.***

The mild rebuke from the Lord; ***John 14:9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?***



In a way, there was both bad and good in Philip's request, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us!"

Bad, in that Philip had the mistaken idea that God can be seen with the material eye. Yet though God in Christ had been standing before Philip, he knew Him not. Good was also in Philip's request for it revealed an inner craving, the longing for One who would satisfy his longing and rest his heart. As the Greeks who came to Philip wanted to see Jesus, so Philip himself desired to see God, the chief joy of man's soul.

### **IX. An Apostle Who Went Forth to Serve.**

Philip's name appears in the list of the apostles gathered in the upper room for prayer and supplication, and was one of them to receive the mighty baptism of the Holy Spirit on the historic day of Pentecost, enabling him to preach the Gospel in the language of the people who had gathered together out of every nation under heaven.

#### **Simon the Canaanite**

#### **"The Apostle Who Was A Revolutionists"**

***Text: Matthew 10:4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.***

***Luke 6:15. Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes,***

Introduction: The fact that Simon is called the Canaanite has nothing to do with his birth place but rather more to do with his character and his connection with a radical and revolutionary party among the Jews that hated the Romans.

Kana, which means "to be ardent or zealous," and is the exact Hebrew equivalent of the word for Zealot, which Luke gives us.

The historian Josephus described four basic parties among the Jews in the time of Jesus. The Pharisees were the fastidious about the law, the Sadducees were the religious liberals, they denied the supernatural, the Essenes are not mentioned in Scripture at all, but are described as ascetic and celibates who lived in the desert and devoted their lives to the study of the Law. The fourth group, the Zealots, who were more politically minded than any group besides the Herodians. They hated the Romans and their goal was to overthrow the Roman occupation.

The Zealots were hoping for a Messiah who would lead them in overthrowing the Romans and restore the kingdom to Israel with its Solomonic glory.

Beyond the fact that he became an apostle we have nothing but his name, and a nick-name by which he was familiarly and commonly talked of and known. There is no record of anything he ever said, or any deed he ever did recorded for us in Scripture.

#### **I. A Lover of His Country.**

There was a Jewish nationalist party prior to A.D. 70 known as the Zealots, but whether Simon was a member of such a group we have no way of knowing for certain. However, "Simon the Zealot" gives him a character of his own, and probably suggests something about his former life.





Simon as a Zealot loved his country and was prepared to die for it. But he found Christ, loved Him sincerely, and, if legend be true, died for Him as a martyr.

## **II. A Lover of a Better Leader.**

Lockyer states: He must have had some fitness for the Master's service, otherwise He would not have chosen him as an apostle. He became one of the Master's companions, and must have rendered service to Him in such a capacity. He took his share in the mission work of the twelve, when the Master sent them forth two by two.

Simon like all the others we have covered so far changed from his former occupation to one of telling others of the wonder of the grace of God. Only Christ could take the unlikely and make something unique of them.

## **III. A Lover of a Holier Cause.**

Simon had come to know Him who is the Truth, and his soul was free from the old-time fanatical patriotism, and he found a blessed cause in "the glorious fellowship of the apostles."

When Christ took Simon into His service, He did not eradicate his passion, but enhanced it and made it glow with a heavenly light.

## **IV. A Lover of an Inner Peace.**

We have been thinking of Simon as a Zealot, first against Rome, then for the Redeemer, but looking at him as Simon the apostle, we know that he became the possessor of an inner peace enabling him to love others, especially after becoming a spectator of the Love that died upon the cross.

We can only marvel that Jesus would place Matthew the tax-gather and Simon the Zealot side by side and cause them to come to harmony and fellowship the one with the other. What the world could never do Jesus did by the grace of God. I believe the same is still true today.

Conclusion: Several early sources say that after the destruction of Jerusalem, Simon took the gospel north and preached in the British Isles. Like so many of the others, Simon simply disappears for the biblical record. There is no reliable record of what happened to him, but all accounts say he was killed for preaching the gospel.

