

An Identity Commentary on the Gospel of Mark



And looking up he said "I see men, that as trees I see walking!" [Mark 8:24]

The Gospel of Mark - Part 14: Reckoning the Twelve [3:16-19]

One troublesome tradition of men, largely "Catholic" and "Orthodox", but with various shades among the Protestant so-called churches as well, is that the apostles were supernaturally astute or even infallible. No true Christian thinks that way, of course, but old assumptions in how we view Scripture and history can still linger around unnoticed sometimes, even for those of us in Christian Identity.

Here in this commentary, we will explore Mark's reckoning of the twelve, (*as in his organization of their names*), and compare his reckoning with that of the other gospels; but we will also reckon in our minds who the apostles were, and how we can learn from their examples, as we look at their journey of growth as told within the pages of the New Testament. We will see that the apostles were God-fearing men favored by the Prince; but that they were still men, just like us, and that the proper way to look at them is of course as "brothers and fellow-companions in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Yahshua".¹

3:16 And He made these the twelve: Simon whom He also labeled with the name "Petros", 17 and Iakobos the son of Zebedaios and Iohannes the brother of Iakobos and He labeled them with the name "Boanerges", which is "Sons of Thunder", 18 and Andreas and Philippos and Bartholomaios and Maththaios and Thomas and Iakobos the son of Alphaios and Thaddaios and Simon the Kananee 19 and Ioudas Iskarioth, he who also betrayed Him.

A list of the twelve apostles also appears at Matthew 10:2-4 (where their appointing is merged with the account of their sending forth which happened later), and then Luke 6:14-16, where the appointing on the mountain has the same chronological placement as Mark. The apostle John does not list the twelve in his gospel, ostensibly because the previous evangelists had already done so thoroughly in their accounts, and his objective was to focus more on things which they did not mention.

Naming of the Twelve

Matthew	Peter	Andrew	James (Zb)	John	Phillip	Bartholomew	Thomas	Matthew	James (Alph)	Jude (Thaddeus)	Simon (Kananee)	Judas
Mark	Peter	James (Zb)	John	Andrew	Phillip	Bartholomew	Matthew	Thomas	James (Alph)	Jude (Thaddeus)	Simon (Kananee)	Judas
Luke	Peter	Andrew	James (Zb)	John	Phillip	Bartholomew	Matthew	Thomas	James (Alph)	Simon (Zealot)	Jude	Judas
Acts	Peter	John	James	Andrew	Phillip	Thomas	Bartholomew	Matthew	James (Alph)	Simon (Zealot)	Jude	N/A

Green = agreement in ordering between all three synoptics

Blue = agreement in ordering between two out of three synoptics

Yellow = agreement in pairing in all three synoptics, but not in ordering (the odd gospel being colored)

The exact order in which the apostles are listed in the synoptic gospels does not hold any doctrinal significance, especially since Luke had no issue shuffling some names the second time around in Acts. However, in paying careful attention, we can glean some subtle historical insight into these men and the relationships which they might have had with one another.

All three synoptic gospels (and Acts) begin their listings with Simon Peter, but this should not be taken as evidence that he was officially elevated to some kind of unique office above his brethren. Although Acts records Peter as quickly taking on a necessary leadership type role in the early years after Christ's ascension, the fact that James had taken on that role by 48 AD, and also that Peter was later in Babylon near the end of his life, shows that his early leadership arose out of practical need, and not by formal appointment. This stands in contrast to what the heretical so-called Catholic Church desperately wants to believe, and we will address their deceitful pit of lies when we discuss Simon Peter in detail. The

¹ Revelation 1:9 [...]

fact of the matter is that whenever listing names, someone *must* appear first by default, and given Peter's prominence in the gospel accounts and his early role in Jerusalem, he is the natural choice for each synoptic writer. It is that simple.

Looking at the table above, we can observe that Matthew and Luke pair Peter with his younger brother Andrew, followed by the sons of Zebedee; but that here in Mark, the sons of Zebedee are placed in between Peter and his brother Andrew. At first, it might seem odd to break the brothers apart, especially in Peter's own gospel, but a keen ear demonstrates how the arrangement allows this oral campfire gospel to flow more smoothly, by placing the two epithets bestowed by Christ side by side: *Petros* for Simon, and *Boanerges* for James and John. (Reading it out loud can really show how it flows off the tongue). That second epithet of *Boanerges* is *only* recorded in Mark, so the other gospel writers had no reason to follow the construction which is unique to this gospel.

As for the sons of Zebedee, they being brothers are naturally placed side by side in all three synoptic gospels. James is always listed first, which reflects his seniority, because after all, the gospels consistently say "John, the brother of James," but never "James, the brother of John." This custom reflects how he was the older brother. (*While Luke does reverse the order in Acts, placing John before his older brother, it seems to have been an intentional move to place John beside Peter, considering that those two go on to be a prominent duo in the opening chapters of that same book*)

Thus, in all three synoptic gospels, these two brotherly pairs, Peter and Andrew, James and John, are listed first. This ordering is fitting, especially since John occupies the second-most prominent role in the gospel narratives after Peter. And so, within these two brotherly pairs, we find two apostles who would later be reputed as pillars:

Galatians 2:9 and knowing the favor being given to me, Iakobos and Kephas and Iohannes, those reputed to be pillars, had given right hands of fellowship to me and to Barnabas, that we are for the Nations, and they for the circumcised; (*Notice how Paul mentions James before Peter? By the time Paul wrote this epistle to the Galatians, James had already taken on a leadership position.*)

The third pillar mentioned by Paul in his epistle to the Galatians is not James the son of Zebedee, the brother of John, who had already died by the time Paul wrote that epistle, but rather James the son of Alphaeus, who was the half-brother of Christ. Despite being later recognized as a pillar, James the son of Alphaeus appears near the end of each listing of the apostles, perhaps because his role in the gospel narratives is very light given that he is never mentioned in any pericope, only stepping more fully into the light of history later in the book of Acts. It might also be because the listing represents the general in order in which the apostles began to follow Christ, though that is conjecture.

While James the son of Zebedee was not reputed to be a pillar, it is still fitting for him to be among the first four names listed in each gospel account, given how Christ picked out Peter and the sons of Zebedee several times from among the twelve to witness pivotal moments, such as the raising of Jairus' young daughter from the dead, and the Transfiguration on the Mount (an event He instructed the three to keep secret, perhaps even from the other apostles, until after His resurrection). As a result, Peter, James, and John become the three most frequently mentioned and recognizable apostles in the synoptic gospels, and the placement of their names at the beginning of each list only becomes increasingly logical when that is taken into account.²

Andrew the brother of Peter is next in these opening four names, which appear together once more and in the same order in a clause unique to Mark's account of the Olivet Discourse. Aside from the listings of the apostles, this is the only other place where these four men, Peter, James, John, and Andrew, are mentioned together.

Mark 13:3 And upon His being seated in the Mount of Olives opposite the temple they questioned Him by themselves, Petros and Iakobos and Iohannes and Andreas:

Is it not interesting how Mark lists these four apostles in the same sequence as he does here in Mark 3:16-18? The explanation for Andrew not being paired with his brother is quite logical in the listing of the apostles, but it is peculiar to see the same anomaly again later in Mark 13, especially since this is

² Mark 5:37, 9:2, 14:33

Peter's own gospel. The conjecture which I will present for now is that this may have been done to echo the earlier listing, or perhaps to reflect on how Peter, James, and John, had already been singled out in earlier scenes (Mark 5:37; 9:2), Andrew being mentioned at the end as an addition to that more regular trio.

Moving forward, the fifth and sixth apostles named in all three synoptic gospels are Philip and Bartholomew, and always in that order. They are the only consistent pair besides the sons of Zebedee, which might suggest a strong association between the two men. However, there is little that can be discerned about their relationship, apart from the conjecture that this Bartholomew is the same person called Nathanael in the gospel of John, based solely on the fact that it was Philip who told Nathanael about Christ. We will address this theory at a later point in the commentary.

The seventh and eighth apostles to be named by Mark and Luke are Matthew and Thomas. However, in his own gospel, Matthew switches the ordering of these names. A possible hint as to why Matthew chose to do this may lie in the way he uniquely presents his list of the apostles, which is that he alone grammatically arranges them into pairs. This choice could be reflective of a detail we learn exclusively from Mark 6, where Yahshua “[began to send them off in pairs](#)”.³

Matthew presents the apostles with the following pairings:

1. Peter and Andrew
2. James and John
3. Phillip and Bartholomew
4. Thomas and Matthew
5. James and Jude
6. Simon and Judas

Since Matthew makes a point to arrange the apostles in pairs, perhaps he listed himself second after his partner Thomas as an expression of humility. This is not random conjecture, given that he is also the only gospel writer to refer to himself as *the tax collector*, which can likewise be seen as a humble admission. The apostles understood the teachings of their Teacher well, who said, “[Whoever should humble himself shall be exalted](#)”⁴. The bowing of their heads, and most especially the humility of our Prince, who was not ashamed to take a bondman's form, is an example for us all.⁵

Journeying forward in the list, in both Mark and Matthew, the ninth and tenth apostles to be named are the brothers of Christ, James and Jude (Thaddeus). However, in Luke's gospel we see Simon and Jude switch places, so that Jude, instead of Simon, takes the penultimate eleventh position. Since Luke is the only Gospel writer to refer to Jude by his more well known name, *Judah*, rather than by his alternate name *Thaddeus*, it is possible that Luke, who was a gifted writer, deliberately chose to place the pious Judah (Jude) beside the wicked Judah (Judas) in order to establish a poetic contrast. One might ask, then, why Luke does not restore Jude to his place beside his brother James in his listing of the apostles in Acts? I believe that could have a similarly poetic purpose, because it allows the list of the apostles to end post-Judas with the true and living Judah of a godly seed, triumphing over the wicked seed of the false Judah who was by then dead. It also foreshadows the necessity for a replacement of the twelfth apostle, which is the theme the account then transitions into.

Speaking of that devil Judas, he is deservedly mentioned last in all three gospels, and the snake is fortunate to even get that, because as it is written concerning Judas' brood in the 109th Psalm: “[Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out.](#)”⁶

³ Mark 6:7 [...]

⁴ Matthew 23:12 [...]

⁵ Philippians 2:7

⁶ Psalm 109:13

And so, we have three lists in the synoptic gospels, each one with a single notable variation in their listings, and our theories on each variant can be summarized as follows:

1. **Mark** places the sons of Zebedee in between the brothers Peter and Andrew, setting the course for the oral nature of his gospel to fluently and poetically rhyme the naming of Simon as *Petros* with the naming of the sons of Zebedee as *Boanerges*.

2. **Matthew** alone presents the apostles in pairs, and perhaps for that reason presents himself second after his partner Thomas as an expression of humility, consistent with his decision to identify himself as “the tax collector.”

3. **Luke** moves Simon the Kananee backwards one step so that Jude is placed beside Judas Iscariot rather than his brother James. Since Luke alone uses Jude’s more familiar name, *Judah*, instead of the alternate *Thaddeus*, this arrangement was likely deliberate, setting the pious Judah (Jude) in stark contrast to the wicked Judah (Judas).

With these variants each having logical explanations, there actually appears to be a remarkable consistency in how the apostles are ordered. We cannot be certain how the list settled into this familiar pattern, but it may loosely reflect the sequence in which the apostles followed Yahshua. After all, Andrew, John, Peter and Philip were the first apostles to follow Christ; (and Nathaniel following Christ after Philip, it would not be entirely surprising if he was Bartholomew after all). Some might object saying that Matthew appears to have been the last apostle called by Christ, but that is only an assumption often ridden upon as fact. The words of both Christ and Peter strongly imply that all twelve were with Yahshua from the days of His immersion in the river Jordan at the beginning of His ministry⁷. We could conjecture that many or all of the apostles began following Yahshua at that early time, only for some to receive a more formal summons later, as seen in Peter, Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee by the Sea of Galilee in Mark 1. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that Matthew was already a follower of Yahshua before He was formally called by Him at the tax office.

Before we examine each apostle in detail in the upcoming commentary, it might be a worthy digression to consider who these men were and how they matured over the course of their earthly lives. The apostles are often misunderstood or even idolized by Christians, and vestiges of those old wineskins still linger in some circles of Christian Identity today in certain assumptions and trains of thought.

To begin with, it is certain that all of the apostles (except Judas Iscariot) were Galileans, because in Acts we read that after the apostles were immersed in the Holy Spirit and began speaking in tongues, that the people present were “[astonished and wondered saying "Behold, are not all of these who are speaking Galilaeans? Then how do we each hear in our own language, with which we were raised?"](#)”⁸ It is also evident, since the messengers had beforehand said to them on the day of Yahshua’s ascension, “[Men, Galilaeans, why do you stand looking into the heaven? This Yahshua, who is taken up from you into the heaven, thusly shall He come in the manner which you have beheld Him going into the heaven.](#)”⁹ There is no doubt reading these two solid witnesses that the eleven apostles were Galileans, just like their Teacher.

Galileans indeed, but can we travel any further down the roots? Setting aside any alien infiltrators, Galilee in the 1st century was inhabited by Judahite, Benjamite, and Levite descendants of those 40,000 who returned from Babylonian exile; and prophecy indicates that these Galilean apostles were either mostly or entirely of the tribe of Benjamin:

1 Kings 11:13 [Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.](#)

1 Kings 11:36 [And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.](#)

⁷ John 15:27, Acts 1:22

⁸ Acts 2:7-8 [...]

⁹ Acts 1:11

To put these fascinating prophecies in context: when Solomon's heart strayed from Yahweh, the Almighty decreed that his kingdom would be torn in two. Yet, for his father David's sake, this judgment would not occur during Solomon's lifetime; instead, the realm would be taken from his son Rehoboam. It was promised to Solomon that Rehoboam would retain one tribe after the civil war shattered Israel's unity, which ended up being the tribe of Benjamin.

Prophetically, when Yahweh explained that the yoking of this one tribe of Benjamin with the tribe of Judah was “for David my servant's sake”, this cannot be taken in its fullest substance as a reference to Solomon's deceased father David, who was no longer reigning on the throne; but rather it must have pointed to the greater “David” of the prophets, namely Yahshua Christ.¹⁰ Therefore, if the tribe of Benjamin according to the Scriptures was to be “a light” before Christ, then we must ask how that prophecy was fulfilled, and the answer to this question is found in the fact that Christ and His Gospel were, as Simeon declared through the Spirit, “a light for the revelation of the Nations and honor of Your people Israel!”¹¹ The apostles bearing that very Gospel would have been light-bearers for the son of David. This is why the apostle Paul writes that “Yahweh speaking out of darkness shines forth light, which has shone in our hearts”¹² speaking of what he called “the light of the good message of the honor of the Anointed”.¹³

Speaking of Paul - did he too shine as a lamp of Benjamin? If the eleven apostles were primarily or perhaps even entirely Benjamites, then what about the twelfth, the vessel whom Yahshua chose as a replacement for Judas Iscariot? Funnily enough, Paul of Tarsus is the only apostle who provides a genealogy for himself, where he wrote to the Romans and Philippians that he was “of the tribe of Benjamin.”¹⁴ What a coincidence! Except, there are no coincidences in life nor in Scripture. If even Paul, having come later, and being of Tarsus of Cilicia and not Galilee, was a Benjamite, then we should expect that most¹⁵ if not all of the apostles were - in accordance with the prophets. *(These matters have often led to it being assumed by Identity Christians that the land of Galilee was allotted to Benjamin, but it was not. The region was once part of the territories of Naphtali and Zebulun.)*

And so to summarize: the apostles were largely or entirely Benjamites by race, which was a prophetic fulfillment of their tribe's destiny as a light for David (Christ) - shining out for the sake of Jerusalem (Israel).

By trade, many of the apostles were fishermen (at least six to nine), chosen out by the Master to be fishers of men gathering lost Israelites into the net of reconciliation. It was a simple trade for honest and ordinary men, and that is precisely what Yahshua desired. It is our God's will to choose “the feeble of the Society, that He disgrace the strong”, and to make foolishness the cunning of the scribe.¹⁶ And did those apostles in the wisdom given to them ever demonstrate the foolishness of this society!

The simple and honest background of the apostles (and other early Christians) was actually prophesied of in the book of Isaiah, where it is written “Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.”¹⁷ Seven hundred years later, Yahshua Christ would praise the Father for the fulfillment of these words, saying, “I gratefully acknowledge to You, Father, Sovereign of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and have revealed them to babes! Yeah, Father, because thusly was it pleasing before You.”¹⁸ Here is another incredible aspect of Yahweh's masterful and poetic pen inked onto the story of life: Benjamin was the youngest of the twelve sons of Jacob, perhaps a type for how the apostles who would come from his loins were themselves “babes”; and so when those apostles sit upon twelve thrones judging the tribes of Israel with their King, the word will come to pass where it is written in the Psalms, “There is little Benjamin with their ruler”¹⁹

¹⁰ Isaiah 16:5, 55:3, Jeremiah 30:9, Ezekiel 34:23-24, 37:24-25, et al

¹¹ Luke 2:32

¹² 2 Corinthians 4:6 [...]

¹³ 2 Corinthians 4:4 [...]

¹⁴ Romans 11:1, Philippians 3:5

¹⁵ We brought up the possibility in this commentary that Matthew was a Levite.

¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 1:27 [...], 19-20

¹⁷ Isaiah 28:9

¹⁸ Matthew 11:25-26

¹⁹ Psalm 68:27 [...]

Yahweh's immeasurable strength as the Almighty God is magnified when small armies, like the three-hundred men of Gideon, conquer larger and mightier foes through His distinct favor; and in that same manner the infinite Wisdom of the One and Only is magnified through the astonishing victory of the so-called "simple" apostles over the so-called "wise" and supposedly learned Sadducees and Pharisees. The Sadducees marveled at the knowledge of the apostles, where we read in Acts, "[And observing the frankness of Petros and Iohannes, and perceiving that they are unlearned and unskilled men, wondering they then recognized them, that they were with Yahshua.](#)"²⁰ In the success of Christianity through the testimony of Yahweh's chosen apostles, mere babes, humble and ordinary men, the word came to pass as it was quoted by Paul of Tarsus, "[I will destroy the cunning of the shrewd, and the understanding of the sagacious I will set aside](#)".²¹

It is impossible to overstate how invaluable it was for the apostles to have been salt of the earth laborers who were not "formally" schooled in Scripture. The doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees spouted forth in the assembly halls ranged from mildly misguided at best to abominably evil at worst, and Christ repeatedly exposed the errors and hypocrisy of their organized religion which was founded on the traditions of men (sound familiar?). In fact, Yahshua had even said to His followers that "[unless your righteousness abounds beyond that of the scribes and Pharisees, by no means shall you enter into the kingdom of the heavens!](#)"²² To *enter into the Kingdom of the Heavens* is for the children of Israel to make it manifest upon the earth through obedience, and to exceed the scribes and the Pharisees in obedience was not a necessarily high task to meet. Christ had simply made this remark to demonstrate just how far off target the leading religious "authorities" of the day were. The fact that the apostles were not from among the Pharisees was an incredible blessing. We can imagine how difficult it would have been for them to have shaken off their old wineskins if they were former scribes, and the fact that none of them were was an explicit rejection, on the part of Christ, of Judaea's organized religion.

As we explained in our opening commentary, [Preparing the People](#), one of John the Baptist's missions was to ready Israel for the Messiah by making their crooked ways straight in repentance, and the fact that he had to proclaim repentance by itself proves that the Pharisees had utterly failed to foster an obedient, law-abiding populace in Judaea. John preached beside the rivers, because this was where Judaeans gathered when no official assembly hall was available, as seen in the prophets among the captivity and in Paul and Luke's journey into the city of Philippi in Acts²³. Therefore, anyone who made the trek to hear John, was by that very choice, declaring a rejection of the assembly halls.

The apostles were among those who made this decision. Many, if not all of them, were former students of John the Baptist, and their willingness to follow him shows just how disillusioned they were with the "official" religious establishment that dominated Judaea. In much the same way, many who embrace Christian Identity today were first driven away from the so-called "churches", before being shown the light of the Truth. Modern church institutions are, in many respects, even blinder and more blasphemous than the Pharisees whom they inherited much of their doctrine from, and the third Elijah Ministry of Christian Identity shares the same labor as the second Elijah Ministry of John the Baptist, by calling the people to repentance apart from the churches and their lies, in readiness for the Messiah's imminent return.

However, while the apostles had grown disillusioned with the so-called religious authorities of their day, this does not mean they had entirely clean slates upon following Yahshua. We must remember that these were young men who from childhood had been raised hearing the writings interpreted in the assembly halls every Sabbath, and they may not have realized just how deeply those doctrines had shaped their worldview. Before the ministry of the Christ, who revealed things kept hidden from the foundation of the world, who brought the errors of the people to light, it would have been impossible for the apostles to discern just how far from the truth the Pharisees really were.

For example, the Pharisees had interpreted Malachi 4:5 as foretelling the literal return of Elijah the Tishbite, and for that reason the scribes taunted Christ as He hung upon the cross and asked if Elijah would come down to save Him. Being raised on that same misinterpretation, the apostles Peter and the sons of Zebedee were certainly excited when they saw Moses and Elijah with Yahshua during the

²⁰ Acts 4:13

²¹ 1 Corinthians 1:19 (Isaiah 29:14 LXX)

²² Matthew 5:20 [...]

²³ Ezekiel 1:1, 3:15, Daniel 8:2, Acts 16:13

Transfiguration on the Mount, and likely anticipated that the ushering in of the Kingdom was right around the corner. Rather anticlimactically in their immediate point of view, Moses and Elijah disappeared from the mountain, and being confused the apostles asked while descending down, “[So why do the scribes say that it is necessary for Elijah to come first?](#)”²⁴ It was then illustrated to them by Christ that the prophecy of Malachi had spoken of a ministry in the like-character and spirit of Elijah, namely John the Baptist, but not of the return of Elijah the Tishbite himself; and also that another Elijah Ministry would come after John. The Pharisees were, as usual, wrong.

It is revealed throughout the progression of history that knowledge is revealed to men by God on a need-to-know basis, as evident in the book of Daniel where it is written that knowledge *increases*, and also in the Gospel where we read in Luke that “[this saying was hidden from them](#) [the apostles] [and they did not discern the things being spoken.](#)”²⁵

Yahshua did not spend the three and a half years of His ministry schooling the apostles in the fine details of Scripture, they were not spending their days huddled indoors with Yahshua, poring over old scrolls and the letters of the law. They were out there with Him in the field, as His companions and fellow laborers in the harvest. They were witnessing His marvelous works as the blind received sight, and the lame walked, and lepers were cleansed, and the deaf and mute heard, and the dead were raised, and the poor had the good message announced to them.²⁶ This was also for the good of all of us, because the fact that the apostles were wide-eyed young men during Yahshua’s ministry, still grasping to understand the full meaning of the astonishing things they witnessed, makes their testimony all the more valuable in its simple sincerity. The gospels were not sophisticated accounts crafted with guile, but written and conveyed plainly by ordinary men, two of which were fishermen, apostles who testified of what they saw with their own eyes: amazing things their youthful minds could not yet fully comprehend. As Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “[For our summons was not out of error, nor of uncleanness, nor with guile, but just as we have been approved by Yahweh to be entrusted with the good message, in this manner we speak; not as if pleasing men, but Yahweh, who is examining our hearts.](#)”²⁷

Whenever Yahshua taught Scripture it was largely focused on moral teachings that instructed the people on how to depart from the vain rituals and hypocrisy of the Pharisees and to please their God through loving obedience. His ministry is therefore summarized to wit in the Gospel: “[The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of Yahweh has neared! Repent and have faith in the good message!](#)”²⁸ And while many of His parables revealed things kept hidden from the foundation of the world, it took time for the apostles to fully unravel the mysteries of the Kingdom of Yahweh which they were given,²⁹ as they were only able to hear the parables as much as the Prince allowed, which is evident where it is written, “[with many such parables He spoke to them the Word just as they were able to hear](#)”³⁰

While Christ would expound at least some of His parables privately to His own students, we can see through the gospel’s two examples of a parable’s elaboration that the expounding did not incorporate a thorough overview of the writings, and that it was left for the apostles to later compound more fully through the Spirit. As Yahshua said to them on the night of His arrest, “[But when He should come, the Spirit of Truth, He shall guide you in all truth. For He shall not speak by Himself, but as many things as He shall hear, He shall speak and He shall report to you the coming things.](#)”³¹ Then, when Yahshua appeared to them after His resurrection from the dead, we read in Luke that “[He opened their minds for which to understand the writings.](#)”³² But even that opening of their minds was not an immediate transformation, because roughly forty days later they were still confused on the timeline of the prophets and their fulfillment, asking Yahshua on the day of His Ascension, “[Prince, then at this time shall You restore the Kingdom to Israel?](#)”³³ It took many years after Yahshua’s ascension for the apostles to digest everything He had taught them and weave it into a fully formed Christian worldview; as they discarded

²⁴ Matthew 17:10

²⁵ Daniel 12:4, Luke 18:34 [...]

²⁶ Matthew 11:15

²⁷ 1 Thessalonians 2:3-4

²⁸ Mark 1:15 [...]

²⁹ Matthew 13:35, 11

³⁰ Mark 4:33

³¹ John 16:13

³² Luke 22:45

³³ Acts 1:6 [...]

all the old wineskins they were raised with and put their new wine into new skins through the guidance of the Spirit. When we compare the attitudes and perspectives of the apostles as recorded in the gospels to that which is found later in the book of Acts and especially in their epistles, it becomes evident how greatly they had matured in their knowledge.

They were not able to develop such understanding overnight. The apostles were men, and it took them time to learn new things, just like us.

For example, as we discussed in our commentary, [*Preparing the People*](#), the reason why John the Baptist immersed in water was so that he could wash Yahshua's body in preparation of its role as a sacrificial offering, and also so he could wash the Levites who would present that offering, both these things being required to fulfill the righteousness of the Levitical law. The apostles apparently did not immediately understand this, however, since they had held on to their habits as former students of John and continued to immerse in water for some time, as we can see from John 4 and especially in the early chapters of Acts. It was not until Peter saw the Holy Spirit poured upon the household of Cornelius that he came to a fuller and more complete understanding, realizing what Yahshua meant when He said [*"Indeed Iohannes immersed in water, but you shall be immersed in the Holy Spirit."*](#)³⁴ Once Peter exhibited this more precise understanding to the other apostles, they embraced it, and from that point forward water immersion is never again seen or mentioned in the New Testament. This is one excellent example of the apostles having their opened minds gradually reach an understanding of something which the Prince told them in the past, and we all have these learning experiences in our personal journeys. Of course, the Judaizers who infiltrated the early churches would maintain and ritualize water immersion as a means to conquer and rule over men. The Judaized so-called churches of today clinging to those vain traditions have still not caught up with a realization which the apostles made 2,000 years ago, which clearly shows that they do not follow apostolic Christianity, and standing on the sand of tradition instead of the foundation of Christ makes their founts of wisdom a dry tap.

Another example is the fact that the apostles did not yet understand the mystery of iniquity while they accompanied Yahshua during His earthly ministry, even though He had revealed it to them through parables. Yahshua often illustrated how trees symbolize people and that not everything springs from God, but that certain plants (races) were sown by the Adversary at the foundation of the society, and that those strange plants will be uprooted at the end of the age. Therefore, the mystery of iniquity long concealed since the time of Moses was finally revealed through the mouth of Christ, its answer being that whatever is good originates from God, whereas evil is spawned from racial corruption. In these things Christ had plainly revealed that bastards are devils, which is why He called the Edomite bastard Judas Iscariot a devil, but when Yahshua made that statement, the apostles were not able to immediately compound it with the revelations which Christ had been providing to them through His parables. The apostles did not immediately begin to warily discern the fruits of each tree in their fellowship in order to establish which one of them was the bastard plant, but remained ignorant even until the night of their final Passover with Christ, when they were not able to even conceive of the treachery of Judas, assuming that he slipped away to give alms to the poor even after having already seen him dip his hand into the same bowl as Christ.

But many years later, the apostles had certainly come to understand how and why Judas Iscariot was a devil, which is why John late in his life had exposed Judas for what he was through the clarifying parenthetical remark he provided for Christ's statement in his gospel, and Peter by the end of his life firmly grasped that devils were people as well, writing [*"Be sober. Be alert. Your opponent the False Accuser walks about as a roaring lion seeking someone to consume"*](#)³⁵ The apostles Peter and Jude also wrote at length in their epistles on how the bastard descendants of the fallen angels are evil animals without the Adamic Spirit, showing their understanding of the mystery of iniquity as they compounded Yahshua's parables with the writings, but even that matter was not fully revealed to the posterity of men until Yahshua gave His Revelation.³⁶

³⁴ Acts 11:16

³⁵ 1 Peter 5:8

³⁶ 2 Peter 2, Jude, Revelation 12

To give one last example, though it is really two last examples merged into one. The apostles did not initially understand that the purpose of the Messiah in His First Advent was to save the entire seed of His people from their errors;³⁷ and therefore, the apostles being confused as to how anyone could be justified enough to attain the Kingdom, asked Christ “Who then is able to be saved?”, to which he responded “With men this is impossible, but with Yahweh all things are possible!”³⁸ Years later they would understand precisely how Yahweh had achieved the impossible, and so the once youthful apostle John wrote near the end of his life as an elder that salvation was on account of racial origin, writing that a man of Israel “is not able to do wrong, because from of Yahweh he has been born.”³⁹ John did not mean that the children of Israel *do not sin*, but that their sin is *not accounted to them*, for the writing of Isaiah was fulfilled in Christ where it says, “In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.”⁴⁰ The mechanism of salvation is that Israel the wife was released from the law of Yahweh the Husband when He died on the cross and thus voided the ordinances of the marriage contract, along with the power of death which came from the transgression of those ordinances, (not so that we would no longer obey the law, but so we could keep it in newness of life without fear of death in letters). Therefore, the understanding of salvation rests on the knowledge that Yahshua Christ is the same God who married Israel at Sinai, something which the apostles came to realize, but were ignorant of when they were still walking with Christ during His earthly ministry, which is why He said to Phillip “For so long a time I am with you and you do not know Me?”⁴¹ When the apostle Thomas touched the pierced wounds of the resurrected Christ, He finally exclaimed “My Prince and My God!” - perhaps because he was reminded of where it is written “and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced”⁴² But the realization of Yahshua’s divinity was only made at the end, and was not held from the beginning.

We can see then another excellent example of how Yahweh gives men knowledge on a need-to-know basis. Yahshua did not sit down with His apostles one night and candidly explain to them how He was Yahweh in the flesh, and that His death was going to release Israel from the penalty of the law; these were all things which they came to realize later. There is poetry in that. When Yahshua told them He was going to die, they did not even understand those plain words alone, and that is because He precisely did not want them to. As Luke writes, “But they did not understand this saying, and it was disguised from them that they could not comprehend it, and they were afraid to question Him concerning this saying.”⁴³ And despite having plainly explained that He would be risen on the third day, the women were simply not expecting the tomb to be empty when they visited it on the fateful morning. The witnesses were given to His apostles not so that they would immediately understand but so they could glorify their God after the fulfillment, for as He said to them, “Right now I say to you before that which is to happen, so that you may believe it when it happens, that I am!”⁴⁴

This was hopefully sufficient to demonstrate how much the understanding which the apostles had concerning salvation, race, sin, and prophecy, grew between the time when Yahshua ascended to Heaven, and when they wrote their surviving epistles. It was a journey of discovery which we all similarly undertake, and for example, it might have taken as many as thirty years for Peter to develop the understanding which he expresses in his two surviving epistles. What is important to understand is this: that the wide-eyed and young apostles were largely blinded through the doctrines of the Pharisees while Christ was still with them, and that they had only acquired a much fuller understanding of the Messiah’s purpose, of race, of salvation, and of many other matters, many years later. This is how Yahweh operates, and it is humbling to see how gradual the process was even for the men who literally walked and lived with Christ. It is beautiful and it is also encouraging.

Some might bristle at any criticism of the apostles, and they are only exposing how their hearts are filled with idolatry. Paul did not hesitate to rebuke Peter for a moment of hypocrisy in Antioch. If we treat the apostles as beyond criticism, we are treating them as gods. But we are not to worship men. When Cornelius fell at Peter’s feet, the apostle lifted him up, saying, “Stand up! I myself also am a man!”⁴⁵ (Cornelius, being a Roman, can be interpreted as prophetically foreshadowing the shameful

³⁷ Matthew 1:21

³⁸ Matthew 19:25 [...], 26 [...]

³⁹ 1 John 3:9

⁴⁰ Isaiah 45:25

⁴¹ John 14:9 [...]

⁴² John 20:28 [...], Zechariah 12:10 [...]

⁴³ Luke 9:45

⁴⁴ John 13:19

⁴⁵ Acts 10:26 [...]

conduct of the Roman Catholic Church, who falsely claim that Peter was the first so-called “pope”, merely as a cover to make them feel justified in attempting to lord over others. It is obvious what Peter’s opinion would be.)

The apostles were God-fearing men worthy of our love and respect, certainly, but they were men. They sometimes showed misplaced altruism such as towards Judas, or stubbornness, as in Peter, or skepticism, as in Thomas. In their faces we see reflections of our own lives, and that realization both humbles and encourages us. It makes their testimonies the precious memories of our kinsmen, and their epistles intimate letters from beloved friends and fellow laborers in God’s work, reminding us that we are all mere men, dust and ashes, mercifully called to do our best as we live out the exercise of this age.

Thank you for reading, in the next commentary we will begin to discuss the lives of the apostles in fuller detail. Praise Yahweh, the God of Israel.



Published: May 17th, 2025

For those who have questions or desire fellowship: lionofpatmosvideos@gmail.com

For those who wish to support these projects:

Paypal: lionofpatmosvideos@gmail.com

Bitcoin address: bc1qmacfink9f4mgwmjgra2h6wwgyecd2806myqtkqh

Ethereum address: 0xC39b0362341301635c070108B50E5AB64d53ddB8

Solana address: GpwyDLAN2fEpyisQ7eRBrTiNTsAQMytBahoPhbrpggV