

## **The Resurrection of Jesus: Fact or Fiction?**

# **Would you go this far to have people believe a lie?**

### **The Fate of the Twelve:**

#### ***Peter***

A.D. 67 - Thrown into the infamous Mamertine Prison in Rome. Chained upright to a post for nine months (so that he couldn't recline), endured brutal torture, and was eventually executed in Nero's Circus by being crucified upside down. His final moments were spent encouraging the disciples. His wife was also executed by Nero for her faith.

#### ***Andrew***

A.D. 69 - In Patras, Greece, Andrew converted the governor's wife to Christianity causing their estrangement. As a result, the governor had him tortured and tied to an "X" shaped cross naked and exposed to the elements. This torture went on for two days until Andrew died. Before his death, Andrew is said to have encouraged the onlookers to turn to Christ as their Lord.

#### ***Thomas***

Best known for doubting the resurrection of Jesus (John 20:25), Thomas turned into a committed believer when he encountered the resurrected Christ. Thomas traveled to India around A.D. 52 where he discredited the Brahmins – a Hindu sect – before their king. As a result, the Brahmins eventually found him praying in a cave and killed him by thrusting a spear through his side. He died trying to drag himself up a hill near the cave.

#### ***Matthew***

Reports of his martyrdom vary. The Jewish Talmud indicates he was condemned by the Sanhedrin. Some writings indicate he was pinned to the ground and beheaded for his faith around A.D. 60.

#### ***Philip***

Executed at the age of 87 in the city of Hierapolis in Phrygia. Pagan priests crucified him upside down by piercing him through the thighs. He was then stoned as he hung upon the cross. Before yielding his spirit, he is said to have prayed for his enemies as Jesus did.

#### ***Bartholomew (Nathaniel)***

Traveled with Philip, but escaped crucifixion at the time Philip was crucified. In Albana (now Derbend, Russia), one account indicated Bartholomew angered pagan priests and the king's brother, Astyages, by speaking out against the local idols (he also miraculously healed the king's daughter as a display of power). His enemies eventually had him arrested, beaten, and crucified in A.D. 68.

#### ***Jude (Thaddaeus)***

Believed to have served with Bartholomew and Thomas for several years. Sources indicate that Jude was martyred by a barrage of arrows on Mount Arrarat.

#### ***James, Son of Alphaeus (not the brother of Jesus)***

After traveling to Syria and establishing the Syrian church, returned to Jerusalem where he was stoned to death for preaching the resurrection of Christ to the Jews.

#### ***Simon the Zealot***

After working as a missionary in Egypt, North Africa, Carthage, Spain, and Britain, was sawn in two for preaching the resurrection of Jesus in Persia.

#### ***John***

Of the 12 disciples, only John died a natural death (but he was exiled to a prison island for his faith in Jesus).

#### ***Sources:***

Muncaster, Ralph O., Examine the Evidence, Eugene, Oregon. Harvest House Publishers, 2004.  
McDowell, Josh, The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict, Nashville. Thomas Nelson, 1999.

### **The Fate of Other Disciples:**

#### ***James, Brother of Jesus***

Early leader in the church and author of the book of James. Executed in A.D. 66.

#### ***Matthias***

Matthias was elected to fill the vacancy created by Judas. It is said that he was stoned and then beheaded.

#### ***Mark***

Tradition indicates that Mark was dragged to pieces in Alexandria after speaking out against the local idol Serapis.

#### ***Paul***

Spent a great deal of time in Roman prisons where he wrote many of his epistles. In A.D. 66, Emperor Nero condemned Paul to death and had him beheaded.

#### ***Barnabus***

Barnabus spread the gospel to many countries, yet on a return to Cyprus he was martyred by the Jews for his evangelism. History records that John Mark secretly buried his body in an empty sepulcher outside the city of Salamis.

### **Facts:**

***Fact 1:*** All of these apostles (except Paul and Barnabus) knew Jesus intimately *before* He was crucified. (Paul and also Barnabus may have seen Jesus before his crucifixion also.) There would be absolutely no doubt about their ability to recognize Jesus and distinguish between Him and other people who might simply look like Him.

***Fact 2:*** All of the Twelve (and others) saw Jesus *after* His resurrection from the dead.

***Fact 3:*** All of the apostles *changed radically* after seeing the risen Christ – from being inept followers to being bold speakers and leaders.

***Fact 4:*** All the apostles *started preaching* the good news about the death and resurrection of Jesus – and action that *threatened their very lives!*

***Fact 5:*** Early on Christians gathered to celebrate the Lord's Supper every Sunday, the day of the resurrection. Also, Christian initiation included baptism, which reenacts the death and resurrection of Jesus.

***Fact 6:*** No corpse was ever produced by the opponents of Christianity.

***Fact 7:*** All the apostles *would have had their lives spared* if they had simply renounced Jesus and stopped their evangelism.

***Fact 8:*** All of the apostles willingly, even joyfully, *laid down their lives* in the most horrible, painful ways to spread the good news about Jesus' death and resurrection.

Why would people willingly endure horrible torture and execution for a lie when they could simply renounce their faith? The only answer: *they were absolutely, totally convinced that Jesus had died and risen from the dead*, verifying His claim to be the Son of God.

#### ***Sources:***

Muncaster, Ralph O., Examine the Evidence, Eugene, Oregon. Harvest House Publishers, 2004.  
McDowell, Josh, The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict, Nashville. Thomas Nelson, 1999.