

Twelve Men: Judas, son of James

As we continue our journey investigating the Twelve Disciples, we come to Judas, the son of James, not to be confused with Judas Iscariot, whom we previously discussed. Don't you know it had to be difficult for the other Judas in the group following the betrayal of Judas Iscariot? I mean they shared the same name. I am sure that it came up a few times as they ministered to people. I could be wrong though. As a matter fact, the apostle John separates the two when he says in John 14:22, "*Judas (not Iscariot).*"

As we discovered while studying Judas Iscariot, the meaning of the name Judas simply means "Jehovah leads." Judas, the son of James, had three names. Matthew 10:3 in the King James Version reads, "... Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus." Now most modern translations skip over Lebbaeus and just read as Thaddaeus. John MacArthur in his book, *Twelve Ordinary Men* shares, "*Lebbaeus and Thaddaeus were essentially nicknames. Thaddaeus means 'breast child' – evoking the idea of a nursing baby. Perhaps he was the youngest in his family, cherished by his mother. His other name, Lebbaeus, is similar. It is from a Hebrew root that refers to the heart – literally, 'heart child.'*"

From this information surrounding the meaning of his names, one could assume his personality type. Judas probably possessed a tender, childlike heart. If this is so, imagine this personality among the other disciples, especially someone like Simon the Zealot, soon to be discussed. In all honesty, every personality type was most likely present in the group. Remember, Jesus picked these men, all for a specific reason and purpose.

There is not much in scripture surrounding this specific disciple as compared to other disciples. There is one incident recorded in John's gospel where Judas asks Jesus a question. We find it in John 14:21-22, "*[Jesus is speaking] 'He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.'* Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, '*Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?*'" This question comes while Jesus is encouraging and teaching the twelve disciples surrounding the role of the Holy Spirit.

John MacArthur states, "Here we see the tender-hearted humility of this man. He doesn't rebuke the Lord like Peter once did. His question is full of gentleness and meekness and devoid of any sort of pride. He couldn't believe that Jesus would manifest Himself to this rag-tag group of eleven, and not to the whole world."

As previously discussed, many of the disciples had the idea that Jesus had come to set up His earthly kingdom and this type of discussion was hard for them to understand. Jesus simply answers and says He would manifest Himself to anyone who loves Him. MacArthur says, "Jesus' answer meant 'I'm not going to take over the world externally; I'm going to take over hearts, one at a time. If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word. And if he keeps My Word, My Father, and I will come to him and together we'll set up the kingdom in his heart.'"

Steadman Livingston

What about us today? How can we relate or learn from Judas, son of James? I would suggest that we learn from his humility and tender, hearted attitude that MacArthur discussed. All of us as Jesus' disciples have room to grow in our humility and ability to be more tender hearted toward Christ and others. Join us next time as we continue our study by looking into the life of Simon who was called the Zealot.

