

## LESSON FOUR

### THE EFFECT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM ON THE APOSTLES AND OTHER CHURCH LEADERS ALIVE IN THE TIME OF CHRIST

*And He said to them, “**Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.**” And they straightway left their nets and followed Him.*

Matthew 4:19-20

“When Jesus called fishermen from the Sea of Galilee to come and follow Him, He promised to make them fishers of men (Matthew 4:19). On the day of Pentecost, this promise was fulfilled. Jesus had promised that they would do even greater works than He did (John 14:12: ***Verily, verily, I say unto you, “He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto My Father.”***), and this promise was also fulfilled at Pentecost. During Christ’s earthly ministry, very few people seem to have been converted to God through Him. The greatest number of Jesus’s converts mentioned is about five hundred (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:6: *After that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.*). But after He ascended to the Father and sent the promised Holy Spirit, the disciples led three thousand converts to the foot of the cross in one day (Acts 2:41: *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls*), and several days later the number of those converted appears to have grown to five thousand (Acts 4:4: *Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed, and the number of the men was about five thousand*). In a moment of time, God changed the fishermen of Galilee into the world’s greatest preachers. In a moment of time, they learned more about Christ than they had learned in three years of walking and talking with Him.”

(taken from *Deeper Experiences of Famous Christians* by James Lawson)

When Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem, all of the 11 remaining disciples, without Judas, with the possible exception of John, and many other followers fled in terror. (John records himself as being at the foot of the cross with the women in John 19:25-27.)

These disciples received the Holy Spirit, when Christ Himself had breathed on them on Resurrection Day three days after He was crucified (John 20:22-*And when He had said this, He breathed on them and saith unto them, “**Receive ye the Holy Spirit,**”*) but not the baptism in or infilling of the Holy Spirit, which would occur 50 days after the Passover or Crucifixion Day.

Yet after Pentecost and the coming down and filling of the Holy Spirit on the disciples, each one of them had a passionate boldness and lack of fear and were gladly martyred for the sake of the Gospel. What was the difference between hiding in fear when Jesus was crucified and martyrdom? Simply this: First, they had seen the risen Lord, and

secondly and especially, they had received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, which gave them the power they needed to be His witnesses. We likewise need this Baptism today!

Let's look at how the twelve disciples and the other early Church leaders endured persecution and died willingly, (with the exception of the Apostle John who was persecuted but died a natural death around 100 AD). They died horrible deaths refusing to deny Christ and insisting on preaching the Gospel.

We will start with two of the most prominent of the leaders of the fledgling church, Peter and Paul.

Peter and the Apostle Paul, who was not one of the original disciples, were imprisoned in Rome. A terrible fire broke out and burned for days, killing thousands and causing a public outcry. Most believe that Nero had the fire set either because he wanted to clear land for his planned palatial complex and the Senate would not go along with this building program or because he knew he was the object of an assassination plot, and he wanted to take all Rome with him to his death. To defer blame from himself, Nero accused the Christians, who already were *suspect* to the average Roman who did not understand the new religion. Nero ordered the death of several prominent Christian leaders in Rome, including Erastus, Aristarchus, Trophimus, and Peter, who had already been in one of Rome's most horrible, dark dungeons, where he was chained to a post for 9 months. Paul (originally called Saul), who had apparently been imprisoned twice under more favorable conditions because he was a Roman citizen, also was ordered killed. Paul was likely beheaded since Roman citizens could not be crucified. Peter (also known as Simon bar Jona, Cephas, Simon Peter, and Simon) was crucified but requested, a request that was apparently honored, to be crucified upside down since he felt unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as His Lord.

John (Boanerges, The Beloved Disciple, The Revelator) was the son of Zebedee and Salome. He was a fisherman by trade. After he left Jerusalem after Pentecost he lived on a hill outside Ephesus (in modern Turkey), where he cared for Mary, the Mother of Jesus, until she died. He was brought to Rome by the Emperor Domitian in AD 93 and ordered to burn incense to pagan gods or be killed. He refused to burn the incense and chose the latter, to be killed. Domitian angrily ordered John to be thrown into a vat of boiling oil. However, John stepped out of the boiling oil unharmed. Domitian, angry and frightened, ordered that John be exiled to Patmos, where John remained until Domitian died in AD 96, and the new emperor, as a good will gesture, ordered all political prisoners released. John returned to Ephesus where he lived out his remaining years and, according to an early Christian historian, Jerome, was asked by the bishops of Asia to write his own version of the Gospel. After reading Matthew, Mark, and Luke and affirming their accuracy, he wrote his own version, emphasizing certain events in Christ's earliest years of ministry not included in the other Gospels. As far as we know, John died after living into his late nineties.

The other disciples, according to early church historian Eusebius, divided up the known inhabited world and spread themselves out to the four corners of the globe. The Romans had built the Roman Way, which made travel not only possible but much safer. This highway system connected Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe,

including the recently captured Gaul (France) and Britain. We know that the apostles left Jerusalem before Rome destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70.

James (Boanerges, James the Elder) brother to John and also the son of Zebedee and Salome, who tradition says was the sister of the Virgin Mary, was the first disciple martyred by Herod Agrippa in AD 44. Jerusalem was under Roman control, and the Roman officer, who led James to his execution, was so moved by James' unwavering faith that he became a believer, knelt down beside James, and, as a new Christian believer, was beheaded along with the apostle. Before he was imprisoned by Herod, it is thought that Peter and James went to India and elsewhere to preach the Gospel and that James later went to Spain, where some claim he was the first Bishop of Spain, but where he made only a few converts and returned to Jerusalem. After he was killed, tradition says that some of his disciples, fearing what the Jews might do to his body, placed it on a ship where it eventually ended up back in Spain. At any rate, we know James was beheaded by Herod, but all the rest is speculation.

Andrew (Protokletos or First Called), Peter's brother, is believed to have gone to Eastern Europe and Russia to preach the Gospel. He supposedly died in Greece where he was crucified on an x-shaped cross to prolong the suffering. Unlike Peter, Andrew wanted to be crucified upright because that is the way Jesus was crucified. When he was led to his cross, Andrew said, "I have long desired and expected this happy hour. The cross has been consecrated by the body of Christ hanging on it." Andrew had angered the local Roman governor because he had led the man's wife to Christ. On the cross, he continued to preach to his tormentors for two days until he died. Twenty thousand onlookers finally went to the governor on the second day demanding Andrew's release, but he died shortly thereafter before they could release him.

Philip (the apostle, not the evangelist) ministered in modern-day Iran, Turkey, and possibly Gaul or modern-day France, and Ukraine. Philip eventually returned to Turkey where the pagans there worshiped a giant serpent. Philip reportedly commanded, in the name of the cross he held, the snake to come out from under the altar and die. Immediately it did so and died causing a terrible odor, which caused many others, including the king's son, to die. However, Philip raised the king's son back to life. The pagan priests were so angry that they bound Philip to a tall cross and then stoned him to death, as he prayed for his tormentors. This was in Turkey.

Bartholomew, also known as Nathaniel, preached in India, Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, and Ethiopia, sometimes alone and sometimes with Philip. He eventually ended up in Armenia. Jerome wrote that Bartholomew preached in Armenia for 26 years. Tradition says that he wore the same clothes and shoes every day, and they never wore out. He healed the lunatic daughter of the king and banished the demon which inhabited the king's idol. The king and many others were baptized into the Christian faith, but the pagan priests were furious and talked the king's brother into having him arrested. Bartholomew was beaten with clubs, skinned alive, and crucified in agony. However, Bartholomew's ministry in Armenia was so powerful that Armenia was the first nation ever to declare Christianity as an official religion in AD 301. Later in 1915

the Muslim and Ottoman Turks slaughtered 1.5 Million Armenian Christians. Yet today 98% of Armenians continue to claim Christianity.

Thomas (Didymus or Twin, Judas Thomas, Doubting Thomas) drew lots with the disciples to see where he would go. He drew India. He immediately protested claiming it was too far to go and too difficult on the body. Jesus supposedly appeared to him, and he still did not want to go. Finally an Indian merchant agreed to take Thomas, as a servant, to India, and Thomas surrendered knowing this was of the Lord. Thomas became a “vigorous missionary, a fearless evangelist, a worker of miracles, and a great builder of churches.” He is said to have converted 6 kings and 3 Indian emperors. However, when he led two Indian princesses to Christ, their husbands divorced them and sent soldiers to spear Thomas to death. Thomas was thought to have been a carpenter.

Matthew (Levi) was the son of Alphaeus and was among the last apostle to leave Jerusalem. He was a tax collector. He was the most educated of the disciples, and he began his Gospel while remaining in Judea. He spent time evangelizing in Persia (Iran), Macedonia, Syria, and later Ethiopia and Egypt. He was thought to have been entertained by the Ethiopian eunuch converted by Philip the Evangelist, and he performed many miracles, including raising the son of the King of Egypt from the dead and healing the King’s daughter of leprosy. He was likely martyred in Egypt or killed by a sword in Ethiopia.

James the Son of Alphaeus, possibly Matthew’s brother and a cousin to Jesus, was also known as James the Lesser, meaning younger, as opposed to James, the brother of John. He was thought to have been a member of the revolutionary group known as the Zealots. He founded the Syrian Christian Church before preaching in Egypt where he was reportedly beaten to death with a club, although others think he was crucified in Sinai or in Persia or stoned to death in Jerusalem.

Jude Thaddeus or Lebbaeus or Judas (not the half-brother of Jesus who wrote the book of Jude nor the one who betrayed Jesus) was thought to be the son of James and nephew of John. Thaddeus preached in Judea, Samaria, Edom, Syria, Arabia, Iraq, and Libya before finally settling in Armenia with Bartholomew. It is thought that Thaddeus went to Armenia because he got a letter from Thomas asking him to go pray for healing of a member of the royal family, who had had a plague for seven years. The royal family member was healed upon Thaddeus’ arrival and later became king of Armenia. Like James the Younger, Thaddeus was thought to have been a member of the Zealots. He died in Persia (Iran), shot by arrows.

Simon the Zealot (Simon the Canannite) carried the Gospel to North Africa, Egypt, Mauritania, Cyrene in Libya, Carthage, Spain and possibly Britain. He eventually ended up in Persia (Iran), where he was eventually martyred by being sawn asunder.

Matthias was chosen by lot to replace Judas Iscariot. He ministered some in Armenia. At one point he was reportedly blinded and imprisoned by cannibals until Andrew came and rescued him. He reportedly was stoned and beheaded.

OTHER Church Leaders most likely in Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost and in the Upper Room on Mount Zion when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the 120 or were baptized later in the Spirit shortly afterwards:

Mark (John Mark) died in Alexandria, Egypt, after being dragged by horses throughout the streets until he was dead. Many believe John Mark was the young man who fled when Judas betrayed Jesus and the soldiers arrested Him (Mark 14:50-52: *Then they all forsook Him and fled. Now a certain young man followed Him having a linen cloth thrown around his naked body. And the young men laid hold of him, and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.*). Barnabas was Mark's cousin or uncle, but it is thought that Peter led him to Christ since Peter refers to him as "Mark my son" in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:13. Mark was a close companion of Peter and probably accompanied Peter for about 12 years on Peter's missionary journeys. Most scholars believe that Mark's Gospel was the first one written and was based on stories that Peter told, although there is no doubt that John Mark, as a young man, also personally was there and knew Jesus.

James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem, was thrown down a hundred-foot drop from the southeast pinnacle of the Temple because he refused to deny Christ. This did not kill James so his enemies then proceeded to beat him to death with clubs.

Barnabas, one of the 70 disciples, preached throughout Italy and Cyprus and was stoned to death because of his refusal to deny Christ.

Luke was hanged in Greece as a result of his tremendous preaching to the lost.

Before the end of the age, perhaps many other Christians around the world, as some are even today, will be killed for their faith in Christ. You may be one of them. We must remember that Jesus said, ***And you shall be hated of all men for My Name's sake: But he that endures to the end will be saved***" (Matthew 10:22).