



Catholic Arts & Academic Competition



Catholic Heroes: 2019-2020 People in the Bible study list

The individuals on the list below are strictly from a biblical reference point, not their sainthood. Students will need to know general factual information about the person, be familiar with the book(s) they are mentioned in, their story, and their role in salvation history.

Abraham

Abraham was the first patriarch of Israel. He was the son of Terah, and brother to Nahor and Haran. The name Abraham means "a father of many nations." He originally lived near the Mesopotamian city of Ur, but Terah took him, along with Lot, to the city of Haran in northwest Mesopotamia (Gen 11:31).

After the death of his father, God told Abraham, who was 75 years old at that time, to leave his country and to go to the land of Canaan, with his wife, Sarah, and his nephew, Lot. Lot and Abraham later separated because there was not enough grazing lands for their flocks.

Abraham settled in Mamre, near Hebron. He was a peaceful herdsman but also warlike and defeated four kings who had invaded Canaan. Upon his triumphant return, Abraham was greeted by Melchizedek, the king of Salem and "Priest of the God of the Most High" (Gen 14:21-24).

When Sarah could not conceive she gave Abraham her maid, Hagar, as a wife. Hagar gave birth to Ishmael (Gen 16:1-6). In affirmation of his covenant with God, Abraham circumcised himself and all males in the household. Later three angels visited Abraham and Sarah and announced that within a year Sarah would give birth.

Sarah gave birth to Isaac when Abraham was 100 years old. Isaac became the sole heir, as Sarah urged Abraham to banish Hagar and Ishmael. The Lord confirmed this demand, and promised that Ishmael would also become a great nation. After Sarah's death and Isaacs marriage to Rebekah, Abraham married Keturah, and she bore him several children.

Abraham deeded everything he owned to Isaac, however he gave gifts to his other sons, and sent them off into the east, away from Isaac. Abraham died at the age of 175 and was buried by Isaac and Ishmael in a cave of Machpelah (Gen 25:9-11). Abraham's call is the origin and mainspring of Israel's election and religion. Abraham is mentioned 72 times in the New Testament and is considered the father of all true believers, the first to receive God's promises.

Abraham had great faith in God, and God promised to make him into a great nation, a blessing for all families of the earth, "I will bless those that bless you and curse those who curse you, and the entire world will be blessed because of you." (Gen 12:2-3).

Adam

Adam ("Man"), was created by God on the sixth day of creation. God gave him dominion over all living things. God formed Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed life into him. God then placed Adam in the Garden of Eden. Then God gave Adam a partner by creating Eve.

Eve was later persuaded by a serpent to eat fruit from the tree of "knowledge of good and evil", the tree that God had warned Adam and Eve not to eat from. Eve gave some of the fruit to Adam. Because of this, God expelled Adam and Eve from Eden. Adam then had to till the ground and labor for his food. Adam and Eve's children included Cain, Abel and Seth, and other sons and daughters.

Adam lived for 932 years. In the New Testament, Adam is compared to Christ: Just as Adam had brought sin and death into the world, Christ brings forgiveness and life. Paul writes, in Romans 5:12, that "when Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. His sin spread death throughout all the world, so everything began to grow old and die, for all sinned." The story of Adam is found in Genesis, chapters 1-5.

Andrew the Apostle

Andrew was one of the original 12 apostles. He was the son of a man named Jonah (sometimes the name is rendered as John), and brother of Simon Peter. He lived in Bethsaida on the north side of the sea of Galilee. The two brothers had a fishing business in partnership with James and John.

Before Andrew had met Jesus, he had been a disciple of John the Baptist. He became convinced that Jesus was the Messiah and brought his brother Peter to see Jesus. The two brothers returned to their fishing, but later, after John the Baptist had been arrested, Jesus saw Peter and Andrew by the Sea of Galilee and said to them, "Come after Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:18). Peter and Andrew, at that point in time, lived in Capernaum (Mark 1:21, 29).

Jesus always named Andrew among the first four apostles. Andrew was one of the four apostles who were with Jesus on the Mount of Olives. It was Andrew who inquired about the signs that would mark the end times (Mark 13:3-4). Andrew also was the one who called attention to the boy who had loaves and fishes, when Jesus fed the 5000 men, besides women and children, in John 6:5-9.

Annas

Annas was High Priest in Jerusalem about 2000 years ago. His son-in-law Caiaphas was also high priest (Luke 3:2). Each played a role in the trial of Jesus (John 18:12-14). Jesus was first taken to Annas during the trial, who then sent Jesus to Caiaphas (John 18:13, 24). Peter and John were arrested and taken before both Annas and Caiaphas in Acts 4:6. Caiaphas is mentioned in each of the three Bible passages that mention Annas, a possible indication that the two ruled together or shared power.

Annas is mentioned by name in [Luke 3:2](#), [John 18](#), and [Acts 4:6](#)

Aquila

Aquila was a Jewish Christian living in Corinth with his wife Priscilla when Paul the evangelist arrived from Athens (Acts 18:2). Aquila is mentioned by name in four books of the New Testament: Acts, chapter 18, Romans 16:3, 1 Corinthians 16:19, and 2 Timothy 4:19. Aquila was born in Pontus, which in ancient times referred to a strip of land on the southern coast of the Black Sea, in Asia Minor. The book of Acts says that he had lived in Rome until the emperor Claudius banned Jews from living in the city.

Various historians have suggested that this event occurred in the year 49, 50 or 51. The extent to which Jews actually were pushed out of Rome is unknown. Some decrees in ancient times were never strictly enforced. Although the book of Acts does not explain the reason for the banishment, the ancient historian, Suetonius Tranquillus, wrote in his book, *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, in reference to Claudius that: "He banished from Rome all the Jews, who were continually making disturbances at the instigation of one Chrestus." Some scholars have proposed that "Chrestus" was a reference to Christianity. We know from another Roman historian, Tacitus, from his 11th book of *The Annals*, that Claudius was concerned about "the growth of foreign superstitions."

Perhaps Claudius was alarmed by the rapid spread of Christianity in Rome and sought to expel the city's Jewish community as a way of protecting the Roman religions.

Whatever the reason or the extent of the expulsion, Aquila and Priscilla moved to Corinth, where Aquila worked as a tent maker. When Paul left Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla traveled with him as far as Ephesus (1

Corinthians 16:19). There, they met Apollos and instructed him more thoroughly in the Christian faith (Acts 18:24-26). It is believed that Aquila and Priscilla returned to Rome, because Paul sent them greetings in his letter to the Romans (Romans 16:3).

Barnabas

Barnabas was an apostle, but not one of the original twelve. He was a colleague of Paul on his first missionary journey. He was a Levite from Cyprus, who, having sold his property, gave all his money to the apostles. Barnabas was his surname, and his original name was Joses or Joseph (Acts 4:36-37).

Barnabas persuaded the Jerusalem community to accept Paul. The apostles were suspicious of Paul and did not believe that he was a disciple. Barnabas declared that Paul had seen the Lord and that he had preached at Damascus in the name of Jesus (Acts 9:26-27).

Barnabas went to Antioch to assist the rapidly growing group of believers there, and he brought Paul from Tarsus to Antioch (Acts 11:25). Barnabas and Paul traveled and preached in many cities, including Cyprus. When they returned to Antioch, Paul prepared for his second missionary journey, but objected to taking Mark along on the grounds that he had already left them once on their first journey. As a result, Paul and Barnabas separated, each going his own way. Paul went with Silas, while Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus (Acts 15: 36-40).

Bartholomew the Apostle

Bartholomew (perhaps also known as Nathanael) was one of Christ's twelve original apostles. He appears in the lists of the twelve apostles given in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts. Usually, his name is paired off with Philip. Bartholomew is a patronymic and thus not a person's familiar name. He does not appear in John's Gospel, and the association of Philip with the otherwise unknown Nathanael (John 1:45-51, 21:2) leads to the possibility that Nathanael was Bartholomew's personal name.

In John, Chapter 1, Philip tells Nathanael "We have found the Messiah! The very person Moses and the prophets told about! His name is Jesus, the Son of Joseph from Nazareth." "Nazareth!" exclaimed Nathanael, "can anything good come from there?" The two went to see Jesus, and as they approached Him, Jesus said, "Here comes an honest man, a true son of Israel". Nathanael then asked, "How do you know what I am like?" Jesus replied, "I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you". Nathanael then replied, "Sir, You are the Son of God - the King of Israel".

It is believed that Bartholomew/Nathanael was a missionary with Philip and Thomas. He is said to have preached the gospel in Armenia, India, Lycaonia, Mesopotamia, Persia and Phrygia.

Caiaphas

Caiaphas was the high priest during the time of Jesus and was a member of the Sadducees (Luke 3:2). He was appointed High Priest of the Jews by the Roman procurator Valerius Gratus in about A.D. 18, according to Josephus, a first century Jewish historian (Ant., XVIII, ii, 2). Gratus was the predecessor of Pontius Pilate.

He called for Jesus' death, when he and other community leaders became alarmed at the rising popularity of Jesus. After Jesus was arrested, he was taken to Annas, also a high priest, who was also the father-in-law of Caiaphas. Annas questioned Jesus and then sent Him to Caiaphas. After the trial before Caiaphas, Jesus was sent to Pilate, the Roman governor (John 18:12-28).

Caiaphas was afraid that Jesus' popularity would entice a large number of people to gather and to possibly stage an uprising for independence. Such an event would be dealt with severely and harshly by the Romans. Caiaphas expressed this concern when he said that it would be better for one man to die than for a whole nation to suffer (John 11:43-50). This was soon after Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead.

Caiaphas was also present at the trial of the Apostles John and Peter. He was one of the leaders who questioned the two men about the miraculous healing of a lame man at one of the gates of the Temple (Acts 4:6-7).

In 1990, excavators found an ornate ossuary with the name of Caiaphas on it. It was found near Jerusalem and contained the bones of a man who lived to be about 60 years old. Some believe that the bones might be those of the man named Caiaphas in the New Testament.

Caiaphas is mentioned in the New Testament books of Matthew, chapter 26; Luke 3:2; John 11:49; John, chapter 18; and Acts 4:6.

Cleopas (or Cleophas)

Cleopas is one of the two disciples who talked with Jesus on the Road to Emmaus, after Jesus was resurrected. Emmaus is a village seven miles from Jerusalem. Cleopas and the other disciple did not recognize Jesus at first, but after they invited Jesus to stay with them, due to the late hour, they realized Who he was while breaking bread with him at the table.

Jesus vanished at that point. So the two disciples returned to Jerusalem to tell the eleven Apostles and those with them, that they saw the resurrected Jesus. While they were still speaking about this, Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst and said "Peace be with you." (Luke 24:13-36).

In John 19:25, there is a person named Mary, a witness to the crucifixion, who is identified as having a husband named Cleopas. But it is unknown if he is the same Cleopas who witnessed the resurrected Jesus.

Daniel

Daniel was among the Jews who were carried off into captivity in Babylon about 2600 years ago.

Even though he was a captive, he received an education and rose to a high position in the Babylonian government. He later rose to a high position in the Persian government after the Persians conquered Babylon. Because of his faith in God he was persecuted by the Babylonians. At one point, he was thrown into a den of lions, but survived.

The Bible's book of Daniel deals with many historical events of that era. His book also contains prophecies concerning the future. Daniel saw and described the great world empires that were to come. He also saw the power of God and of the Messiah (Jesus Christ) who was to come and undo the evil of this world.

The book of Daniel is divided into two parts. The first part is a collection of narratives about Daniel and his friends (Chapters 1 - 6). The second part is a collection of apocalyptic visions foreseeing the course of world history (Chapters 7 - 12).

After a three-year training period in Babylon, Daniel was found to be smarter than all of the skilled magicians and wise astrologers in Babylon, and was appointed as a counselor to King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel held that position until the first year of the reign of King Cyrus.

Daniel stayed true to God and prayed three times a day. He refused to bow to idols, and would not eat the food or drink the wine furnished by the King. He ate only vegetables and drank water. Through his faithfulness, God gave him the power to interpret dreams, see into the future, and God gave him a long life.

The name Daniel means "God is my judge." His book is the fourth book of the four Major Prophets.

David (King David)

David was the youngest son of Jesse, the great-grandson of Boaz and Ruth, born in Bethlehem in the tribe of Judah. He was handpicked by God, anointed by Samuel, and became Israel's second, and greatest, king.

David was a shepherd in his early years. After killing Goliath, with a slingshot, he joined the entourage of King Saul, Israel's first king. Saul eventually became jealous of David's popularity with the Israelites and tried to kill him several times. David and his followers had to flee and hide out from Saul, but with the defeat of the Israelites and the death of Saul at the hands of the Philistines, David was anointed King over Judah.

Later, David defeated Ishbosheth the son of Saul, who was King of the northern tribes of Israel. Thereafter, in his eighth year, David united all the tribes and became King of all Israelites. He moved the capitol to Jerusalem, and brought the sacred Ark of the Covenant there.

David defeated the Philistines in two decisive battles, at Baal Perazim and at Rephaim, and the Philistines were no longer a serious threat to Israel. David then defeated Moab, Edom, Damascus, and Ammon, and they all became subjugated.

David committed adultery with Bathsheba and sent her husband Uriah to his death. For this, God rebuked David through Nathan the prophet, and told David that murder will be a constant threat to his family from this time on. David's first child by Bathsheba died seven days after birth. One of David's sons, Absalom, killed his half-brother Amnon, after Amnon raped Absalom's sister, Tamar.

Later, Absalom revolted against his father David and tried to take over the throne, but was killed by Joab, David's army commander. Another son of David, Adonijah, was killed soon after David died.

David was king for about 40 years. He was an extraordinary musician and poet, and wrote many of the Psalms in the Book of Psalms. He had many sons and daughters and died at an old age, and Solomon, his second son by Bathsheba, became the next king.

David is noted for several things. He initiated a cultural and literary revival which was continued by Solomon. He undertook far-reaching reforms in national institutions and administration. He also began preparations for building a central sanctuary in Jerusalem (the first Temple) and chose the site. The worship of God became the official state religion, and the priesthood was organized under the chief priests. He also reorganized the army.

Because the prophets, during the Old Testament times, had proclaimed that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David, people would use the phrase "son of David" as a way to refer to Messianic prophecy or to their hopes that the Messiah would arrive during their lifetime.

Jesus is often called the "son of David." A blind man named Bartimaeus, for example, refers to Jesus by that title, in [Mark 10:46-52](#), shortly before Jesus healed him and restored his sight.

Details about the life of David can be found in the Bible's books of 1 and 2 Samuel and the first two chapters of 1 Kings, also in 1 Chronicles.

Dorcas (also known as Tabitha)

Dorcas, also known as Tabitha, was a Christian woman from Joppa. She was known for her acts of charity, which included making garments for poor people. When Dorcas became ill and died, many people mourned her. They sent for Peter who was only a few miles away in Lydda. Peter prayed over her, and then said "Tabitha, rise up." She opened her eyes, saw Peter and sat up. This event became known all over Joppa, and many came to believe in the Lord. (Acts 9:36-42).

Elijah (or Elias)

Elijah, a Tishbite from the region of Gilead, was a prophet in Israel during the reigns of Ahab, Ahaziah and Jehoram. All his life Elijah was active in the defense of God. His teachings brought him into constant conflict with the Kings of Israel, and on one occasion had to flee for his life. He fought against the cult of Baal, and clashed frequently with Ahab's wife Jezebel, who had introduced the pagan cult in Israel.

Elijah performed some extraordinary miracles as a prophet of God, he brought the dead son of a widow back to life (1 Kings 17:22-23), caused a jar of meal and a jar of oil to constantly refill during a drought, caused fire to come out of the sky and consume a burnt offering, ended a drought, and ran faster than King Ahab's chariot.

In Kings 19 the Lord revealed Himself to Elijah. Elijah parted the waters of the Jordan River, by striking it with his mantle, and crossed on dry ground with his understudy, Elisha. "As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlpool into heaven" (2 Kings 2:11).

Elisha then picked up Elijah's mantle and became a prophet of God. Elijah remains one of the most intriguing of the prophets. In the New Testament, the angel Gabriel tells Zechariah that his wife Elizabeth will bear a son "with the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17).

Many have identified John the Baptist with Elijah the forerunner of the Messiah. Some thought Jesus to be Elijah but Jesus rejected this, attributing the roll to John the Baptist. Elijah, with Moses appears with Jesus at the Transfiguration. The story of Elijah is found in 1 and 2 Kings, and in 1 and 2 Chronicles. The name Elijah means "Yah is my God"

Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist

The mother of John the Baptist, and the wife of Zechariah the priest. She is a descendant of Aaron. Elizabeth had been barren for many years, but God performed a miracle and she conceived a child who would be the forerunner of the Messiah.

While Zechariah was burning incense in the Temple, the angel Gabriel appeared to him and announced that a son who would "be great before the Lord" would be born to Elizabeth. In Elizabeth's sixth month of pregnancy, Gabriel also appeared to Mary and announced that she would become pregnant with a Son "called the Son of God." Mary then traveled to a Judean town (tradition places this town as, Ein Karem, just west of Jerusalem) to visit her relative Elizabeth. When Mary entered the house of Zechariah, and greeted Elizabeth, the baby leaped in Elizabeth's womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Luke 1:41-42).

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home. When the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, she bore a son. Her husband Zechariah named him John. (Luke 1:5-79). There is no further mention of Elizabeth or Zechariah in the New Testament.

Gabriel (Angel)

Gabriel is an angel of heaven who appears to the prophet Daniel to interpret a vision (Daniel 8:15). He reveals to Daniel a prophecy found in Daniel 9:20. And in Luke 1:19, Gabriel announces the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah. In Luke 1:26, God sends Gabriel to Nazareth in Galilee to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the House of David.

The virgin's name was Mary. Gabriel told her that she had found favor with God, and that she would conceive and bear a son whom she was to give the name of Jesus, which means "Salvation." He also told Mary that her relative, Elizabeth, despite her old age, had also conceived a son (John the Baptist). Gabriel functions as a messenger. He announces the births of both John the Baptist and Jesus.

Herod Antipas

Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great and brother to Herod Archelaus. His mother was a Samaritan named Malthace. He ruled over Galilee and Perea from 4 BC-39 AD. He inherited his father's political finesse. In fact, Jesus referred to him as "that fox" in Luke 13:32.

Like his father, Herod Antipas had a great love for opulent architecture and was responsible for the building of the city of Tiberias in AD 22. He married the daughter of the Nabatean King Aretas IV. He then divorced her in order to marry Herodias, who was the daughter of his late half-brother, Aristobulos. She also had been married earlier to another half-brother, Herod Philip.

John the Baptist spoke out against Herod Antipas for this marriage, and for other things that he had done wrong. Because of his outspokenness, Herodias wanted to have John killed in revenge. Herod Antipas put John in prison and eventually beheaded him, at the request of Herodias. Later, Jesus was sent to Herod Antipas after his arrest by Pontius Pilate.

Jesus refused to answer his questions and Herod mocked Him and sent him back to Pilate (Luke 23:7-12). Later, Herod Antipas was accused by his rival, Herod Agrippa I, of plotting against Rome. In 39 AD, he was banished to Lyons in Gaul. Herodias went with him.

Herod the Great

Herod the Great was the son of Antipater. He was the procurator of Judah, under Julius Caesar, and king, under Augustus.

He reigned as an appointed king for 33 years (37-4 BC). He was of both Jewish and Edomite ancestry. He made outstanding contributions to the architecture of his day. At Samaria and Caesarea he founded entire cities and built many others. He built temples, theaters and fortresses. His most magnificent achievement was the reconstruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, which was started in 19 BC.

Shortly after Jesus was born, Herod was visited by men from the east. The men told Herod that they had seen a sign in the sky signifying that the King of the Jews had been born and that they wanted to visit with him. This concerned Herod, perhaps because he feared that the birth of a new king would mean the end of his own reign.

Herod called for priests and teachers to explain to him where specifically he might look for this newly born king. The priests and teachers explained that the Jewish Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. So, Herod sent men to kill all of the babies in Bethlehem. But Jesus and his family fled to Egypt before the killing had started.

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord again appeared to Joseph, and told him to take the Baby and His mother back to Israel. (Matthew, chapter 2).

After his reign, Herod's sons became rulers, including Herod Archelaus and Herod Antipas.

Isaac

Isaac, the second patriarch of Israel, son of Abraham and Sarah, and father of Jacob and Esau. Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age, his name means "to laugh." After Isaac was weaned, his half brother Ishmael was banished with his Egyptian mother Hagar (Gen 21:8-20), as Isaac alone was designated as Abraham's heir.

Isaac's destiny was confirmed when Abraham proved willing to comply with the divine command to sacrifice his son on Mount Moriah. An angel stopped Abraham from slaying Isaac, and offered a ram as a substitute. Abraham sent a slave to his family in Mesopotamia to procure a wife for Isaac (Gen 24:1-10).

Isaac was forty years old at the time of his marriage to Rebekah, and she eventually bore him twins, Esau and Jacob (Gen 25:21-26). Isaac became very wealthy as a farmer in Gerar, and later returned to the region of Beersheba. In his old age, Isaac grew blind, and through a ruse by Rebekah and Jacob, gave his blessing to Jacob instead of Esau. Isaac died at age 180, and was buried by his two sons (Gen 35:28-29).

Jacob (Israel)

Jacob was the son of Isaac and Rebekah, and the twin brother of Esau (Genesis 25:23-26). Jacob, meaning "grabber", was born clutching Esau's heel. He eventually received his father's blessing that was meant for Esau. Cheated by his brother, Esau vowed to kill Jacob (Genesis 27:41). Jacob left his home and went to the town of Padan Aram, where his uncle, Laban, lived.

At the outset of his journey, near Bethel, Jacob was given a vision by God of Israel's future: that the Jews would establish their own nation, that they would be scattered like dust to the ends of the earth, that they would have a worldwide impact, and that they would one day return to their homeland. All of these things of course have happened, long after the prophecy from Jacob was written down.

After working seven years as a herdsman for his uncle Laban, Jacob wanted to marry Laban's youngest daughter Rachel. But, Laban deceived Jacob by giving him his eldest daughter, Leah, in marriage. Jacob consented to work another seven years for the permission to marry Rachel.

Leah bore Jacob four sons, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. Rachel, who was barren, gave her maid, Bilhah, to bear Jacob's children for her. Bilhah bore Dan and Naphtali. Leah likewise gave Jacob her maid, Zilpah, who bore him Gad and Asher. Afterwards Leah gave birth to Issachar and Zebulun, and Jacob's only daughter, Dinah. Only then did Rachel conceive, bearing Joseph.

Jacob packed up his large family and went back to Canaan. On that trip, at night Jacob wrestled with an angel, asking for a blessing. At last the angel blessed him and gave him a new name: Israel ("You have struggled with God.") Jacob made amends with his brother Esau. Rachel died in childbirth of Jacob's last son, Benjamin.

Jacob settled again in the land of Canaan. After some years, his son Joseph became a high ranking official in Egypt. Jacob and his family moved to Egypt and lived there. Jacob blessed Joseph's two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. When Jacob died, his body was taken back to Canaan for burial. The 12 sons of Jacob (Israel) became the twelve tribes of Israel. They multiplied greatly in Egypt for a few hundred years, and returned to Canaan with Moses during the Exodus.

James, the Apostle, son of Alphaeus

James (son of Alphaeus) One of the 12 Apostles. He is named in the list of Apostles in Matthew 10:1-3, Mark 3:14-19, Luke 6:13-16, and Acts 1:13. His mother's name was Mary and she was one of the women who went to the tomb of Jesus, and found that it had been opened. James was also called "James the Less" and "James the Younger."

Because the Apostle Matthew also is the son of a man named Alphaeus, it has been thought that he and James were brothers. But the two were never referred to as brothers, whereas Peter and Andrew, and James (a different James) and John, were consistently referred to as being brothers. Nothing else is known about James except he was among those who went to the upper room to pray after the Ascension of Jesus.

James, the Apostle, son of Zebedee

James the Apostle was one of the 12 original apostles. He was the son of a man named of Zebedee and the older brother of John the Apostle. James was a fisherman, as was his father and brother. He was one of the first apostles to be called by Jesus. Jesus gave John and James the surname of Boanerges, which means "sons of thunder." Together with Peter and John, James was a close confidant of Jesus, being present at many important events, including the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus, Jesus' transfiguration, and the agony in Gethsemane. James was killed by King Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:1-2).

James, the Epistle writer

The Epistle of James is the 20th book of the New Testament. He identifies himself as "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." Of the several New Testament people named James, it is possible, perhaps logical, that this James is "The Lord's Brother" (Galatians 1:19), the leader of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13, 21:18). He was a well-known figure of the church and martyred in 62 AD. His book may be the earliest of the New Testament writings.

His book shows the difficulties that were troubling the people of the early church, such as pride, discrimination, greed, lust, hypocrisy, worldliness, and backbiting. James writes to correct these evils by showing that "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:26), that is, mere profession of faith is not enough. He rebukes the rich in (James 5:1-6), tells us to be patient and take courage (James 5:7-11), not to swear (James 5:12), the effectiveness of prayer (James 5:13-18), and turning a fallen Christian back to Christ (James 5:19-20).

Jeremiah (or Jeremy)

Jeremiah lived about 2600 years ago. He was the son of Hilkiyah and lived in the town of Anathoth in the land of Benjamin in Judah. His ministry began during the reign of Josiah, and continued through the reigns of Jehoiakin, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah.

Jeremiah, according to the Bible book that bears his name, preached from about 628 BC to 586 BC in Jerusalem. During that time, the Babylonian Empire had taken control of Jerusalem. The Babylonians took Jews as captives to Babylon as early as 605 BC and 597 BC. Babylon destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC.

Jeremiah lived through the invasions by the Babylonian armies, the deportations of his people, the slaughter of Jews living in Jerusalem, and the destruction of the Temple.

Jeremiah warned the people of Jerusalem that they would be punished harshly for their sins. He pleaded with the people to turn away from sin and to turn back to God, but to little avail. In return, Jeremiah was targeted with scorn and persecution.

When the people of Jerusalem were being deported, Jeremiah was given a choice of either staying in Judah or going to Babylon. He chose to stay in Judah, but was compelled later to flee to Egypt after a group of fanatics killed the Babylonian who had been appointed governor of Judah. It is believed that Jeremiah died in Egypt.

Jeremiah prophesized that the Jews would be scattered from their homeland and persecuted. He also said that God would protect the Jews from total destruction and that they would one day return to their homeland and that the "second" Israel would be more impressive than the first.

Today, we can see with our own eyes that the Jews have indeed survived worldwide dispersion and that they have re-established Israel (in 1948), after 19 centuries of exile and persecutions throughout the world.

The book of Jeremiah is the second of the four Major Prophets. The four Major Prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel.

Jesus

Jesus Christ was born in Israel about 2000 years ago. He was born of the Holy Spirit and of the virgin Mary. He was God living among us as a person. He was fully man and fully God. His birth, life, mission, death and resurrection were foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament and revealed to us by the authors of the New Testament.

For about three-and-a-half years he preached the word of God, performed miracles and revealed the future. After being crucified by the Romans, he died and was buried. He was resurrected, meaning he rose to life again. He ascended into Heaven and is seated with God the Father.

Through faith in Jesus Christ, we are cleansed of our sins and we too are resurrected, to an eternal life in the Kingdom of God. The life and teachings of Jesus Christ are contained in the Bible. His followers are called Christians.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." - Jesus, as quoted in John 3:16 of the Bible (NIV translation).

To learn more about Jesus, we recommend reading the Gospel of John, which is a book within the Bible. You can read it online by going to www.biblegateway.com and typing in "John 1" to read the first chapter. (There are 21 chapters total in the Gospel of John).

Joanna

One of the followers of Jesus who provided for His material needs, and the needs of the disciples. She was the wife of Chuza, the steward of Herod Antipas, and with many others, provided for Jesus and the disciples with their own resources (Luke 8:3). She also witnessed the empty tomb with Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and announced Christ's resurrection to the apostles (Luke 24:9-10). The name Joanna means "the Lord has been gracious."

John the Baptist

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus Christ. He was born to the elderly Zechariah and his barren wife Elizabeth (similar to Abraham and Sarah). Elizabeth was a relative of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and both became pregnant a few months apart. (Luke 1:41-42). Both were visited by the angel, Gabriel.

John grew up in the wilderness and preached in the wilderness. His message was for people to repent because the Kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 3:2). John baptized his followers in the Jordan River, to signify the drowning of their old life and their emergence from the water into a new life. John, as did Jesus later on, ran into conflict with the Pharisees and Sadducees for whom he had sharp words (Matthew 3:7-12).

John baptized Jesus, and proclaimed Him the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus Himself appraised John in Matthew 11:7-15. John was much more than a prophet, surpassing his predecessors in greatness, and comparable to Elijah. But John's generation did not accept him, alleging instead that he was demon possessed (Matthew 11:17-18).

John's role as forerunner to Jesus was alluded to in a prophecy from Isaiah 40:3, which spoke of *A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God."* There is another prophecy, in Malachi 3:1, that also alludes to John the Baptist's role in preparing the way for Jesus Christ.

John was beheaded AD 29 by Herod Antipas who imprisoned him in revenge for John's condemnation of his incestuous marriage to his brother's wife (Luke 3:19-20). Herodias' daughter, danced for Herod, who rewarded her by offering her whatever she wished. On the advice of her mother, she requested the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Herod was grieved at being requested to execute him, but having given his oath before witnesses, he commanded that it be done (Matthew 14:1-11, Mark 6:14-28).

John the Apostle

John the Apostle was one of the original 12 apostles. He is the author of five New Testament books, including the Gospel of John, which is sometimes called the book of John. John, his brother James and their father Zebedee were Galilean fisherman. Jesus called John and James to leave their careers as fishermen and to become His apostles. Soon after, John and James became part of an inner circle around Jesus with Peter and sometimes Andrew. John along with Andrew had been disciples of John the Baptist and became followers of Jesus after He was baptized by John the Baptist.

John was the "beloved disciple" who leaned on Jesus during the Last Supper (John 13:23), who was "known to the high priest" (John 18:15), who was entrusted by Jesus with the care of His mother Mary (John 19:26), and who outran Peter to the empty tomb (John 20:2-4). After the resurrection, John appears as one of the leaders of the early church.

According to Papias, one of John's disciples, John later went to the city of Ephesus. He was exiled under Emperor Domitian to the island Patmos. It was there that he wrote the Book of Revelation, which is the 27th book of the New Testament. Under Nerva, John returned to Ephesus, and there composed the Gospel of John, the 4th book of the New Testament, and three Epistles, called John 1, John 2, John 3. John reportedly died at a very old age.

John and his brother James were called the "Sons of thunder" by Jesus (Mark 3:17).

Jonah (or Jonas)

Jonah, the son of Amittai, was born in Israel. He was called by God to preach repentance to Assyria, of which the capital city was Nineveh. However, Jonah rebelled.

Jonah didn't want to preach to the pagans of Assyria. So, Jonah tried to escape God's plan by fleeing on a ship. But Jonah was thrown overboard and swallowed by a great fish. Later, the fish spit him out on the shoreline. Then, finally, Jonah obeyed God's command and went to Nineveh to preach. His preaching was successful and 120,000 people in Nineveh turned to God in obedience, sparing themselves punishment from God.

Jonah's time inside the fish is used as an example of Jesus' burial in Matthew 12:38-41. The basic theme of Jonah is that God declares His love for all men, whether they are Israelites or not. Jonah was unable to love the Assyrians properly, but God desired nothing for them but their salvation, and so He sent a prophet to preach repentance.

Jonah, means "dove". The Bible's book of Jonah is the 5th of the twelve minor prophets. Unlike the other prophet books, Jonah's is not a collection of prophetic speeches, but a short narrative.

Joseph of Arimathea

Joseph was a wealthy man from the Judean town of Arimathea. He was a follower of Jesus and he is the one who buried Jesus after the crucifixion. Details about Joseph of Arimathea are recorded in the New Testament passages of [Matthew 27:57-60](#), [Mark 15:42-46](#) and [Luke 23:50-56](#).

We learn from Matthew and Mark that Joseph was bold enough to ask Pontius Pilate for the body of Jesus. Pilate, the Roman governor who ruled over the land of the Jews, was the one who had ordered the crucifixion of Jesus. After making sure that Jesus was dead, Pilate allowed Joseph to take his body.

Joseph took the body of Jesus, wrapped him in linens and placed him in a rock tomb. Matthew tells us that the tomb had never been used before. Matthew and Mark inform us that the tomb had been carved out of rock. Tourists who visit Israel today are able to view a number of rock-hewn tombs from ancient times, similar to the one described in the New Testament.

After placing the body of Jesus in the tomb, Joseph of Arimathea rolled a large stone to close the entrance to the tomb. It was from this tomb that Jesus was resurrected.

In the book of Luke, we are told that Joseph of Arimathea was a good man who believed in the teachings of Jesus, and that he was a member of the Sanhedrin who had not consented to the action that the council had taken against Jesus.

Joseph, the adoptive father of Jesus

Joseph, the adoptive father of Jesus, was the son of Jacob (Matthew 1:16), and the adopted or legal son of Heli (Luke 3:23), both of the family of David. He lived in Nazareth and worked as a carpenter. Betrothed to Mary, he married her at the instigation of an angel, who informed him of her pregnancy by the Holy Spirit.

At the time of the census, Joseph was required to register in David's city, Bethlehem, and it was there that Jesus was born. With wife Mary and infant Jesus, Joseph fled to Egypt, fearing Herod's wrath, after Herod's death they returned to Nazareth. Joseph and his family went up to Jerusalem on two occasions, once to present Jesus to the Temple, and again, during Passover when Jesus was twelve years old. Joseph is not mentioned during the period of Jesus' public ministry and may have died previously.

Joseph, a son of Jacob/Israel

Joseph was one of 12 sons of Jacob. He was the first born son of Rachel (Gen 30:22-24). He received preferential treatment which angered his ten older brothers. His brothers faked his death to their father Jacob, and sold him to a caravan of Ishmaelite traders who were on their way to Egypt. God gave Joseph the power to interpret dreams, and when the Pharaoh had two disturbing dreams, Joseph was brought before the Pharaoh, and interpreted his dreams, of seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine (Gen 41:8-32).

Joseph also suggested how to put this foreknowledge to good use, by storing produce in warehouses. Pharaoh charged Joseph, then at age thirty the rank and authority of a viceroy. When the famine came, it effected Canaan whereupon Jacob sent all his sons, except for Benjamin, to Egypt to buy food. Joseph broke down on seeing his brothers (they did not recognize him at first), gave them food, and eventually had his entire family move to Egypt to live.

Jacob's family of seventy people traveled to Egypt, and multiplied into a few million before Moses led them out. Joseph had two sons by his Egyptian wife (Asenath), Manasseh and Ephraim. Joseph died at age 110, his body was embalmed in Egypt, and his bones returned to Canaan in the Exodus. The name Joseph means "May God increase."

Judas the Apostle

Judas Iscariot "man of Kerioth," the son of Simon, was one of the twelve original apostles of Jesus. He was the treasurer of the twelve. He considered it a waste of money when Mary anointed Jesus with expensive oil. And, John states that Judas had often dipped into the funds for his own personal use (John 12:3-6), and that Judas cared little about using the money to help the poor.

After Jesus and His disciples went to Jerusalem, Satan entered into Judas (Luke 22:3) and Judas approached local community leaders, offering to deliver Jesus into their hands for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-15). During the Last Supper, Jesus foretold of Judas' betrayal (Matthew 26:25). Judas betrayed Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. After Jesus' arrest, Judas was seized with remorse.

He returned the betrayal money and hanged himself (Matthew 27:3-5). The money was later used to buy a piece of land, which became known as the "Field of Blood."

Lazarus

There are two prominent people in the New Testament of the Bible with the name of Lazarus. The most prominent was the Lazarus who died and was brought back to life by Jesus. The other was known as Lazarus the beggar.

The Lazarus who was brought back to life was a brother to Martha and Mary who lived in Bethany. The two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling Him "Sir, Your good friend is very very sick" (John 11:3). When Jesus and His disciples arrived at Bethany, they were told Lazarus had already been in His tomb for four days. Jesus told them to open the tomb, then Jesus looked to heaven, said a prayer to the Father, and then shouted "Lazarus come out." And Lazarus came out, wrapped in a grave cloth. Jesus told them "Unwrap him and let him go" (John 11:41-44).

Later, six days before the Passover ceremonies began, a banquet was prepared for Jesus honor, in which Lazarus, Martha and Mary attended. The resurrection of Lazarus so shocked the chief priest and Pharisees, they decided to kill Jesus "before the whole nation follows him, and then the Roman army will come and kill us . . ." (John 11:48). Six days later, Jesus was crucified.

Lazarus the beggar was a poor man who was featured in a parable of Jesus (Luke, chapter 16). Lazarus, a diseased beggar, laid at a rich man's door, longing for scraps from the rich man's table. The beggar died and was carried by the angels to be with Abraham in heaven. The rich man also died, and his soul went into hell.

There, in torment he saw Lazarus in the far distance with Abraham. He asked Abraham for pity. But Abraham said to him "Son remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is being comforted and you are in anguish. And besides, there is a great chasm separating us, and anyone wanting to come to you from here is stopped at its edge, and no one over there can cross to us". (John 16:19-31).

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Luke

Luke was a physician and traveling companion of Paul. Luke is mentioned in three of Paul's books as "Luke the beloved physician." Luke wrote the third Gospel, which is often called the Gospel of Luke or the book of Luke. He also wrote the book of Acts (3rd and 5th books of the New Testament).

Luke joined Paul on his second missionary journey in Troas. During Paul's third journey, Luke joined him in Philippi (Acts 20:6) and went with him to Jerusalem (Acts 20:16). Luke had a good education and was skillful at writing. He was well-traveled and well-versed in navigation (Acts, chapter 27).

Whereas Matthew shows Jesus to be the Jewish Messiah, and Mark shows Jesus to be the Servant of God, Luke depicts Jesus as the perfect God-Man whose genealogy can be traced back to Adam (3:23-38). Jesus is the greatest man in history, because of what He taught, what He did, why He died, and because He rose again from the dead. For this reason we ought to accept Him as our Lord.

His book of Acts is a continuation of the Gospel where Luke intends to show what Jesus began on earth and what He continues to do in the life of the church. The book focuses on the Apostle Peter and the early persecution of the believers, and then shifts to the Apostle Paul and his missionary activity. It ends with Paul's trip to Rome.

Lydia

Lydia might be the first person in Europe to convert to Christianity. Her story is told in the New Testament book of Acts, chapter 16. She meets Paul, the evangelist, who is traveling with Silas, during what is referred to as Paul's second mission journey. This journey covered roughly 2,000 miles throughout western Asia and southern Europe.

Paul and Silas travel to Philippi in Macedonia and meet Lydia. They evangelize to her, talking about Jesus Christ. She accepts Jesus Christ as her savior:

Lydia was from the city of Thyatira and lived in the town of Philippi, a Roman colony that had been founded about four centuries earlier by Philip II, who was the father of Alexander the Great.

Paul met Lydia her near a riverbank, where the town's Jewish community gathered to worship on Saturdays. Some Bible scholars speculate that Lydia was Jewish and that the town of Philippi did not have enough Jewish residents to have a synagogue and so the Jewish people met near a riverbank to hold their worship services.

In Acts 16:14, we learn that while Paul was evangelizing to the women gathered at the riverbank and: *One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.* - Acts 16:14.

Lydia was a prosperous businesswoman who dealt in purple cloth. She showed hospitality to Paul, inviting him into her home for a meal. (Acts 16:11-15).

Paul and Silas visit Lydia again in Acts 16:40, before leaving Philippi. This is after Paul and Silas had been beaten, flogged, imprisoned and ultimately released.

The conversion of Lydia reminds us of a unique challenge of Christian evangelism during its earliest days: Christianity was so new that it often meant that converts would be breaking away from the beliefs of their parents, their siblings, their friends, their neighbors, their co-workers and their employers. Even so, Christianity was able to spread throughout the Roman world.

Mark

Mark's Gospel is the second book of the New Testament and is often called the Gospel of Mark or the book of Mark.

Mark was a Jew from Jerusalem. His full name was John Mark. His mother's name was Mary and her house served as a meeting place for the first Christians (Acts 12:12). Mark was a cousin to Barnabas (Col 4:10) who he accompanied with Barnabas and Paul on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:5). Mark later went to Cyprus with Barnabas, and later joined Paul again.

Through 1 Peter 5:13 it is suggested Mark and Peter were in Rome. Rome was referred to as "Babylon" by the early Christians. Peter calls Mark "my son", which shows the kind of relationship between Peter and Mark, and further suggests that the Gospel of Mark had its origin in Rome. If the account of Papias (bishop of Hierapolis, AD 140) and other early traditions are accepted, then the Gospel of Mark is based on Peter's words, and written shortly after Peter's death in about AD 64-65.

Mark's book is fast-paced, starting with the beginning of the ministry of Jesus and ending with the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Mark depicts Jesus as a Servant of God who came to do God's will. The miracles and healings and power show that Jesus was no ordinary servant, but was truly the Son of God (15:39).

Mary (Mother of Jesus)

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was betrothed to Joseph when the angel Gabriel appeared to her and announced that she would bear a son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. During her pregnancy she visited her cousin Elizabeth, who was at that time pregnant with the baby who would become John the Baptist. It was on this occasion that she praised the Lord in a hymn (Luke 1:39-56).

After the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, Joseph took his wife and Child to Egypt to escape Herod's plans to kill Jesus. After Herod's death, the family returned and settled in Nazareth in Galilee. She stood at the cross with two other women named Mary when Jesus was being crucified.

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon her and the apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 1:14). Scripture is silent on Mary's life after Pentecost, but legends abound. There is evidence that Luke came to her for information about the Holy family which he used in his Gospel. There is also evidence that Peter consulted her on points of doctrine, and that the Apostles' Creed was composed at her inspiration.

The most common belief is that Mary made her home with John the Apostle in Jerusalem and that she died there some time before his departure for a mission in Ephesus, possibly in the year 48 or 49, which would make her about 70 years old at the time of her death.

Mary and Martha

Mary and Martha were sisters, and with their brother Lazarus, lived in Bethany, near Jerusalem. When Lazarus fell ill, Mary and Martha sent for Jesus (John 11:3). But Lazarus died before He came and Mary rebuked Him: "If You had been here my brother would not have died" (John 11:32).

Later after the resurrection of Lazarus, Mary anointed Jesus' feet with a jar of costly perfume made from essence of nard, and wiped them clean with her hair (John 12:1-8). While Martha was cooking dinner for Jesus and His disciples, Mary was listening to Jesus as He talked.

Martha complained to Jesus "Sir, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? tell her to come and help me". Jesus answered "Martha dear friend, you are so upset over all these details. There is really only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it - and I won't take it away from her." (Luke 10:40-42).

Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene is highly regarded by Christians for many reasons, one of which is that she was the first person to see Jesus after he was resurrected. (John 20:10-18).

The Roman Catholic, Anglican and Eastern Orthodox churches revere her as a saint. Christians celebrate an annual feast on July 22. Many Christian churches and schools are named after her.

Her name literally means "Mary of Magdala," which is a town on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. "Magdala" is the name for the town in the Aramaic language. The Hebrew-language name is often rendered in English as "Migdol" or "Migdal."

She was possessed by demonic spirits until she was healed by Jesus (Luke 8:2). Afterwards, she began to follow Jesus. She was present during the crucifixion and burial of Jesus.

Matthew the Apostle

Matthew was one of the original 12 apostles. He was a tax collector before he was called by Jesus to be an apostle (Matthew 9:9). Known formally as Levi, son of Alphaeus (Mark 2:14), Matthew wrote the first book of the New Testament. It is sometimes called the Gospel of Matthew or the book of Matthew.

Matthew gives a detailed account of the ancestors of Jesus, and about His birth through the Virgin Mary, and about the beginning of His public ministry in Chapters 1-4. Matthew's gospel includes a series of Jesus' speeches, including the Sermon on the Mount (see Chapters 5-7), the mission discourse (see Chapter 10), the parables of the Kingdom (see Chapter 13), the discourse on Christian living (see Chapter 18, and the final end time warnings in Chapters 23-25.

Ten miracles by Jesus are recorded in Chapters 8 and 9.

Matthew's work has been described as a textbook for Christian leaders. It is Gospel "to announce the good news", a presentation of the birth, ministry of teaching and healing, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Melchizedek

Melchizedek ("Righteous King"), was the King of Salem (Jerusalem), called priest of "God the Most High" (Genesis 14:18). After Abraham's victory over Chedorlaomer, Melchizedek greeted him with a gift of bread and wine. He then blesses Abraham, and Abraham gives him one-tenth of the goods taken from the battle with Chedorlaomer.

In Psalm 110:4, the promise is made, "You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek". In Hebrews 5:5-6, in speaking of Christ, God said to Him, "My Son, today I have honored You." And another time God said to Him, "You have been chosen to be a Priest forever, with the same rank as Melchizedek".

In Hebrews 7:3 it, states "Melchizedek had no father or mother, and there is no record of his ancestors. He was never born and never died but his life is like that of the Son of God - a Priest forever". In Hebrews 7:20-21, "God took an oath that Christ would always be a Priest, although He never said that to the other priests. Only to Christ He said, "The lord has sworn and will never change His mind: You are a Priest forever, with the rank of Melchizedek".

Michael (the Archangel)

Michael, the Archangel, is the patron angel of Israel. In Daniel 10:13, it is Michael who assists another angel who had been sent to Daniel, to respond to Daniel's prayer. In Daniel 12:1-3, Michael's tasks include the destruction of sinners at The End of Days, he will also praise and glorify the righteous. In Jude 1:9, Michael contended with the Devil over Moses' body, and did not dare to bring a condemnation of slander against him, but said "The Lord rebuke you!" In Revelation 12:7-8, Michael is the angel who leads a battle against evil, which is characterized as a dragon. Michael prevails. The name Michael means "Who is like God?"

Moses

Moses ("I drew him out of the water") son of Amram and Jochebed from the tribe of Levi, and the younger brother of Miriam and Aaron. At the time of his birth, the Israelites were experiencing severe oppression in Egypt. Moses was adopted by a Egyptian princess and lived in Egypt many years.

Later, Moses was forced to flee Egypt after killing an Egyptian overseer who had beaten a Hebrew slave. He escaped into the Sinai desert, met with a Midianite priest named Jethro, and married one of his daughters, Zipporah. He had two sons by Zipporah.

The turning point in Moses life was the divine revelation of the burning bush. God ordered Moses to return to Egypt and lead His people out of bondage. Only after a series of ten divinely ordained punishments did Pharaoh agree to set the Israelites free.

Moses, at the age of 80, then assumed a new role, leading the Israelites on their historic journey. Moses, at God's command, parted the Red Sea, to allow an escape route for the Israelites from the Egyptian army. Moses received the Ten Commandments from God, written on two stone tablets on Mount Sinai.

The Israelites sinned greatly in the desert, and God wanted to destroy them, but Moses talked to God, and saved His people. Because of their disobedience, grumbling, and not trusting in God, the Israelites were forced to live in the desert 40 years, where they received manna (a bread-like substance) from heaven, to keep them alive. The entire Exodus generation died off (except for Joshua and Caleb) and their children were the ones who would later settle in Israel.

God instructed Moses to build a moveable Temple and to construct the Ark. After witnessing the conquest of the eastern side of the Jordan River, Moses was notified of his imminent death. Moses conferred his authority upon Joshua, to lead the 600,000 men (not counting women and children) into the land of "milk and honey." Moses died at age 120.

He is credited with writing the first five books of the Bible. He talked with God and at God's command he performed amazing miracles. The story of Moses is covered in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. He is mentioned 80 times in the New Testament, usually as a lawgiver. He is also seen as the prophet who points the way to Jesus. Moses, along with Elijah appeared in the Transfiguration with Jesus.

Onesimus

Onesimus was the slave that fled from his master to Rome and met the apostle Paul. Paul converted Onesimus to Christianity. He is the basis of Paul's letter "Philemon." Philemon was Onesimus' master. Paul sent Onesimus back to his master, asking him to be welcomed willingly, not just as a slave, but as a brother in Christ. Paul in his letter to Philemon offers to pay for any injustice that Onesimus might have done. Onesimus means "useful."

Paul

Paul, the evangelist, was known as *Saul* before he became a Christian. He was born in Tarsus of Cilicia in Asia Minor. His family was of the line of Benjamin. He grew up in Jerusalem and studied Jewish tradition under the elder Gamaliel, becoming a zealous Pharisee. Paul was at first an active opponent of the Christian movement. He took care of the cloaks of those who threw stones at Stephen (Acts 7:58, 22:20).

On his way to Damascus to persecute Christian believers, he was stopped by a blinding light:

He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

- Acts 9:4-6

Paul then converted to Christianity. And his zeal to persecute the early Christians was re-channeled into preaching the Gospel.

Paul made three missionary journeys around Asia Minor, Macedonia and Achaia. He is the author of thirteen New Testament letters - Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. It is also possible he might have wrote Hebrews. With the exception of Romans, all of Paul's letters were written to churches or individuals whom he knew personally.

The focus of Paul's writings is Jesus, through whom God has effected redemption for all people regardless of ethnic or social background.

Paul was willing to evangelize about Jesus despite great risk to himself. He was threatened, beaten, flogged, stoned and imprisoned on various occasions, but never gave up his preaching of Christ. He might have been the

most zealous and hardest working Apostle of all time. It is believed that Paul was beheaded in Rome under Nero in about AD 67.

There is another famous person in the Bible with the name of Saul. Saul was the name of the first king of Israel. He lived about 1,000 years before Paul the evangelist lived.

Peter the Apostle

Peter (also known as Simon) was one of the original 12 apostles. He became the leader of the apostles, after Jesus' ascension. Peter was originally from Bethsaida on the northern shore of the sea of Galilee. Peter was married. He was a fisherman with his brother Andrew. His home was in Capernaum. When Jesus called him to be an apostle, he was given the added name Cephas (Aramaic: "stone," Greek: "Petros," which in English is rendered as Peter).

Peter was one of the three main apostles, along with James and John, who were chosen by Jesus to be present during certain important moments of His ministry.

One trait of Peter's character that stands out in the New Testament account, is his impetuosity.

Peter was famous for many things: For being at Jesus' transfiguration, for walking on water at Jesus' bidding, for rebuking Jesus for what seemed to him negative thinking (prompting Jesus' sharp reply "Get behind Me Satan"), for his statement to Jesus during the washing of feet during the Last Supper, for his denials of knowing Jesus when Peter was in the courtyard of the high priest, for drawing a sword when Jesus was being arrested, and for being granted the singular privilege of an individual post-resurrection appearance by Jesus (Luke 24:34, 1Cor 15:5).

When Jesus asked him "Who do you say I am?" Peter made that famous statement, "You are the Christ (Messiah) the Son of the Living God." (Matthew 16:15-16).

Under the power of the Holy Spirit, Peter healed the sick and raised the dead. He made a trip to Antioch (Galatians 2:1), and possibly Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:12). It is believed that Peter later traveled to Rome, and was martyred there by crucifixion in 64 AD. He is said to have requested that he be crucified upside down, because he said he wasn't worthy of dying in the same way as Jesus.

Peter wrote two Epistles, called Peter 1 and Peter 2, in the New Testament. Papias, a disciple of the Apostle John, wrote that Mark's Gospel was influenced by Peter's writings.

The name Peter, in the Greek language, which was spoken by people in the land of Israel during the 1st Century, as was Aramaic and Hebrew, means "rock." So, too, does the name Cephas, which is an Aramaic word for "rock," as used by Jesus in John 1:42.

Phoebe

Paul writes in his letter Romans; "I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is also a minister of the church at Cenchreae, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the holy ones, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a benefactor to many and to me as well." (Romans 16:1-2). Phoebe offers evidence that women played important roles in the early Christian church. It is believed by many scholars that she delivered Paul's letter to Rome.

Silas

Silas was a leading member of the first Christian community in Jerusalem and a colleague of Paul. In the epistles 2 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians, he is called by a Roman name, Silvanus. He might have been a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37). In Jerusalem he was a prophet who preached (Acts 15:32) and was sent to Antioch, along with Paul and Barnabas, to convey resolutions adopted at the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:22).

After a disagreement between Paul and Barnabas, Paul selected Silas to be his companion on his second missionary journey, and Silas accompanied him through Galatia. In Philippi, Paul and Silas were cast into prison because of their preaching the Gospel (Acts 16:21).

As Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to the Lord, an earthquake occurred opening the prison doors. Because of the miraculous event, the jailor asked them what he must do to become saved in Jesus. They replied by telling him: "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, and your entire household" (Acts 16:31).

Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea when Paul continued alone to Athens (Acts 17:14). But Silas rejoined him in Corinth (Acts 18:1-5). Silas was known to be a gifted speaker (Acts 15:32).

Stephen

Stephen was a Jew who had lived outside of Israel. He accepted Christianity and became one of the seven deacons chosen by the disciples to take care of the widows and the needy people in Jerusalem (Acts 6:1-5). Stephen is described as a man who was unusually full of faith and the Holy Spirit.

He performed miracles. One day, while he was teaching in the Synagogue, people who disagreed with Stephen argued against him. He was accused of blasphemy, a serious crime. False witnesses later testified against him, claiming, falsely, that he had said that Jesus would destroy the Temple and throw out the law of Moses (Acts 6:14).

Stephen defended himself against the accusations, but his defense made his adversaries even more angry (Acts 7:56). His adversaries then grabbed him, dragged him out of the city and stoned him to death. (A man named *Saul* - who later became a Christian evangelist named Paul, was present at the stoning. He watched over the cloaks of the people who were stoning Stephen). During the stoning, Stephen prayed to Jesus, asking that his adversaries not be charged with the sin of killing him.

He then died (Acts 7:59-60). Stephen became one of the first Christian martyrs. His death marked the onset of an era during which the early Christians fled Jerusalem for fear of persecution. The story of Stephen is found in the New Testament book called Acts, chapters 6 and 7.

Thomas the Apostle

Thomas the Apostle was one of the twelve original apostles of Jesus.

In Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts, he is called Thomas. In John 11:16, he is given a further name, Didymus. On the evening of the day of the resurrection, Thomas declined to believe that Jesus had appeared to the other disciples (John 20:24), hence the term "doubting Thomas." When Jesus appeared again after eight days, Thomas was there also and on seeing Him confessed his faith that Jesus is God (John 20:28).

John 21:2 mentions that Thomas was among those who were at the Sea of Galilee when Jesus appeared to them on another occasion.

Timothy

Timothy was a traveling companion of Paul's. A native of Lystra in the province of Galatia, Timothy was the son of a Jewish mother and a Gentile father. His mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois, were believers in Jesus.

Paul took Timothy on his trips, and Timothy represented Paul at various times in Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus, and Macedonia. Timothy is named as co-author of seven of Paul's letters.

In the two letters sent to Timothy by Paul, Timothy appears as timid, perhaps because of his relative youth. It is believed that Timothy became the first bishop of Ephesus, and that he was martyred there in 97 AD.

1 Timothy and 2 Timothy are the 15th and 16th books of the New Testament. The book, entitled "2 Timothy", seems to be the last book that Paul wrote, possibly around 66 AD.

1 Timothy was written by Paul to instruct Timothy on problems that had arisen in the early church, concerning doctrine, church practice and government. The 2nd letter is more of a personal letter that expresses Paul's deepest feelings, and though his life would soon end, God had eternal life waiting for him in heaven. He tells Timothy to stand firm in the face of the coming persecution.

Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist

The father of John the Baptist, and husband of Elizabeth. He was a priest belonging to the order of Abijah. While he was offering incense in the Temple, the angel Gabriel appeared to him, and told him that his wife Elizabeth who had been barren for many years would give birth to a son, and the son's name would be John. Zechariah, who was an old man, did not believe the angel, and because of his disbelief, was struck dumb unable to speak, until the prophecy was fulfilled.

When the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, she did bear a son. On the eighth day when the child was circumcised, they were going to name him Zechariah, after his father, but Elizabeth said "No, he is going to be called John." This surprised everybody because none of their relatives had this name. They then asked Zechariah, who was still mute, what name he wanted to give his son. He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." Immediately Zechariah's mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. (Luke 1:5-79). There is no further mention of Zechariah or Elizabeth in the New Testament.

Zechariah, the prophet

Zechariah was a prophet from 520 BC to 518 BC in Jerusalem, about 2500 years ago. During that era, many Jews were returning from the Babylonian Captivity to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple, which had been destroyed by the Babylonians.

Zechariah, the son of Iddo, was instrumental in inspiring his fellow Jews to rebuild the Temple (see Ezra 6:14).

Zechariah began prophesying during the same year as the prophet Haggai, in about 520 BC. Zechariah's prophecies came from visions that showed God's power, God's judgment of sin, the importance of spiritual strength, and the promise of things to come, including the promise of the Messiah.

Zechariah's prophecies often looked far into the future, a future in which the Jews would again be exiled from their homeland and scattered throughout the world. His prophecies said that Jews would be persecuted worldwide, that Jerusalem would become a battleground of nations, and that Jerusalem would become the religious center of the world.

Today, we can see with our own eyes that Zechariah's prophecies accurately described the worldwide dispersion of Jews that has taken place during the past 1900 years, as well as the fact that Jerusalem has become a focal point of the international community (the United States and Europe, and the United Nations) and a religious focal point among Jews, Christians and Moslems.

Zechariah, means "Yah has remembered". His book is the 11th book of the twelve minor prophets.