

Matthew 10:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

Analysis

The list continues with diverse figures: 'Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus.' Matthew identifies himself as 'the publican' (ο τελωνης), acknowledging his despised former profession. This self-designation reveals humility and awareness of grace—Jesus called him from tax collecting to apostleship. The others remain relatively obscure in Scripture, reminding us that faithful service doesn't always mean public recognition. God uses both prominent and hidden servants. These men represent ordinary people transformed by extraordinary calling. Their selection demolishes merit-based thinking: Jesus chose not the qualified but those He would qualify through His presence and Spirit.

Historical Context

Tax collectors were collaborators with Rome's oppressive system, extracting revenue plus profit. For Matthew to include his shameful past in his own Gospel demonstrates remarkable transparency. Philip came from Bethsaida, same town as Peter and Andrew. Thomas, famous for doubt (John 20:24-29), illustrates that questioning doesn't disqualify from apostleship. Thaddaeus may be the same as Judas son of James (Luke 6:16). The relative obscurity of several apostles reminds us that church history often elevates some while forgetting others equally faithful.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does Matthew's inclusion of his shameful past teach about honest testimony?
2. How does the obscurity of several apostles challenge our desire for recognition?
3. What does Jesus' choice of 'unqualified' apostles teach about grace and calling?

Interlinear Text

Φίλιππος καὶ Βαρθολομαῖος Θωμᾶς καὶ Ματθαῖος

Philip and Bartholomew Thomas and Matthew
G5376 G2532 G918 G2381 G2532 G3156

ο τελώνης Ἰάκωβος ο ο ο Αλφαίου καὶ¹
the son of the publican James the son of the son of Alphaeus and
G3588 G5057 G2385 G3588 G3588 G256 G2532

Λεββαῖος ο ἐπικληθεὶς Θαδδαῖος

Lebbaeus the son of whose surname was Thaddaeus
G3002 G3588 G1941 G2280

Additional Cross-References

Acts 1:13 (Parallel theme): And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

Mark 3:18 (Parallel theme): And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite,

Matthew 9:9 (Parallel theme): And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

Mark 2:14 (Parallel theme): And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

John 11:16 (Parallel theme): Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

John 21:2 (Parallel theme): There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.