

“The Terrorists”

(James, Simon and Judas)

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Chapel Pointe
March 14, 2010

I. Introduction

A. Terrorists

1. Remembering 9-11
2. Suicide Bombers
3. What are they thinking?
4. Why are they willing to die for their cause?

B. Today...the story of three terrorists

1. Three of the least known of the Twelve Apostles

C. Calling of the Twelve....Luke 6:13-16

(13) When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: (14) Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, (15) Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, (16) Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

1. The “Others”
2. The other James, the other Simon, and the other Judas

II. Background

A. The Other James

Name: James the son of Alphaeus

1. James the Lesser

2. James the Younger
3. James the Small
4. Not the author of the book of James

Family:

1. The son of Alphaeus
2. Possibly Matthew's brother
 - a. Matthew's dad's name was also Alphaeus

Occupation: Zealot?

1. Tradition suggests he was one of the "Zealots"

Personality:

1. Unknown

Ministry:

1. Early church history is mostly silent about James.
2. Some evidence that he took the gospel to Syria and Iran.

Death:

1. Some say he was stoned
2. Others say he was thrown off the Temple and beaten to death with a club

B. The Other Simon

Name: Simon who was called the zealot

1. Simon the Cananaean
 - a. "zelotes" (*dzay-lo-tace'*)
 - b. From the Aramaic word meaning "zealous one"
3. "Zeal"

Enthusiastic and diligent devotion in pursuit of a cause, ideal, or goal; fervent adherence or service

4. “Zealot”....a fanatically committed person

Family:

1. Some suggest that Simon was the bridegroom at the wedding in Cana

Occupation: Zealot

1. Suicide Bomber
2. A terrorist

Personality:

1. Patriotic (Matt. 10:4)
2. Loyal (Mark 3:18)
3. Passionate (Luke 6:15)
4. Sacrificial (Acts 1:13)

Ministry:

1. Traveled with Judas (not Iscariot)
2. Armenia and Iran

Death:

1. Several early sources say that he preached in the British Isles.
2. Traditionally martyred in Persia (Iran) along with Judas (not Iscariot)

C. The Other Judas

Name: Judas son of James

1. Judas, not Iscariot
2. Also called Thaddaeus and Lebbaeus

Family:

1. Son of James

Occupation: Zealot?

1. Some believe he too was one of the Zealots

Personality:

1. Know very little

Ministry:

1. Travelled with Simon the Zealot
2. Traditionally preached in Armenia and Iran

Death:

1. Traditionally martyred in Persia (Iran) along with Simon the Zealot
2. The traditional apostolic symbol of this Judas is a club, because tradition says he was clubbed to death for his faith.

D. Why would Jesus bring “Zealots” on board?

1. Likely adding a bunch of felons to your staff
2. I wonder how they got along with Matthew?
 - a. Matthew was a dreaded tax collector
 - b. He worked for the enemy
 - c. He was considered a traitor
3. How did Jesus harness their passion and commitment?
4. ...and who were the “Zealots?”

III. Text

A. The four political factions during the time of Christ

1. The Pharisees

- a. *Religious Legalists*
- b. They prided themselves in their religious life-style
 - 1. They believed they deserved to go to heaven
 - 2. Had earned it
- c. Considered themselves “the pious”
 - 1. Looked down on others
- d. They refused to associate with others:
 - 1. Non-Jews
 - 2. Non pure Jews (Samaritans)
 - 3. Tax collectors
 - 4. The regular people
- e. They condemned Jesus for talking to....
 - 1. Sinners
 - 2. Prostitutes
 - 3. Tax collectors
 - 4. People like you and me
- f. When returning from the market place they washed themselves
 - 1. Perchance they accidentally touched a sinner
- g. The Pharisees of today
 - 1. View Christianity as a bunch of “do’s and “don’ts”
 - 2. Won’t have anything to do with those they disagree with
 - 3. Self-righteous
 - a. View religion is a bunch of rules to be obeyed

- b. A person's spirituality is evaluated on external behavior

2. The Sadducees

a. *Religious Liberals*

1. Only believed parts of the Old Testament
2. Didn't believe in the supernatural
3. Didn't believe in a resurrection of the dead

b. They were rich, aristocratic, and powerful

1. The Temple money changers
 - a. Sold the animals for sacrifices
 - b. Gouged the buyers
 - c. The group that Jesus drove out of the Temple
2. They were in charge of the Temple and the Sanhedrin
 - a. The high priest was usually a Sadducee
 - b. They were hated by their fellow Jews

c. The religious compromisers

1. Didn't want trouble with Rome
2. Politically correct
3. They blended into their world

d. Today's Sadducees

1. Much of mainstream Christianity
 - a. They blend well
 - b. Socially acceptable
 - c. Deny the literal interpretation of Scripture

- d. Doubt the miraculous
- e. Doubt the resurrection
- 2. They fly the banner of:
 - a. Becoming well educated
 - b. Becoming socially acceptable
 - c. Becoming politically correct
 - d. Blending in with the world

3. The Essenes

- a. *Religious Isolationists*
- b. Not mentioned in Scripture
- c. Both Josephus and Philo describe them as ascetics and celibates who lived in the desert and devoted their lives to the study of the Old Testament Law
- d. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls
 - 1. The caves of Qumran
 - 2. The shepherd's discovery
- e. The discovery of the Essenes' commune
 - 1. A commune of the isolated
 - a. Copied and hid the scrolls
 - 2. Devoted....but little impact
 - 3. Information without transformation
- f. The Essenes of today
 - 1. A closed community of believers
 - 2. No impact

3. Ever learning but failing to engage their world
4. Information without Transformation

4. The Zealots

a. *Religious Terrorists*

1. Suicide bombers of their day
- b. More politically minded than any other group
1. Sought to overthrow the Roman occupation
 2. Used terrorism and surreptitious acts of violence
- c. They believed only God Himself had the right to rule over the Jews and believed they were doing God's work by assassinating Roman soldiers, political leaders, and anyone else who opposed them.
- d. They were hoping for a Messiah who would lead them in overthrowing the Romans and restore the Kingdom to the glory of Solomon.
- e. They were ready to die in an instant for what they believed in
- f. Secret assassins called "sicarii" or "*Dagger-men.*"
1. Carried a deadly, curved dagger in the folds of their robes. They would sneak up behind Roman soldiers and politicians and stab them in the back, between the ribs, expertly piercing the heart.
- g. Why Jerusalem didn't surrender to Titus Vespasian in 70 A.D.
1. Hopelessly besieged by Rome, the Zealots began killing fellow Jews who wanted to negotiate with Rome and end the siege.
 2. May have been why Titus massacred the survivors and destroyed the Temple
 3. Didn't know which of the survivors were Zealots

B. What various groups wanted in a Messiah

1. Pharisees

a. Legalists

b. Wanted a Miraculous Messiah

2. Sadducees

a. Liberals

b. Wanted a Materialistic Messiah

3. Essenes

a. Isolationists

b. Wanted a Monastic Messiah

4. Zealots

a. Terrorists

b. Wanted a Military Messiah

IV. Things you ought to know about Zealots

1. They were fighting for the wrong cause

a. Good zeal will not correct bad theology

b. Romans 10:1-2

(1) Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. (2) For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. (3) Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

c. What you believe in is critical

d. What are you zealous about?

2. Being zealous doesn't mean you're right

a. "But they're so zealous..."

1. "Willing to die for what they believe"

- b. Islamic terrorists
 - 1. Islam and the 72 virgins
 - 2. Guaranteed Heaven for themselves
 - a. ...and their families

3. The end doesn't justify the means

- a. How you do something matters
- b. Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount
 - 1. Revolutionary message

4. Nothing is more powerful than a “born again zealot”

- a. Aimed at the right target
- b. Fully committed to the cause
- c. No fear of ridicule or death
- d. The impact of the Twelve

5. Our zeal should be to do what is good

- a. Titus 2:13-14

(13) While we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, (14) who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, zealous (eager) to do what is good.

- b. How do you develop “zeal?””
 - 1. ...by starting to do good

6. Holy Zealots come in all shapes and sizes

- a. Different ages
 - 1. You baby boomers

2. Young adults

- a. What a great age
- b. Different personalities
 - 1. Those with “quiet zeal”
- c. The Twelve were all so different
 - 1. Yet God uses all kinds
 - 2. Facing difficult tasks makes a person strong

7. It’s never too late to become a zealot

- a. You’re never too old to start
- b. ...and you’re never too young to start

8. God will accept you with all your baggage

- a. The story of Paul’s misguided zeal
- b. Philippians 3:4-11

(4) If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: (5) circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; (6) as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. (7) But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. (8) What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ (9) and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. (10) I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, (11) and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.