

## Judas Thaddaeus

Whether identified as two separate individuals (Judas and Thaddaeus) or as one person with two names (Judas Thaddaeus), this figure – or figures – is listed in early Christian tradition as one of the 12 disciples of Jesus (→ Christ, Jesus, 01: Survey). Despite, or perhaps rather due to, the lack of information about Judas (or) Thaddaeus in the New Testament writings, this enigmatic disciple became the subject of extensive treatment in later Christian sources, particularly with regard to apostolic missionary activities in the eastern church.

### Earliest Christian Sources

The first task is to determine the possible referents among the Twelve as far as the New Testament evidence is concerned. The name “Thaddaeus” appears tenth, that is, among the final group of four, in the list of disciples (→ Apostle/Disciple) provided by Mark (3:18) and Matt 10:3 (see below for textual variants), although he is not mentioned again in either Gospel or indeed in any other New Testament writing, at least by this name. Thaddaeus (Θαδδαῖος/*Thaddaios*) is a Greek name, probably (like Theudas) the equivalent of Theodosios, Theodotus, or Theodorus, and in all likelihood it was shortened to the Aramaic form *Taddai* (Bauckham, 2006, 100). Both the Greek and Semitic forms (and also *Taddion*) are attested on ossuaries and papyri stemming from the 1st century CE (Ilan, 2002, 283). Later rabbinic (→ Rabbi) evidence includes a certain *Todah* among the five named disciples of Jesus (*b. Sanh.* 43a); this may represent a genuine Jewish recollection that one of Jesus’ disciples was called *Taddai* (see further Bauckham, 1996, 34–35).

If the most important Alexandrian witnesses and some parts of the western tradition read “Thaddaeus” in Matt 10:3, other manuscripts belonging to the western tradition read “Lebbaeus” (Λεββαῖος/*Lebbaios*) in Matt 10:2 and, in some rare cases, in Mark 3:18 (Codex Bezae). It has been proposed that this variant is probably an attempt to include among the 12 disciples the Levi whose call account (Mark 3:13–14; Luke 5:27–28) corresponds to that of Matthew (9:9; see further Lindars, 1957/1958, 220–222; see Or. *Cels.* 1.62). It is less likely that the connection

between the two names is because “Lebbaeus” comes from the Hebrew word for “heart” (*leb*) and that Thaddaeus stems from the Aramaic term for “breast” (*tad*). Other textual witnesses conflate the two names by reading “Thaddaeus” as the second name for “Lebbaeus” or vice versa. All in all, given the agreement between early textual witnesses, “Thaddaeus” is more likely to be the original reading not only in Mark but also in Matthew.

No reference to Thaddaeus is made in the corresponding Lukan list, but – in the one variation between the lists in the Synoptic Gospels – it names “Judas of James” as the 11th disciple immediately before Judas Iscariot (Luke 6:16; see Acts 1:13). The more specific identification (“of James”) is necessary to distinguish this disciple from the other Judas (see John 14:22) but also from many other Palestinian Jews who shared the Hebrew name Judah and its Greek transliterated form Ἰουδᾶς/*Ioudas* (Ilan, 2002, 112–125). Both references to “Judas of James” in Luke–Acts are widely regarded as denoting father and son (“Judas son of James”) rather than two brothers, and, as a result, he is not to be identified with Judas, the brother of James and of Jesus (see Mark 6:3; Matt 13:55), to whom the Epistle of Jude is traditionally attributed (see v. 1).

What accounts for the variation between the synoptic lists of the 12? It has been suggested that the names of all 12 disciples may not have been recalled with complete accuracy by the time the canonical Gospels were composed (see Fitzmyer, 1981, 620), or that the naming of two different individuals – Thaddaeus and Judas son of James – point to two independent traditions or to an otherwise uncorroborated replacement of one by the other due to dismissal, illness, or death during Jesus’ ministry (Meier, 2001, 130–133). Alternatively, and in line with several church fathers (see below), it is proposed that the Greek name Thaddaeus and the patronymic name Judas of James are in fact alternate names for the same person (e.g. Jeremias, 1971, 232–233; Bauckham, 2006, 101–102). To support this proposal, attention is drawn to widespread evidence among ossuary inscriptions that at least some Palestinian Jews had both Semitic and Greek names (see e.g. Rahmani, 1994: no. 477 [Judah/Jason], no. 789 [Nathanael/Theodotus]). One possible scenario is that Luke (→ Luke, Gospel of) favored patronymic names to

distinguish among disciples (see also Luke 6:15: “James son of Alphaeus”), and Mark (→ Mark, Gospel of) (and Matthew; → Matthew, Gospel of) opted for “Thaddaeus” rather than “Judas son of James” in order to disassociate this disciple totally from his more well-known namesake.

No such technique is adopted in John’s Gospel (→ John, Gospel of), where the disciple who questions Jesus about the nature of his promised → revelation is starkly called “Judas not the Iscariot” (John 14:22). Like “Thaddaeus” and “Judas son of James,” this “Judas” is not mentioned elsewhere within the Gospel narrative, and, within the Johannine farewell discourse, he fulfils a representative role as one of four disciples (together with Peter, Thomas, and Philip) who act as conduits of further elucidation by Jesus in the context of his imminent departure (Williams, 2013, 551–552). If, as is sometimes suggested, the obscurity of this “Judas” points to authentic historical tradition (see Brown, 1966, 641), his naming by John may provide additional support for Luke’s contention that there was another Judas among the 12.

### Developments in Early Christianity

Given the lack of elaboration about the identity and role of “Thaddaeus,” “Judas son of James,” and even “Judas not Iscariot” in the four canonical Gospels, it comes as no surprise that a much fuller, even composite, image of these figures emerges from the 2nd century CE onward (see Burnet, 2009, 197). In some traditions no overt attempt is made to establish identification between them. Thus, Thaddaeus is among the apostles listed as having been called by Jesus in *Gos. Eb. 2* (see Epiph. *Pan. 30.13.2–3*), and, according to the *Genealogies of the Twelve Apostles*, he was of the house of Joseph (Budge, 1935, 41). Judas son (or brother?) of James is named as one of Jesus’ disciples in the *Acts of Thomas* (1:1; → *Thomas, Acts of*) and as the third → bishop of Jerusalem in the *Const. ap. 7.46* (see Eus. *Hist. eccl. 4.5.3*). The conflation of these (and other) names begins to appear at a relatively early stage, including “Judas the Zealot” in the *Ep. Apos. 2*, but also, more widely, “Judas Thaddaeus,” as noted by Jerome: “He [Thaddaeus] is called Judas son of James by the evangelist Luke, and elsewhere is named Lebbeaus, which means “little

heart.” One must believe he had three names (Jer. *Comm. Matt. 10.4*).”

In some traditions, Thaddaeus and/or Judas son of James (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13) is identified with Judas the brother of James, the designated author of the Epistle of Jude (e.g. Bede), and further described by → Ephrem the Syrian (*Comm. Acts 1.13*, preserved in Armenian) as both the brother of Simon the Zealot and the son of Joseph, hence the brother of Jesus (Harris, 1894, 37; see the tradition preserved in Ethiopic about “the preaching of the blessed Judas, the brother of our Lord, [who was surnamed] Thaddaeus,” Budge, 1935, 296). In the East Syrian tradition, the apostle Thomas, the “Twin,” is called “Judas Thomas” (title of the *Gospel of Thomas* [→ *Thomas, Gospel of*]; *Acts Thom. 1:1*; see John 14:22 in the Syriac Curetonian version) and is sometimes identified as Judas the (spiritual or physically resembling) “twin” brother of Jesus (Klijn, 1970, 88–96; see *Acts Thom. 1:11, 31, 39*), though not with Judas (Thaddaeus) the son of James (1:1).

A connection, but not identification, between Judas Thomas and a certain Thaddaeus is established in certain forms of the Abgar legend, the earliest extant version of which states that King Abgar, having heard of Jesus’ miraculous healings, wrote a letter asking him to come to Edessa to cure him (Eus. *Hist. eccl. 1.13.1–2*); Jesus responds by letter, promising to send one of his own disciples to the city, and therefore, following his ascension, Judas Thomas, “one of the twelve apostles,” sends Thaddaeus, who heals the king and converts him to Christianity (*Hist. eccl. 1.13.3–4; 1.13.11–22*) and, according to a retrospective summary (*Hist. eccl. 2.1.6–7*), the inhabitants of Edessa as well (see further Brock, 1992; Ramelli, 2015). Much detail is provided about Thaddaeus’ visit to Edessa, including his own healings and the vision on his face seen by King Abgar, although his precise identity remains unclear; he is described by → Eusebius of Caesarea as “reckoned among the number of the Seventy disciples” (Eus. *Hist. eccl. 1.13.4; 1.13.11*: “The apostle Thaddaeus, one of the Seventy” [see Luke 10:1]) but not as one of the Twelve. Ephraim overtly states that Jesus’ disciple of this name is not to be equated with “the other Thaddaeus [...] of the Seventy,” who was with Abgar (Ephr. *Comm. Acts 1.13*).

The Syriac document from which Eusebius cites the story of Abgar survives, in expanded form, within a larger work known as the *Teaching of Addai* (*Doctrina Addai*) and which probably dates in its present form from the early 5th century CE (see Howard, 1981). As the title suggests, the missionary identified by Eusebius as Thaddaeus is here called “Addai the apostle” and delivers a long sermon about Jesus to all those assembled in the city. If the underlying Syriac tradition is earlier than Eusebius’s account, it is possible that Eusebius deliberately changed “Addai” to “Thaddaeus” (see Drijvers, 1991, 494; Bauckham, 2006, 88n83, 101) to forge a secondary identification that, in turn, initiated a strong link in Syriac Christianity between Thaddaeus and the city of Edessa.

It is in later tradition that the Thaddaeus named in the Abgar legend is specifically identified as one of the Twelve. Thus, in the *Acts of Thaddaeus*, which is a later, possibly 7th-century CE, Greek narrative expansion of the Abgar legend (text: Tischendorf, 1851, 261–265), a Hebrew called Lebbaeus is said to have travelled to → Jerusalem from Edessa and received the name Thaddaeus on the occasion of his → baptism; he was chosen by Jesus as one of the Twelve, “the tenth apostle according to the evangelists Matthew and Mark” (Burnet, 2009, 210–212). It is not Thaddaeus who is responsible for healing King Abgar according to the *Acts*, but a linen cloth containing an imprint of Jesus’ face (which later became known as the “image of Edessa”; see Brock, 2004, 46–56); the apostle Thaddaeus, however, preaches before Abgar, baptizes him and all his household, as well as the citizens of Edessa, Amis, and then Berytus, in Phoenicia, where he died and was buried “with great honor” by his disciples.

Like many other apostles, “Judas” or “Thaddaeus” is also the subject of several martyrdom accounts.

### Historiography

The studies by O. Cullmann (1962), J.P. Meier (2001) and R. Bauckham (1990; 2006) provide the most in-depth, and influential, analyses of the New Testament and related evidence about “Judas (of James),” “Thaddaeus” as well as “Lebbaeus.” R. Burnet (2009) and S. McDowell (2015) expand the discussion to include traditions about this disciple (or disciples) in the *Acts of Thaddeus* and the *Armenian Martyrdom*

of *Thaddeus*. On the relation between Thaddaeus and the Addai story, see → Addai and the relevant historiography.

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