

A. MATTHIAS the Apostle [14 May](#)

Profile

Apostle. As he could bear witness to the Resurrection of Jesus, he was chosen to replace Judas Iscariot. [Preached](#) the Gospel for more than 30 years in Judea, [Cappadocia](#), [Egypt](#) and [Ethiopia](#). Remembered for preaching the need for mortification of the flesh with regard to all its sensual and irregular desires. [Martyr](#).

Died

[stoned to death](#) at Colchis in 80 AD; some [relics](#) in the abatical church of Triers, others in Saint Mary Major in [Rome](#)

Name Meaning

gift of Yahweh (Mattithiah)

Patronage

[alcoholism](#); [carpenters](#); [diocese](#) of [Gary, Indiana](#); [diocese](#) of [Great Falls-Billings, Montana](#); [reformed alcoholics](#); [smallpox](#); [tailors](#)

1. The Relics

An object connected with a saint. It may be the whole or a part of the saint's body, or something the saint has touched, e.g., a garment. Such objects are venerated with the approbation of the Church because, though all the members of the Church are considered, and from the time of the Apostles are addressed, as "saints", those who practise heroic virtue or die for the Faith and are honored by the Church as exceptionally holy, merit the veneration of the faithful. This is paid by special respect for their remains as well as imitation of their virtues. Their relics are therefore enshrined on altars, carried in processions, and used to obtain cures and other favors.

2. Prayer to Saint Matthias the Apostle

O Glorious Saint Matthias, in God's design it fell upon you to take the place of the unfortunate Judas who betrayed his Master. You were selected by the twofold sign of the uprightness of your life and the call of the Holy Spirit.

Obtain for us the grace to practice the same uprightness of life and to be called by that same Spirit to wholehearted service of the Church. Then after a life of zeal and good works let us be ushered into your company in heaven to sing forever the praises of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

What do we know about St. Matthias? Not much but...

We know from the Bible...

- That he was present when St. Peter called on the faithful to choose another apostle to take the place of the traitor Judas (Acts 1v 15).
- That he has been with Jesus from the Baptism of John until His ascension and had been a witness of the resurrection. (Acts 1v 22)
- That he was held in high esteem amongst the other faithful (about 120 were gathered) and the choice was between him and Joseph Barsabas Justus.
- That he was chosen by casting lots between him and Joseph
- That he was then numbered with the eleven apostles.
- That he was present on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2v1)

We can suppose...

- That Apostle Matthias was one of the Seventy who were sent out by Jesus on missionary tours. (Luke Ch 10) so would have known St Aristobulus who came to Britain as its first Bishop.

Some say...

- That St. Matthias was born in Bethlehem and educated by St. Simeon the God-receiver.

- That he accompanied St. Peter and St. Andrew to Antioch and lived there with them.
- That later he accompanied St. Andrew on his missionary journeys in Edessa and Sebaste.
- That he was forced to drink poison but not only was not affected but healed those who were.
- That he was imprisoned but released by St. Andrew.
- That, like the Lord, he became invisible to avoid capture.
- That the earth swallowed up his enemies.
- That he preached the Gospel in Judea then in Colchis among the barbarian cannibals and was crucified.
- That he died and was buried in Sebaste near the Sun Temple.
- That he was stoned and then beheaded in Jerusalem after preaching before the Sanhedrin.

One quotation:

"We must combat our flesh, set no value upon it, and concede to it nothing that can flatter it, but rather increase the growth of our soul by faith and knowledge".

Sadly he is very frequently left off the icons of the Apostles in favour of St. Paul or confused with St. Matthew.

B. SAINT MATTHIAS, APOSTLE

1. From Acts i. 21. See Tillemont, t. 1, p. 406. Henschenius, p. 434.

St. Clement of Alexandria¹ assures us, from tradition, that this saint was one of the seventy-two disciples, which is confirmed by Eusebius² and St. Jerome,³ and we learn from the Acts⁴ of the apostles, that he was a constant attendant on our Lord, from the time of his baptism by St. John to his ascension. St. Peter having, in a general assembly of the faithful held soon after, declared from holy scripture, the necessity of choosing a twelfth apostle, in the room of Judas: two were unanimously pitched upon by

the assembly, as most worthy of the dignity, Joseph, called Barsabas, and, on account of his extraordinary piety, surnamed the Just, and Matthias. After devout prayer to God, that he would direct them in their choice, they proceeded in it by way of lot, which falling by the divine direction on Matthias, he was accordingly associated with the eleven, and ranked among the apostles. When in deliberations each side appears equally good, or each candidate of equally approved merit, lots may be sometimes lawfully used; otherwise, to commit a thing of importance to such a chance, or to expect a miraculous direction of divine providence in it, would be a criminal superstition and a tempting of God, except he himself, by an evident revelation or inspiration, should appoint such a means for the manifestation of his will, promising his supernatural interposition in it, which was the case on this extraordinary occasion. The miraculous dreams or lots, which we read of in the prophets, must no ways authorize any rash superstitious use of such means in others who have not the like authority.

We justly admire the virtue of this holy assembly of saints. Here were no solicitations or intrigues. No one presented himself to the dignity. Ambition can find no place in a virtuous or humble heart. He who seeks a dignity either knows himself unqualified, and is on this account guilty of the most flagrant injustice with regard to the public, by desiring a charge to which he is no ways equal: or he thinks himself qualified for it, and this self-conceit and confidence in his own abilities renders him the most unworthy of all others. Such a disposition deprives a soul of the divine assistance, without which we can do nothing; for God withdraws his grace and refuses his blessing where self-sufficiency and pride have found any footing. It is something of a secret confidence in ourselves, and a presumption that we deserve the divine succor, which banishes him from us. This is true even in temporal undertakings; but much more so in the charge of souls, in which all success is more particularly the special work of the Holy Ghost, not the fruit of human industry. These two holy candidates were most worthy of the apostleship, because perfectly humble, and because they looked upon that dignity with trembling, though they considered its labors, dangers, and persecutions with holy joy, and with a burning zeal for the glory of God. No regard was had to worldly talents, none to flesh and blood. God was consulted by prayer, because no one is to be assumed to

his ministry who is not called by him, and who does not enter it by the door,⁵ and with the undoubted marks of his vocation. Judas's misfortune filled St. Matthias with the greater humility and fervor, lest he also should fall. We Gentiles are called upon the disinherison of the Jews, and are in-grafted on their stock.⁶ We ought therefore to learn to stand always in watchfulness and fear, or we shall be also cut off ourselves, to give place to others whom God will call in our room, and even compel to enter, rather than spare us. The number of his elect depends not on us. His infinite mercy has invited us without any merit on our side; but if we are ungrateful, he can complete his heavenly city without us, and will certainly make our reprobation the most dreadful example of his justice, to all eternity. The greater the excess of his goodness and clemency has been towards us, the more dreadful will be the effects of his vengeance. (Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God; but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth.)⁷

St. Matthias received the Holy Ghost with the rest soon after his election; and after the dispersion of the disciples, applied himself with zeal to the functions of his apostleship, in converting nations to the faith. He is recorded by St. Clement of Alexandria,⁸ to have been remarkable for inculcating the necessity of the mortification of the flesh with regard to all its sensual and irregular desires, an important lesson he had received from Christ, and which he practiced assiduously on his own flesh. The tradition of the Greeks in their menologies tells us that St. Matthias planted the faith about Cappadocia and on the coasts of the Caspian sea, residing chiefly near the port Issus. He must have undergone great hardships and labors amidst so savage a people. The same authors add that he received the crown of martyrdom in Colchis, which they call A Ethiopia. The Latins keep his festival on the 24th of February. Some portions of his relics are shown in the abbatical church of Triers, and in that of St. Mary Major in Rome, unless these latter belong to another Matthias, who was one of the first bishops of Jerusalem: on which see the Bollandists.

As the call of St. Matthias, so is ours purely the work of God, and his most gratuitous favor and mercy. What thanks, what fidelity and love do we not owe him for this inestimable grace! When he decreed to call us to his holy faith, cleanse us from sin, and

make us members of his spiritual kingdom, and heirs of his glory, he saw nothing in us which could determine him to such a predilection. We were infected with sin, and could have no title to the least favor, when God said to us, (I have loved Jacob): when he distinguished us from so many millions who perish in the blindness of infidelity and sin, drew us out of the mass of perdition, and bestowed on us the grace of his adoption, and all the high privileges that are annexed to this dignity. In what transports of love and gratitude ought we not, without intermission, to adore his infinite goodness to us, and beg that we may be always strengthened by his grace to advance continually in humility and his holy love, lest, by slackening our pace in his service, we fall from this state of happiness, forfeit this sublime grace, and perish with Judas. Happy would the church be, if all converts were careful to maintain themselves in the same fervor in which they returned to God. But by a neglect to watch over themselves, and to shun dangers, and by falling into sloth, they often relapse into a condition much worse than the former.

Endnotes

1 Strom. I. 4, p. 488.

2 L. 1, c. 2.

3 In Catal.

4 C. i. 21.

5 Jo. x. 1.

6 Rom. xi 12.

7 Matt. viii 11.

8 Strom. I 3, p. 436.

(Taken from Vol. V of "The Lives or the Fathers, Martyrs and Other Principal Saints" by the Rev. Alban Butler, the 1864 edition published by D. & J. Sadlier, & Company)

C. Saint Matthias: From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

In the [New Testament Acts of the Apostles](#), the author of the [Gospel of Luke](#) records that **Matthias** was the [Apostle](#) chosen by the remaining eleven apostles to replace [Judas Iscariot](#), following Judas's betrayal of [Jesus](#) and his suicide (Acts 1:21-26).

1. Biography

Though there is no mention of a Matthias among the lists of disciples in the three [synoptic gospels](#). According to Acts 1, in the days following the [Ascension](#) of Jesus, Peter proposed to the assembled disciples, who numbered about one hundred and twenty, that they choose one to fill the place of the traitor Judas in the apostolate:

23. So they proposed two men: [Joseph called Barsabbas](#) (also known as Justus) and Matthias. 24. Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen 25. to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." 26. Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

[Eduard Zeller](#) declared this narrative inconsistent with the history of the Apostles' movements, in that the Apostles were in Galilee after the Crucifixion. However, the Acts of the Apostles clearly states (i.12) that they returned to Jerusalem.

No further information about Matthias is to be found in the [canonical New Testament](#). Even his name is variable: the Syriac version of [Eusebius](#) calls him throughout not Matthias but "Tolmai", i.e. Bartholomew, without confusing him with the [Bartholomew](#) who was originally one of the twelve Apostles; Clement of Alexandria says some identified him with [Zacchaeus](#); the [Clementine Recognitions](#) identify him with [Barnabas](#); [Hilgenfeld](#) thinks he is the same as Nathanael in the [Gospel of John](#).

According to [Nicephorus](#) (*Historia eccl.*, 2, 40), Matthias first preached the Gospel in Judea, then in Ethiopia (made out to be a synonym for the geographically quite separate [Colchis](#), now Caucasian [Georgia](#)) and was crucified in Colchis. A marker

placed in the ruins of the Roman fortress at Gonio (Apsaros) in the modern Georgian region of [Adjara](#) claims that Matthias is buried at that site.

2. The *Synopsis of Dorotheus* contains this tradition

Matthias in interiore Æthiopia, ubi Hyssus maris portus et Phasis fluvius est, hominibus barbaris et carnivoris praedicavit Evangelium. Mortuus est autem in Sebastopoli, ibique prope templum Solis sepultus. ("Matthias preached the Gospel to barbarians and meat-eaters in the interior of Ethiopia, where the sea harbor of Hyssus is, at the mouth of the river Phasis. He died at Sebastopolis, and was buried there, near the Temple of the Sun.")

An extant [Coptic Acts of Andrew and Matthias](#), places his activity similarly in "the city of the cannibals" in Ethiopia. Alternately, another tradition maintains that Matthias was stoned at Jerusalem by the Jews, and then beheaded (cf. [Tillemont](#), *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclesiastique des six premiers siècles*, I, 406-7). According to [Hippolytus of Rome](#), Matthias died of old age in Jerusalem. [Clement of Alexandria](#) observed (*Stromateis* vi.13.):

Not that they became apostles through being chosen for some distinguished peculiarity of nature, since also Judas was chosen along with them. But they were capable of becoming apostles on being chosen by Him who foresees even ultimate issues. Matthias, accordingly, who was not chosen along with them, on showing himself worthy of becoming an apostle, is substituted for Judas.

3. Veneration

Saint Matthias is venerated with a feast day in the [Roman Catholic Church](#) traditionally on [February 24](#), but moved to [May 14](#) in the 1970 reform of the calendar. The vigil of his feast, normally commemorated on February 23, moved to its own day in leap year, February 24, the traditional leap day, with the feast one day later on February 25.

In the [Eastern Orthodox Church](#), his feast is celebrated on [August 9](#). The [Anglican Church](#) celebrates Matthias on either [14 May](#) or [24 February](#). The [Church of England](#)'s [Book of Common Prayer](#) liturgy celebrates Matthias on 24 February. According to the newer [Common Worship](#) liturgy he is celebrated on 14 May with a festival, although he may be celebrated on 24 February if desired. In the [Episcopal church](#), his feast is on May ^[1]

Saint Matthias the Apostle, according to Greek sources, is buried in castle Gonio-Apsaros, [Georgia](#).

D. St. Matthias the Apostle

The Greek *Matthias* (or, in some [manuscripts](#), *Matthias*), is a name derived from *Mattathias*, [Hebrew](#) *Mattithiah*, signifying "gift of [Yahweh](#)." Matthias was one of the seventy [disciples](#) of [Jesus](#), and had been with Him from His [baptism](#) by John to the [Ascension](#) ([Acts 1:21-22](#)). It is related ([Acts 1:15-26](#)) that in the days following the [Ascension](#), Peter proposed to the assembled brethren, who numbered one hundred and twenty, that they choose one to fill the place of the [traitor Judas](#) in the Apostolate. Two [disciples](#), Joseph, called Barsabas, and Matthias were selected, and lots were drawn, with the result in favour of Matthias, who thus became associated with the eleven [Apostles](#). Zeller has declared this narrative unhistoric, on the plea that the [Apostles](#) were in [Galilee](#) after the death of [Jesus](#). As a matter of fact they did return to [Galilee](#), but the [Acts of the Apostles](#) clearly state that about the [feast](#) of Pentecost they went back to Jerusalem.

All further information concerning the life and death of Matthias is vague and contradictory. According to Nicephorus (Hist. eccl., 2, 40), he first preached the Gospel in [Judea](#), then in [Ethiopia](#) (that is to say, Colchis) and was crucified. The Synopsis of Dorotheus contains this tradition: Matthias in interiore Æthiopia, ubi Hyssus maris portus et Phasis fluvius est, hominibus barbaris et carnivoris prædicavit Evangelium.

Mortuus est autem in Sebastopoli, ibique prope templum Solis sepultus (Matthias preached the Gospel to barbarians and cannibals in the interior of [Ethiopia](#), at the harbour of the sea of Hyssus, at the mouth of the river Phasis. He died at [Sebastopolis](#), and was [buried](#) there, near the [Temple](#) of the Sun). Still another tradition maintains that Matthias was [stoned](#) at [Jerusalem](#) by the [Jews](#), and then beheaded (cf. [Tillemont](#), "Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire eccl. des six premiers siècles", I, 406-7). It is said that St. Helena brought the [relics](#) of St. Matthias to [Rome](#), and that a portion of them was at [Trier](#). Bollandus (Acta SS., May, III) [doubts](#) if the [relics](#) that are in [Rome](#) are not rather those of the St. Matthias who was [Bishop](#) of [Jerusalem](#) about the year 120, and whose history would seem to have been confounded with that of the [Apostle](#). The [Latin Church](#) celebrates the [feast](#) of St. Matthias on 24 February and the [Greek Church](#) on 9 August. [Note: After this article was written, the [Latin Church](#) moved the [feast](#) of St. Matthias to 14 May.]

[Clement of Alexandria](#) (Strom., III, 4) records a [sentence](#) that the [Nicolaitans](#) ascribe to Matthias: "we must combat our flesh, set no value upon it, and concede to it nothing that can flatter it, but rather increase the growth of our [soul](#) by [faith](#) and [knowledge](#)". This teaching was probably found in the Gospel of Matthias which was mentioned by [Origen](#) (Hom. i in Lucam); by [Eusebius](#) (Hist. eccl., III, 25), who attributes it to [heretics](#); by [St. Jerome](#) (Praef. in Matth.), and in the [Decree](#) of [Gelasius](#) (VI, 8) which declares it [apocryphal](#). It is at the end of the list of the [Codex](#) Barroccianus (206). This Gospel is probably the document whence [Clement of Alexandria](#) quoted several passages, saying that they were borrowed from the traditions of Matthias, *Paradoseis*, the testimony of which he claimed to have been invoked by the [heretics](#) [Valentinus](#), [Marcion](#), and [Basilides](#) (Strom., VII, 17). According to the *Philosophoumena*, VII, 20, [Basilides](#) quoted [apocryphal](#) discourses, which he attributed to Matthias. These three writings: the [gospel](#), the Traditions, and the [Apocryphal](#) Discourses were identified by Zahn (Gesch. des N. T. Kanon, II, 751), but Harnack (Chron. der altchrist. Litteratur, 597) denies this identification. Tischendorf ("Acta apostolorum [apocrypha](#)", Leipzig, 1851) published after Thilo, 1846, "Acta Andreae et Matthiae in urbe anthropophagarum", which, according to [Lipsius](#), belonged to the middle of the second century. This

[apocrypha](#) relates that Matthias went among the cannibals and, being cast into [prison](#), was delivered by Andrew. Needless to say, the entire narrative is without historical value. Moreover, it should be remembered that, in the [apocryphal](#) writings, Matthew and Matthias have sometimes been confounded.