

LIVING GODS WILL

The Apostle

BARTHOLOMEW



Saint Bartholomew by Rembrandt

The Apostle **BARTHOLOMEW**

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Born: Cana, Galilee

Died: Albanopolis, Armenia

Death: Crucified upside down, flayed alive, and beheaded

Also known as "**Nathanael**", "**Son of Tolmai**"

He was a good **friend** of the **Apostle Philip**

He was one of the **original 12 disciples**

Bartholomew is listed as one of the twelve disciples of **Jesus** in each of the four references to the group (**Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13**).

In the Gospel of **John**, however, he is always referred to as **Nathanael** (**John 1:45–49; 21:2**). **Bartholomew** is a Hebrew surname meaning "**son of Tolmai**." So **Nathanael** is the son of **Tolmai**, or **Nathanael Bar-Tolmei**.

In each of the listings of the disciples, the names of **Philip** and **Bartholomew** are linked, which could mean they were **good friends or even related**.

What we know about **Bartholomew/Nathanael** comes primarily from the account of his call by **Jesus** (**John 1:45–49**).

After **Jesus** called **Philip** to follow Him, Philip found **Nathanael** and told him, "**We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph**" (**verse 45**).

This would seem to indicate **Philip** and **Nathanael** were students of the Law and the Prophets and that Philip recognized from their study that **Jesus** was the Messiah they had been waiting for.

We see from **Bartholomew's** next statement, "**Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?**" (**John 1:46**) that he held the town of Nazareth in the same regard as many Jews of that day.

Nazareth, and all of the area around Galilee, was seen as a low and wicked place. Even **Bartholomew/Nathanael**, himself a **Galilean**, was doubtful that anything good, let alone God's Messiah, could come from such a place.

The next verse gives us true insight into the character of **Bartholomew**. When **Jesus** saw him coming, He said, "**Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.**"

The Greek word for “**false**” means “**deceitful, crafty, or full of guile.**” **Jesus** knew **Nathanael’s** heart, just as He knows what is in every heart.

Jesus’ assessment of **Bartholomew** was that he was a “**true**” son of Abraham, that is, a man who worshiped the true and living God without any of the deceit or hypocrisy that characterized the religious leaders of that day.

What follows is a declaration of **Jesus’** divine nature and power.

Bartholomew/Nathanael asked **Jesus** how He knew him, and Jesus replied, “**I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you**” (**John 1:48**).

Jesus wasn’t present when Philip called **Nathanael**, yet He had seen and heard their conversation, evidence of His **omniscience**.

He knew not only **Nathanael’s** words but his heart and sincere character as well. **Nathanael (Bartholomew)** saw the attributes of divine omniscience and the ability to discern hearts in the Man who stood before him.

Nathanael’s familiarity with Old Testament prophecies caused him to recognize **Jesus** for who He was, the promised Messiah, Son of God and King of Israel (**verse 49**).

This is all we know about Bartholomew/Nathanael from Scripture.

1. As an apostle, **Bartholomew** saw the risen Lord **Jesus** (**John 21:2**)
2. He was present at the Ascension (**Acts 1:1–11**).

Tradition indicates that **Bartholomew** was a minister of the gospel in **Persia** and **India**. There is no biblical record of his death. All traditions agree that he died a **martyr’s death**, as did all the apostles except for **John**.

He is said to have been martyred in Albanopolis in Armenia. He was crucified, head downward, flayed alive and beheaded.

He is said to have converted **Polymius**, the king of Armenia, to Christianity. **Astyages**, Polymius’ brother, consequently ordered **Bartholomew’s** execution.

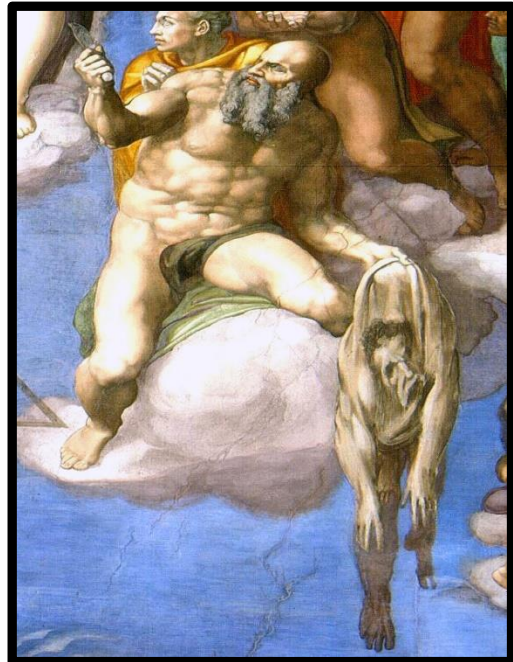
The Church historian **Nicephorus Callistus** describes that **Bartholomew** and the **Apostle Philip** were successful preaching in the Phrygian city of Hieropolis, where they were **arrested and locked up in prison**.

They put the **Apostle Philip** to death on a cross, but **Saint Mariamne and Bartholomew were set free**.

Saint Bartholomew Armenian Monastery



Bartholomew by Pierre le Gros



Bartholomew by Michelangelo