LIVING GODS WILL

The Apostle

MATTHIAS

Saint Matthias by Peter Paul Rubens
The Apostle MATTHIAS

Born: Bethlehem
Died: 80 AD, Jerusalem
Death: Stoned to death and beheaded

Also known as “Zacchaeus”

He was a follower of Jesus from the beginning of the Lord’s ministry

He was the chosen replacement for Judas Iscariot

The Holy Apostle Matthias was born in Bethlehem and was a descendant of the tribe of Judah. He grew up with the study of religious writings and the law of God in Jerusalem. He was taught at the feet of Simeon, who is best known for receiving the Christ-child in the temple.

Matthias, short for the name Mattathias, means “gift of Yahweh.” This meaning is fitting, for Matthias became one of the Twelve, replacing Judas after that disciple’s betrayal of Jesus.

The Apostle Matthias was a follower of Jesus from the very beginning of the Lord’s public ministry. Saint Matthias loved Christ and followed the many journeys and miracles that the Lord performed.

Jesus chose Matthias to be one of his seventy disciples, seeing his purity of soul and zeal for the Lord’s work. "... the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go" (Luke 10:1).

Many do not know that Matthias was originally Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus climbed the sycamore tree because he could not see Jesus due to the crowd of people and his short stature (Luke 19:1-10). He repented of his former life after meeting the Lord.

We meet Matthias after Jesus had ascended back to heaven. About 120 disciples gathered in Jerusalem for fellowship and prayer, awaiting Jesus’ promise of His Holy Spirit (John 14:16–17; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4–8).

Peter, knowing the Scriptures were to be fulfilled, proposed that another man be chosen to take Judas Iscariot’s place among the Twelve to maintain their number and their ministry.

Peter based his suggestion on Psalm 109:8, “May another take his place of leadership,” and Psalm 69:25, “May their place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in their tents.”
Matthew and Joseph (also called Justus and Barsabbas) were selected as candidates for this particular ministry, as both met the qualifications laid out by Peter.

Both Matthias and Joseph had been faithful followers of Jesus “the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us” (Acts 1:21–22).

The gospels do not mention these two disciples by name, but we know there were at least 72 other men, besides the Twelve, whom the Lord had commissioned for ministry (Luke 10:1).

The details of Matthias’s and Joseph’s faithfulness are hidden from our view. Yet Peter and the others were familiar with these men, and their constant, faithful discipleship made them stand out as worthy candidates to “become a witness with [the apostles] of his resurrection” (Acts 1:22).

After praying together, the disciples cast lots to discern who the chosen man would be, and the lot fell to Matthias. Trusting that God’s hand was in these proceedings, the other apostles received Matthias as the replacement for Judas (Acts 1:24–26).

Saint Matthias was chosen at that time to preach to the Jews in Judea, but afterwards, he also preached the Gospel to the Gentiles.

An apocryphal story tells us that the Apostle Matthias preached the "Good News" to the inhabitants of Ethiopia and Macedonia.

In Ethiopia the heathen dragged him over the ground, beat him, hung him from a pillar and tore his stomach with an iron blade and burned him with fire. Matthias suffered many trials in the name of Christ.

One of the towns that Matthias preached in was called the "city of the man-eaters." This was a town where cannibalism was practiced.

He traveled with Andrew and Peter to Syrian Antioch after coming from Jerusalem. He was in Sinope and Titanium, alongside these two apostles of Jesus. When he was in the Cappadocian city, he was locked in a prison. However, Andrew freed him in a miraculous manner.

Upon being set free, Matthias went to Amasea. He also journeyed to Sebaste and Edessa with the Apostle Andrew. He preached at Macedonia and Pontine Ethiopia, based on the Church Tradition.

Although he met several instances that almost caused his death, he was constantly spared to continue his mission to preach and spread the Gospel.
One of the miraculous stories involving Matthias was when he was forced to drink a potion that contained poison. When he did so, he was not harmed, and he even healed some other prisoners who suffered from blindness after drinking the potion.

He was also able to leave the prison without anyone noticing him. Afterward, he headed back to Judea to preach the works of Jesus. He also performed numerous miracles and converted several people to believe in Jesus.

Toward the end of his travels Matthias returned to Galilee to preach to the Jews once again. The Jews, filled with malice and anger, seized Matthias and presented him to the High Priest, Annas.

The High Priest, Annas, who hated all Christians and was responsible for the death of James, the first bishop of Jerusalem, ordered that Matthias be stoned.

When Matthias was taken to be stoned he said to the Jews, "You hypocrites, rightly did the Prophet David speak to those like you: 'they shall hunt down the soul of the righteous man, and the innocent blood shall they condemn'" (Psalm 93:21).

After Matthias spoke these words, two witnesses who claimed that he blasphemed picked up stones to be the first two to stone him. Matthias asked that these stones be buried with him as a testimony of his suffering for the Lord.

They stoned Matthias to death, and as an added insult, they also beheaded him to express that he was an enemy of Rome.

Such was the faith and conviction of the Holy Apostle Matthias. This was the life of a man who lived his life believing and expressing his faith in Jesus as the savior. He

"Now let Your servant depart in peace, O Master, according to Your word, for mine eyes have seen Your salvation, which You did prepare before the face of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the nations and the glory of Your people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32).

**SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE**

Acts 1:23 And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

Acts 1:26 And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.