

LIVING GODS WILL

The Apostle

SIMON



Apostle Simon by Peter Paul Rubens

The Apostle **SIMON**

Page 1

Born:	Capernaum
Died:	AD 65, Beirut, Syria
Death:	He was sawn in half with a saw

Also known as "**Simon the Zealot**", "**Simon the Canaanite**"

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

He was a member of the **Zealot** movement against Rome

Simon the Zealot was one of Jesus' disciples. Generally speaking, a **zealot** is anyone who fervently supports a particular cause.

In the context of the New Testament, the **Zealots** were a party zealous for Jewish independence and throwing off Roman rule. They hoped to accomplish this by inciting the people to rebellion, driving the Romans from Israel, and establishing a **Mosaic theocracy**.

They were also known to target Jews who were sympathetic to Rome. Both **Josephus** and the **Talmud** took a negative view of the Zealots' **fanaticism**.

Simon the Zealot is mentioned **four times** in the New Testament, in places where the names of the disciples are listed, but beyond this no information about him is given (**Matthew 10:4; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13**).

The **KJV** lists him as "**Simon the Canaanite**" in **Matthew 10:4**

The term **Canaanite** here being a political term, not a reference to a regional home. It is usually assumed that he is called "**Simon the Zealot**" because, when **Jesus called him**, he was a member of the Zealots' political movement.

If so, the continued use of the designation does not address whether or not he continued to be zealous for Jewish independence while he was a disciple.

In any case, we can assume that his priorities changed as he submitted to **Jesus' teaching**, which included "**giving to Caesar what belongs to Caesar**" (**Matthew 22:21**), and an emphasis on the kingdom of God, which was not of this world and was not established by use of violence and the force of arms (**John 18:36**).

Simon would also have been informed by **Jesus'** revealing that the temple would be destroyed and Jerusalem would be completely overrun by the **Gentiles** (**Luke 21:5–6, 20–24**).

Keeping the "**nickname**" of "**the Zealot**" may simply have been a way to distinguish him from the other **Simon** (who later came to be known as **Peter**) in Jesus' group.

Perhaps, in later years, he was known to be zealous for the gospel. Tradition says that **Simon the Zealot** preached the gospel in **Persia** and was ultimately **killed for refusing to sacrifice to the sun god**.

Simon has the identifying attribute of a saw because he was traditionally martyred by being sawn in half in Beirut, Syria in 65 AD along with his missionary companion the Apostle Thaddaeus.

The Apostle Simon is traditionally said to be buried in Rome, under **Saint Peter's Basilica** under the alter of **Saint Joseph**.

It is interesting to note that **Jesus** called another disciple, **Matthew**, who was a **tax collector** (**Matthew 9:9**) and who would have been in the employ of Rome directly or of the Jewish officials who ruled with Rome's blessing.

Matthew the publican and **Simon the Zealot** were from opposite ends of the political spectrum. Because of their greater allegiance to **Jesus**, they were brothers and co-workers for the gospel.

It is unfortunate that today many believers seem to be more committed to a political party or a political viewpoint than to the **Christ, the church, the gospel, and the Kingdom of God**.

Of importance in New Testament history, the **Zealots** led a rebellion when Rome introduced imperial **cult worship**. The Great Jewish Revolt began in **A.D. 66**. The Zealots successfully overtook Jerusalem, but their revolt was ultimately unsuccessful.

In **A.D. 70**, the Romans destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple. A remnant of the Zealots then took refuge in **Masada**.

Jesus chose **Simon the Zealot**, a man who likely desired to forcibly remove the Roman government, and He also chose **Matthew**, a tax collector working for the Roman government. Both **Simon and Matthew**, though natural enemies, were part of the **Twelve**. What a beautiful illustration of the peace **Jesus** brings!

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

Matthew 10:2 **The names of the twelve apostles are these:** first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; **Simon the Zealot**, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Acts 1:13 And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and **Simon the Zealot**; and Judas the son of James.