

HOW THE APOSTLES DIED

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The following information about the martyrs is from Grant R. Jeffrey's book "The Signature of God/The Handwriting of God" published by Inspirational Press, 1999, pages 257-259. I have added my own comment and tidbits. This letter/study was originally written to my children and grandchildren, but is now available to believers everywhere.

The Disciples and Apostles of our Savior scattered throughout the whole world and preached the Gospel everywhere during the first century.

The Church historian Schumacher researched the lives of the Apostles and recounted the history of their martyrdoms as follows:

Matthew suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia, killed by a sword wound.

Mark died in Alexandria, Egypt, after being dragged by horses through the streets until he was dead.

Luke was hanged in Greece as a result of his tremendous preaching to the lost. Luke was called "The Beloved Physician" (Colossians 4:14). He also wrote the book of Acts.

John faced martyrdom when he was boiled in a huge basin of boiling oil during a wave of persecution in Rome. However, he was miraculously delivered from death by God. John was then sentenced to the mine on the prison island of Patmos. It was here that he wrote the book of Revelation. He was later freed and returned to serve as Bishop of Edessa in Turkey. He died as an old man, the only Apostle to die peacefully. I have a special place in my heart for John not only because he was so humble of spirit but because he explained salvation so simply, in the Book that bares his name. He had a special gift and understanding to preach salvation. You will recall when he wrote Revelation he was taken up to heaven in a vision and recorded what he saw as instructed by the Lord. John was the one to whom Christ commended his mother while hanging on the Cross.

Peter was crucified upside down on an x-shaped cross, because he told his tormentors that he felt unworthy to die in the same way that Jesus Christ his Savior had died. You will recall that Peter, James (the son of Zebedee) and John were present at the Transfiguration of Christ when Elijah and Moses appeared (Mark 9:4).

James the Just, the leader of the Church in Jerusalem, was thrown over a hundred feet down from

the southeast pinnacle of the Temple when he refused to deny his faith in Christ. When they discovered that he survived the fall, his enemies beat him to death with a fuller's club. This was the same place "the pinnacle" where Satan had taken Jesus during the Temptation (Luke 4:9).

James the Greater, a son of Zebedee, was a fisherman by trade when Jesus called him to a lifetime of ministry. As a strong leader in the Church, James was ultimately beheaded in Jerusalem. The Roman officer who guarded James watched with amazement as James defended his faith at his trial. Later, the officer walked beside James to the place of execution, Overcome by conviction, he declared his new faith to the judge and then knelt beside James to accept his own beheading as a brand new Christian. He got saved (believed) and then died just like the one thief on the Cross next to Christ.

Bartholomew, also known as Nathaniel, was a missionary to Asia. He witnessed about our Lord in present day Turkey. Bartholomew was martyred for his preaching in Armenia. He was flayed to death by a whip. Christ was flayed just short of death during His six trials.

Andrew was crucified on an x-shaped cross in Patras, Greece. After being whipped severely by seven soldiers they tied his body to the cross with cords to prolong his agony. Followers of Andrew reported that, when he was led to the cross, he saluted it in these words: "I have long desired and expected this happy hour. The cross has been consecrated by the body of Christ hanging on it." He continued to preach to his tormentors for two days until he expired. Can you imagine, with his joints pulling apart, no circulation in his arms, unable to get a deep breath, in excruciating pain, thirsting, dying and yet he kept not only his faith but witnessed to the seven who beat him and crucified him.

The Apostle Thomas was stabbed with a spear in India during one of his missionary trips to establish a Church.

Jude, the half brother of Jesus, (son of Mary and Joseph) was killed with arrows when he refused to deny his faith in Christ.

Matthias, the one chosen by the Apostles (because they didn't wait on the Lord) to replace Judas Iscariot, was stoned and then beheaded. He was not chosen as the replacement by God, but was blessed and used by God to spread the Gospel. God chose Paul as you know. But, apparently he did much to preach the Gospel to the lost and gave his life as God's witness.

Barnabas, (not an Apostle) but one of the group of seventy disciples who served with and under the Apostles, wrote the "Epistle of Barnabas" (not accepted as an inspired book of the Bible). He worked closely with Paul the Great Apostle. He preached throughout Italy and Cyprus, He was stoned to death at Salonica.

The “Great Apostle Paul” was tortured and then beheaded by the evil Emperor Nero at Rome in A.D. 67. Paul endured many imprisonments where he wrote many of the Epistles to the Churches he had formed throughout the Roman Empire.

Each of the Apostles faced martyrdom without denying their faith in Christ and His Resurrection.

If asked to explain how great character is formed in men, my reply would be: “The greatest character in man is formed by receiving Jesus Christ as personal Savior, the filling of the Holy Spirit and the teaching and constant prayerful meditation in God’s Word.”