



NATHANAEL BARTHOLOMEW

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Nickname/Other:

Bartholomew – Greek *Bartholomaios*, “son of Talmai/Tolmai” or son of Ptolemy² in the synoptic Gospels. His name is only found in the listing of the Twelve (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lu 6:14; Ac 1:13)

It could be a patronym³ meaning a surname. Such as, Bartholomew – “Bar-Talmai”⁴

Because patronyms like Bartholomew were more commonly used as surnames, this view suggests the disciple’s full name is Nathanael Bartholomew.⁵

Are Bartholomew and Nathanael the same person?

Note: Bartholomew is never mentioned in the Gospel of John. However, Nathanael is only found in the Gospel of John (Jn 1:45-49; Jn 21:2).

Nathanael is Hebrew, meaning “given or gift of God”, one of our Lord’s disciples, “of Cana in Galilee” (Jn 21:2). He was “an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile” (Jn 1:47-48).

Nathanael means “gift of God.” *El*, e-l, is the name of God. It is a portion of Elohim. And so Nathan-el, Nathanael is a gift of God. Bartholomew literally

¹ Apostle St. Bartholomew, Museo de El Greco, Toledo

² “bar” is Aramaic for “son of”

³ Patronym is a name derived from that of the father or paternal ancestor usually by the addition of an affix (Merriam-Webster)

⁴ We also see the patronymic used in the name of Peter: Simon Bar-Jonah (Mt 16:17)

⁵ Jeffrey E. Miller, “*Bartholomew the Apostle*,” ed. John D. Barry et al., The Lexham Bible Dictionary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

means "son of Tolmai." "Bar" means "son of," bar mitzvah, son of the law. And so he is Nathanael, son of Tolmai, Bar-Tolmai.⁶

It just makes sense to me, not proof, that this Apostle's name is Nathanael Bartholomew. If they are not the same person, then there were 13 disciples that Jesus called as Apostles. That would make all the references of "the twelve" to be in error. There is a much simpler explanation, they are the same person.

General Information:

No information about his birth or death

Hometown/Region: Cana of Galilee of the Roman Empire (Jn 21:2)

(Note: This town is the location of Jesus first miracle of turning water into wine.)

Lived in Capernaum

Possibly a fisherman by trade (Jn 21:2).

Family:

Father – Talmai. John MacArthur writes:

There was among the Hebrews a sect. They were called Tolmaians because their leader was named Tolmai. This sect was devoted to the study of Scripture. They gave much attention to the scriptures. It may be that Nathanael, Bar-Tolmai was the son of a man named Tolmai, or some have suggested, though it's a bit more obscure, that it may mean he was a member of a group called Tolmaians. He was there for a son of Tolmai, in the sense that he was a follower of the man who started the group, whose devotion to Scripture marked him uniquely. He is Nathanael anyway, son of Tolmai.

Several scholars believe that he was the only one of the 12 disciples who came from royal family.

MINISTRY INFORMATION:

Major Accomplishments during Jesus' Ministry:

Note: the synoptic Gospels list him right after Philip (Close friends with Philip. perhaps they were affiliated, brothers?)

It appears that Nathanael knew the Scriptures when he proclaimed, "*Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.*" Jn 1:46 (KJV).

"The character of Nazareth was proverbially bad. To be a Galilean or a Nazarene was an expression of decided contempt, Jn 7:52. Nathanael asked, therefore, whether it was possible that the Messiah should come from a place proverbially wicked. This was a mode of judging in the case not uncommon. It is not by examining evidence, but by prejudice."⁷

His calling, introduced to Jesus by Philip (Jn 1:43-51)

⁶ MacArthur, John, "Grace to You" Broadcast, <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/42-78/common-men-uncommon-calling-nathanael>

⁷ Barnes, Albert, *Albert Barnes Notes on the Bible: John 1:46*, SwordSearcher, electronic

Jesus referred to Nathanael as “an Israelite indeed.” (Jn 1:47-49)

Jesus knew Nathanael prayed: He saw Nathanael under the fig tree (Jn 1:48)”

Nathanael declares that Jesus is the “Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” (Jn 1:47-48)

Jesus told him that he would see greater things (Jn 1:50-51).

Bartholomew is listed with the Apostles (Matthew 10:2–4, Mark 3:16–19, Luke 6:14–16, Acts 1:1–13)

He witnessed the ministry of Jesus for about three years.

Present at Jesus first miracle. Peter, Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael were disciples of Jesus at that time. (Jn 2:1-11).

Sent forth by Jesus when he sent the disciples out two by two (Mt 10:1-3; Mk 6:7-11; Lk 9:1-6)

Bartholomew was present at the Last Supper (Mt 26:20; Mk 14:17; Lk 22:14; Jn 13:4)

In the Garden of Gethsemane with Jesus

Deserted Jesus during His trials and crucifixion

While waiting on Jesus in Galilee, he went fishing with Peter, Thomas, sons of Zebedee and two others (Jn 21:2-7)

Major Accomplishments after Jesus’ Ministry:

Was present during Jesus’ ascension (Ac 1:6-11)

Witnessed the miracle of the catch of fish and had breakfast with Jesus on the shores of Galilee (Jn 21:2-7)

Listed among the eleven (Ac 1:13)

Along with the other Apostles, they began the movement called “Christianity.” As such, he was one of the leaders of the early church.

Was present at the choosing of Mathias (Acts 1:13).

Was present in the Upper Room at Pentecost (Ac 2:1)

History says he preached the gospel in Ethiopia, Egypt, India, and Armenia

Eusebius says that he took the Gospel as far as India, while others say he took the Gospel to Armenia.

Manner of Death:

Believed to have healed Armenian Kings daughter which angered priests in the area which eventually led to his death.

According to the noncanonical book, “Martyrdom of Bartholomew,” he was killed by drowning.

Other traditions have him being crucified.

Writings

Non-canonical writings only:

- Gospel of Bartholomew (AD 200-500)

- Questions of Bartholomew (AD 200-500)
- The Resurrection of Jesus Christ by Bartholomew the Apostle (AD 200-550)

Scripture References:

Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lu 6:14; Jn 1:45-49; 21:2; Ac 1:13

Strongest Character Traits:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

NOTES:

