

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

Christian Initiatory Teachings

Judas Iscariot Replaced by Matthias

ALL that is known of Matthias is that he was in constant attendance upon Christ Jesus almost from the beginning of His ministry. He is said to have been one of the seventy disciples sent forth by the Master. He and Barnabas were evidently the most highly advanced of the seventy, as they were the two recommended to take the place of Judas. The choice eventually fell upon Matthias.

Eligibility for elevation to the rank of discipleship was determined, Peter states in Acts 1:22, according as one had taken the Initiations taught by John the Baptist, had followed the three years' work given by the Christ, and had finally been accounted worthy to be among the Elect who participated in the Resurrection Rites.

An apocryphal gospel written under the name of Matthias is quoted by Clement of Alexandria in his *Traditions*. He is said to have met martyrdom circa 54-61 A.D. in Cappadocia.

Since so little is known of Matthias, the following legend about him is of interest as at least suggesting the course of his life and work.

When the Disciples were allotted the countries in which they were to work, it fell to Matthias to go to the land of the man eaters. Every stranger who entered this country was laid hold of and his eyes put out, after which he was made to drink a drug prepared by sorcery whereby the heart was altered and the mind deranged.

Such was the cruel treatment accorded to Matthias when he came to this people. However, the magical drug had no effect upon him and as he prayed his sight was restored. Jesus then appeared to him in prison and said: "Be of good courage, Matthias, for I shall deliver thee from all danger. Remain here

twenty-seven days for the edification of all souls, and after that I shall send Andrew to lead thee forth from prison, and all who hear thee shall be saved." Then Matthias began to sing and to instruct other prisoners in the Mysteries of Christ.

When the twenty-seven days were fulfilled since Matthias was imprisoned, Jesus appeared in the country where Andrew was teaching and bade him take his disciples and go to the rescue of Matthias. The boat in which Andrew and his disciples sailed, the Angels who were their companions, the Master who was their pilot, and the visions of Paradise granted them, are in part descriptive of the experiences of the Invisible Helpers upon the inner planes, in part a lesson on the Divine Immanence.

As Andrew and his disciples slept, the legend continues, the Master commanded the Angels to carry them to the city where Matthias was confined. Andrew made the sign of the cross upon the prison gates which then opened of their own accord. Entering, Andrew found Matthias singing, and they greeted one another with a holy kiss. Then as Andrew and Matthias prayed, they laid their hands upon the faces of the blind men in prison and their sight was restored and also their human reason. There were two hundred and seventy men and forty-nine women whom Andrew and Matthew released from prison on that day.

All were rendered invisible as they left the city by the eastern gate, pausing there to partake of nourishment from a great fig tree. Andrew then commanded a great cloud to descend, to take up Matthias and the disciples of Andrew, and to set them down upon a distant mountain where Peter was teaching.

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In the case of karma there is not that absolute certainty of having to suffer some penalty as under a fixed sign. In common signs, we have some scope to mitigate much of the karma indicated, if we overcome the evil within ourselves. Of course if we go the easy, non-resisting way, then surely we shall reap our unfortunate destiny. That is the main trouble with common sign people. They are very changeable and vacillating, tending greatly to negatives — thereby not having the determination or the desire to try to curb the evil tendencies or characteristics which come from fixed and cardinal signs.

It should be realized that a chart is not iron-bound; it is usually flexible. No matter how many debts of destiny a chart indicates, how high its obstacles seem to loom, there are always bright spots somewhere. No one is ever sent into this world tied hands and feet, figuratively speaking. In the most afflicted horoscopes there is always some aspect or combination that will be of assistance to the person. That is where the duty of the student astrologer comes in — to point this out and show the native how he can build on it and even dominate his afflictions thereby. The astrologer should study carefully the chart, analyzing and weighing each factor against the other. An individual can rise above every affliction or misfortune that earth experience contains, but he must be a strong soul — one who is willing to go down to death fighting.

Some of us, either through character weakness or through habit, learn our lessons slowly. We pay a penalty for some mistake or wrongdoing, then deliberately do it again. Each time we fall or give away to these things we receive a harder lesson — the task is increased. If we can recognize our weak points and adverse tendencies and work to correct them, it will be much easier for us than waiting for some future time to begin. Between now and that future time, our faults can become so fixed that it will take much more effort to overcome them.

The energy that we would have to use in correcting these faults in the future we can use in building new and better characters.

Human nature is weak. The saying, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak," is but too true. Let us, however, try to forget the flesh and concentrate on the spirit, so that it will rise and dominate all else.

Do not blame the stars for the unhappiness or misfortune which comes to you, or for the evil which may be within you. It is so easy to say, "Well, I have the Sun square to Mars; that's why I have such a terrible temper." Forget your stars and look within yourself and realize that the weakness is something which you have within you; something to be mastered. Think of the planets, not as bringers of good or evil fortune, but as the bodies of great spiritual Beings who are willingly aiding you in your evolution. Think of them with the reverence that is due them. Then in the light of this broader knowledge, you will really be grateful for the fate which your horoscope portends. Know that every experience, trial, or misfortune, is helping you to strengthen your character. Meditate upon the words of the great philosopher Confucius, who said, "The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials."

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BIBLE STUDY

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The beautiful ministry of Invisible Helpers is thus clearly revealed in holy legend as it was known to the earliest Christians through the personal instruction of Christ Jesus' own Disciples.

The Twelve Disciples are of varied types, for they serve as prototypes of humanity in general and indicate thereby that there is room and work for all in the Master's vineyard.

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