

Shayla: Why does the Bible list the twelve apostles differently? Is this a contradiction?

Meforshim:

No, the Bible is actually very consistent in its identification of the Twelve. There are essentially four basic lists of the Twelve and all four name the same people. Though the order is different, Simon Peter always comes first and Judas Iscariot comes last.

The only marked difference is the listing of Thaddaeus in Matthew 10 and Mark 3 with “Judas ben James” being listed in Luke 6 and Acts 1. Since several of the other disciples were also known by a couple of different names (i.e. Simon called Peter and Thomas called “Twin”¹), it is reasonable to assume that Judas ben (which means “son of”) James was Thaddaeus’ birth name.

Matthew 10	Mark 3	Luke 6	Acts 1
Simon called Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Peter
Andrew brother of Simon Peter	Andrew	Andrew brother of Peter	Andrew
James ben Zebedee	James ben Zebedee	James	James
John brother of James	John brother of James	John	John
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew
Thomas	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas
Matthew the tax collector	Matthew	Matthew	Matthew
James ben Alphaeus	James ben Alphaeus	James ben Alphaeus	James ben Alphaeus
Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Judas ben James	Judas ben James
Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	*Matthias

Obviously, the list in Acts was modified by Judas Iscariot’s betrayal and death. Another man by the name of Matthias was chosen to replace him at that point.²

¹ John 20:21; 21:2

² Acts 1:26