

DAVID TATE

WHO WAS SIMON THE ZEALOT?



SIMON THE ZEALOT

IN THE

THE CHOSEN

**SIMON THE ZEALOT
ACCORDING TO**

THE BIBLE

ZEALOT, OR ZEALOUS?

The Four Philosophies

SADDUCEES

the Compromisers

- Mostly comprised of aristocrats
- Didn't believe in resurrection/afterlife
- Only followed Torah (Pentateuch)
- **Philosophy:** *In the world and of it*

PHARISEES

the Separatists

- Largest and most popular group
- Believed in resurrection/afterlife
- Strict observance of the Law
- **Philosophy:** *In the world, not of it*

ESSENES

the Monks

- Monastic group that retreated to desert
- Believed in resurrection/afterlife
- Held all things in common, didn't wed
- **Philosophy:** *Neither in the world nor of it*

ZEALOTS

the Rebels

- Violent group opposing Roman rule
- Believed in resurrection/afterlife
- Radical view of Pharisaic beliefs
- **Philosophy:** *In the world and against it*



ZEALOT, OR ZEALOUS?

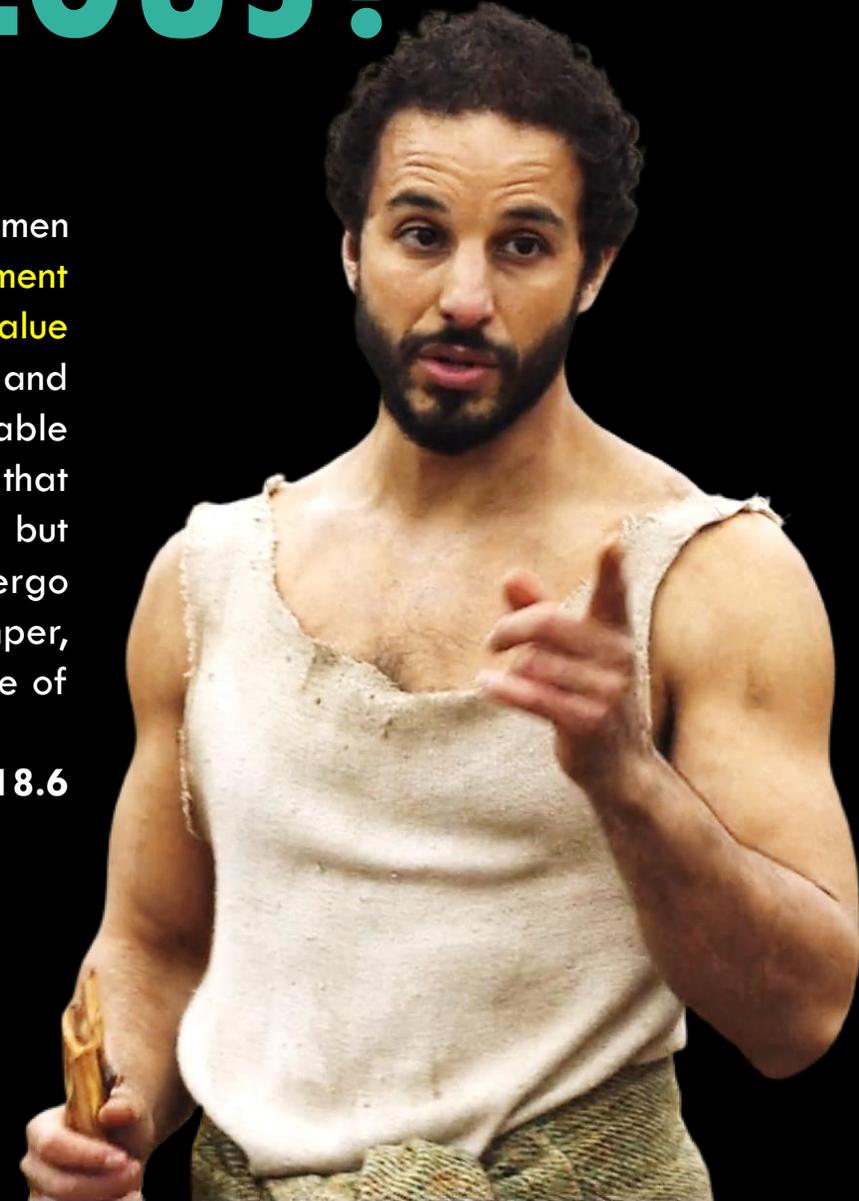
1. Who were the Zealots?

Of the fourth sect of Jewish philosophy, Judas the Galilean was the author. These men agree in all other things with the Pharisaic notions; but they have an inviolable attachment to liberty, and say that God is to be their only Ruler and Lord. They also do not value dying any kinds of death, nor indeed do they heed the deaths of their relations and friends, nor can any such fear make them call any man lord. And since this immovable resolution of theirs is well known to a great many, I shall speak no further about that matter; nor am I afraid that any thing I have said of them should be disbelieved, but rather fear, that what I have said is beneath the resolution they show when they undergo pain. And it was in Gessius Florus' time that the nation began to grow with this distemper, who was our procurator, and who occasioned the Jews to go wild with it by the abuse of his authority, and to make them revolt from the Romans.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.6

Summary:

1. They agreed theologically with the **Pharisees**.
2. They were hyper-focused on **freedom & liberty**.
3. They viewed God as their **only Ruler**.
4. They were **willing to die** (and kill) for their beliefs.

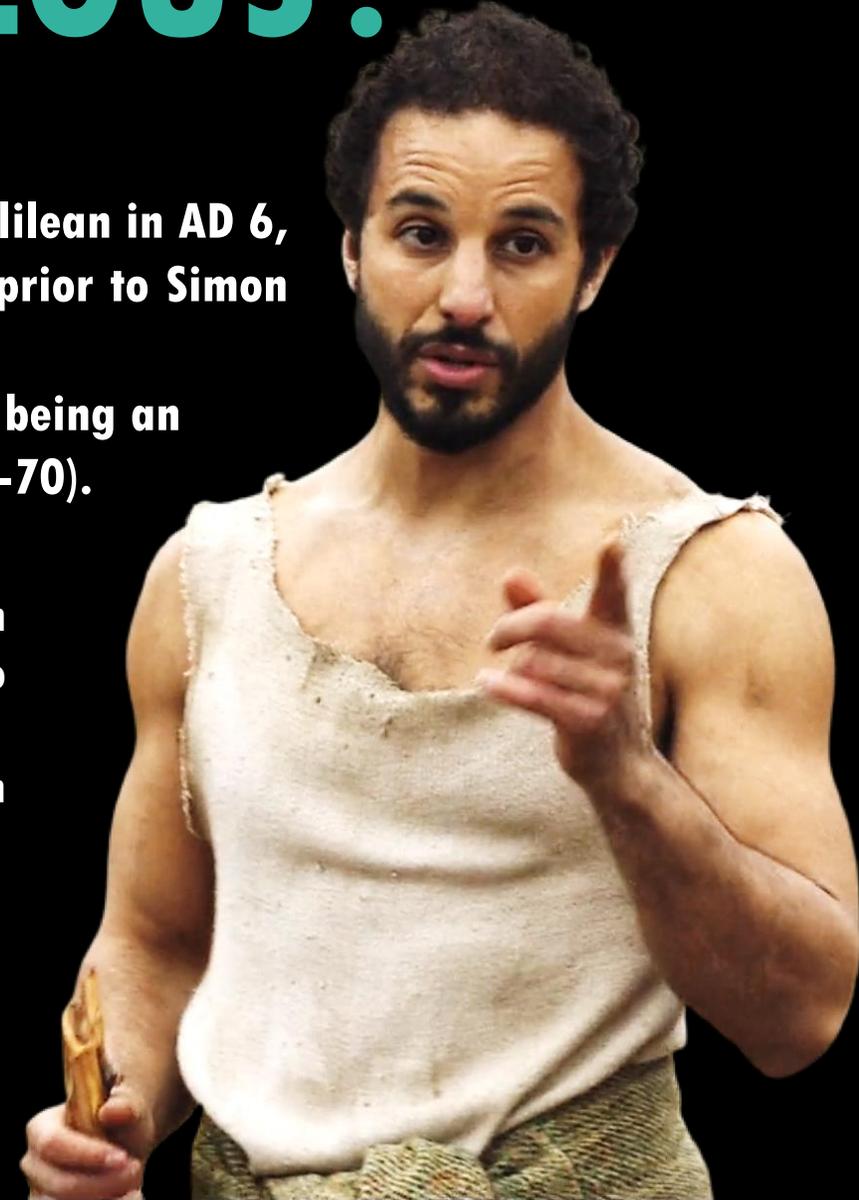


ZEALOT, OR ZEALOUS?

2. Was Simon a “Zealot” or a “zealot”?

- Josephus asserts that the Zealot party was founded by Judas the Galilean in AD 6, which makes it possible that the Zealot party existed in the years prior to Simon following Jesus.
- However, beyond Josephus, we have no evidence of the Zealot party being an official, organized group prior to the First Jewish-Roman War (AD 66-70).
- That being said,
 1. It is possible that Simon belonged to **the Zealot party** of which Josephus speaks (in which case he serves as the earliest attestation to its existence).
 2. It is possible that Simon belonged to **a different Zealot party**, which preceded the extremist one of which Josephus speaks.
 3. It is possible that Simon was **merely zealous**, hence, “the Zealot.”

While evidence seems to suggest Simon did not belong to the Zealot party, in the end, results are inconclusive.



BIOGRAPHICAL INFO

NAME: SHIMON/SIMON (שמעון/Σίμων) – “he has heard”

NICKNAME(S):

The Zealot/Cananaean

(Mt, Mk – ὁ Καναναῖος; Lk – τὸν καλούμενον Ζηλωτὴν; Ac – ὁ Ζηλωτής)

FATHER: ???

MOTHER: ???

SIBLING(S): ???

SPOUSE: ???

HOMETOWN/PLACE OF RESIDENCE: ???

EDUCATION: ???

LANGUAGE: ARAMAIC (likely understood Greek and Hebrew as well)

OCCUPATION: ???



HOW OLD WAS SIMON?

HOW OLD WERE THE DISCIPLES?

- Jesus was around 30 when he began his ministry (Lk 3:23), the typical age for a rabbi.
- Students were usually younger than their rabbis. Jesus refers to them as “little children” (Mt 10:42; 11:25).
- Education ended between ages 12-15. Some disciples were already practicing trades (i.e. Lk 5:1-11; Mt 9:9).
- As far as we know, Simon was the only married one at the time (Mt 8:14-15; Mk 1:29-31; Lk 4:38-39) at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry; the average age for marriage was 18.
- As far as we know, by the third year of Jesus’ ministry, Simon was the only one who had to pay the temple tax (Mt 17:24-27), which began at age 20 (Ex 30:14).

Most of the disciples were likely young teenagers at the time they began following Christ.

Simon was likely a young teenager (~14-16) at the time he began following Christ.

SIMON THE ZEALOT IN THE GOSPELS

LIFE AS A DISCIPLE:

Simon the Zealot is consistently listed in the 3rd group of the Twelve, with his name always appearing next to Thaddaeus / Judas of James.

Like the rest of the Twelve, Simon...

- ...was appointed by Jesus (Mt 10:1-2; Mk 3:13-16; Lk 6:12-13)
- ...travelled with Jesus (Mt 26:20; Mk 14:17)
- ...received insight to Jesus' teachings (Mk 4:10)
- ...was sent out to preach (Mt 10:5-42; Mk 6:7-13; Lk 9:1-6)
- ...baptized people (Jn 4:2)
- ...performed miracles (Mk 6:13; Lk 9:1-2)
- ...was challenged by Jesus' teachings (Mk 9:36; Jn 6:67-71)
- ...heard Christ predict his death (Mt 20:17; Mk 10:32)
- ...fled at Christ's arrest (Mt 26:56; Mk 14:50)
- ...saw the resurrected Christ (Lk 24:33-49; Jn 20:19-28)
- ...witnessed the ascension (Lk 24:50-53; Ac 1:6-11)

MATTHEW 10	MARK 3	LUKE 6	ACTS 1
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Peter
Andrew	James of Zebedee	Andrew	John
James of Zebedee	John	James of Zebedee	James
John	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James of Alphaeus	James of Alphaeus	James of Alphaeus	James of Alphaeus
Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot
Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot	Judas of James	Judas of James
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	

SIMON THE ZEALOT IN ACTS & THE EPISTLES

Simon the Zealot is only mentioned once in the book of Acts (“Judas of James,” 1:13), and is never mentioned in the Epistles.

Along with the rest of the apostles, Simon would have been present...

- ... at the Ascension (Ac 1:6-11)
- ... when they replaced Judas Iscariot (Ac 1:12-26)
- ... when the Spirit fell at Pentecost (Ac 2:1-13)
- ... when Peter delivered the first sermon (Ac 2:14-41)
- ... in the establishing of the Jerusalem church (Ac 2:42-47)
- ... as the Jerusalem church continued to grow (Ac 4:32-37)
- ... when the high priest began to arrest the apostles (Ac 5:17-42)
- ... when they appointed the seven deacons (Ac 6:1-7)



**SIMON THE ZEALOT
ACCORDING TO**

TRADITION

TRAVELS & TRADITIONS

- Traditionally, Simon the Zealot is often **confused with Simon son of Clopas** (cf. Jn 19:25), which makes it difficult to determine the legitimacy of many traditions. (see *Hippolytus on the Twelve*, 4th cent.; *Acts of Simon of Cananaean*)
- It is very difficult to determine where Simon the Zealot travelled:
 1. According to EASTERN tradition, Simon ministered in **Jerusalem, Samaria, Egypt, and Georgia** (*Acts of Simon of Cananaean; Breviarium Apostolorum*).
 2. According to WESTERN tradition, Simon ministered in **Persia** (*Passio Simonis et Judae; History of Armenia; Hieronymian Martyrology*) and **Britain** (*Synopsis de Apostol*, c. AD 300).



THE FATE OF SIMON THE ZEALOT

There are many traditions regarding Simon the Zealot's fate. Some suggest that he:

1. Died (of old age?) in Jerusalem (*Hippolytus on the Twelve*, 4th cent.)
2. Was crucified under Trajan (*Coptic Acts of Simon of Cananaean*)
3. Was martyred under Hadrian (*Breviarium Apostolorum*)
4. Died in Abkhazia, Georgia (Georgian tradition)
5. Killed by priests in Persia (Latin *Passio Simonis et Judae*)
6. Martyred in Veriospore, Persia (*History of Armenia*)
7. Crucified in Britain (*Synopsis de Apostol*, c. AD 300)

That being said, we can't be 100% certain as to how or when Simon the Zealot died.

SEAN McDOWELL'S CONCLUSIONS:

1. SIMON THE ZEALOT ENGAGED IN MISSIONARY WORK OUTSIDE JERUSALEM – very probably true
2. SIMON THE ZEALOT EXPERIENCED MARTYRDOM – as plausible as not

Pomarancio, "Martyrdrom of St.Simon the Zealot" (14th c.)

