

Simon The Zealot

The final faithful apostle of the original twelve was Simon. In the first two gospels he is called “*Simon the Canaanite*”(Matthew 10:4; Mark 3:18). Luke calls him “*Simon the Zealot*”(6:15).

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia explains Simon’s well known political party saying, “the designation ‘Cananaean’ is regarded as of political rather than of geographical significance...The Zealots were a faction headed by Judas of Galilee, who ‘in the days of enrollment’ (compare Acts 5:37; Luke 2:1-2) bitterly opposed the [taxation](#) at the census of Quirinius, and would have hastened by the sword the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy.”

Knowing Simon was part of such a “zealous” political group may teach us...

Jesus looks to use certain strengths for His purposes. Simon was a man known for his “zeal.” Zeal is a powerful force by itself. Yet, how much greater is our “zeal” when it is properly channeled and used “*according to knowledge*” (see Romans 10:2)?

Simon’s political history helped shape his spiritual future. Jesus needed men who were willing to stand and be brave in the face of opposition. Jesus needed soldiers—and still does today (Ephesians 6:10ff). Simon was accustomed to being a minority group willing to fight for truth’s sake and sacrifice. Perhaps these past experiences were valuable to the [circle](#) of apostles and the early church.

Simon was a man accustomed to following orders. Jesus needed men who were able to be both followers (of Him) and leaders (of future disciples). Simon’s political history made it evident he was not too proud to follow and take instruction. The best of disciples must be willing to follow orders. Luke 6:40 says, “*The disciple is not above his teacher: but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.*” For this apostle, it was not “Simon says” but “Jesus says.”