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THE FALLEN HEROES OF FAITH – LESSON 5

APOSTLE MATTHEW

Yesterday we honored the martyrdom of Apostle Philip, the second apostle killed for preaching the gospel in his missionary work in Asia Minor. Yesterday, I mistakenly credited the martyrdom to the deacon Philip instead of the Apostle Philip.

Today we honor the third apostle to be martyred, Matthew to whom the first gospel is credited. Matthew became a well-travelled missionary. He ministered in Parthia which was in present day Iran. Parthia had become a powerful military adversary of Rome during the first century B.C. but had declined in power by this time.

Afterward, Matthew went to the African continent where he ministered in Ethiopia (south of Egypt). Ethiopia had some prior exposure to the gospel because Philip the deacon that became an Evangelist, had years earlier ministered to the Ethiopian Eunuch returning from Jerusalem (as a proselyte to Judaism) while in his chariot of reading the scroll of Isaiah. That man had carried the gospel message of Jesus to Ethiopia.

Fox says Matthew was slain in the Ethiopian city of Nadabah in A.D. 60 with a halberd which was a long spear with an axe on it. One account says he was staked to or impaled to the ground by spears then beheaded. One or more halberds could have done all of that.

The National Geographic gives a different account. They claim that Matthew was stabbed in the back by a swordsman who was sent by Ethiopian King Hertacus to assassinate him for criticizing the King for his immorality. Regardless of the manner of his execution, he is truly a great fallen hero of God's army who spread the gospel far and wide to foreign lands.

"I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord." It may be just across the street to a neighbor. The key for you and me is to be obediently responsive to "go and do" whatever and wherever Holy Spirit puts in our minds and hearts.