

CALLING THE TWELVE

*Matthew 10:1-4, 16, 29-32, 37-39, 12:9-15;
Mark 3:14-19; Luke 6:6-16; 9:23-24*

By Bob Stacy

Choosing the Twelve

Jesus spent the whole night in prayer before calling the apostles from His many disciples. A *disciple* is a learner and an apprentice. An apostle is a chosen messenger sent with a special commission. Jesus had many disciples (Luke 10:1) but only twelve apostles.¹

Qualifications:

1. A disciple
2. Chosen by Jesus
3. (later) One who had seen the risen Christ (Acts 1:21-22 & 1 Corinthians 9:1)

Credentials:

Power and authority from Christ to perform miracles, they authenticated the messenger and message.

Commission:

1. Only go to the Jews (Matthew 10:6)
2. They were to announce the coming of the kingdom just as John the Baptist (Matt 3:2) and Jesus (Matt 4:17) had done. The kingdom was taken from the nation because they rejected Christ and His ambassadors (Matt 21:43).
3. Our commission is different: We are to include “all the world” (Matt 28:19-20), and preach the Gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24). Our message is not, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Our message is, “Christ died for our sins,” and “The King has come. He has already suffered, died, and risen from the dead. Now He offers His salvation to all who will believe.”²

Healing a Crippled Hand – Sabbath day Controversy

The Sabbath was a central issue in the conflicts between Jesus and His opponents (cf. Mark 2:23; 3:4). Mosaic Law required that work cease on the seventh day. Additional laws were added later, which became complicated and burdensome. These human traditions often obscured God’s intention when He gave the Law. “The Sabbath was made for man” (Mark 2:27) so that he could have rest and a time for worship and joy. The Gospels record seven occasions when Jesus and His disciples were challenged by Sabbath day activity.

- **John 5:9-10** – because Jesus healed a lame man at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem. The man who was healed was in danger of losing his life because Jewish traditions taught that a person deserved death if he carried anything from a public place to a private place on the Sabbath.³
- **Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5** – because the disciples plucked ears of corn on the way back from Galilee,
- **Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11** – because Jesus healed a man's withered hand in a synagogue.

This contention seems to have been set up by the Pharisees. As Jesus was teaching in the synagogue, He encountered a man whose right hand was shriveled. The religious leaders were watching this situation because they were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus. He knew what they were thinking, as He did when religious leaders opposed Him previously (5:22). He used the situation to show His authority over the Sabbath. He said, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?" This question indicated that refusing to do good on the Sabbath was the same as doing evil. If suffering is not alleviated, then one is doing evil to the sufferer. As the man stretched out his hand, it was completely restored. Jesus performed no "work" on the Sabbath - He simply spoke a few words and a hand was completely restored. He healed the man without breaking the Pharisees' law, and humiliated the religious leaders at the same time. No wonder they were furious and sought to get rid of Him.⁴

- **John 9:1-34** – when Jesus heals a blind man in Jerusalem
- **Luke 13:10-21** – when Jesus heals a crippled woman in a synagogue in Judea,
- **Luke 14:1-21** – when Jesus heals a man with dropsy in the home of a Pharisee,

WORD STUDY

Called: to sound towards, i.e. address, exclaim, summon⁵

Chose: to choose or select for oneself, not necessarily implying the rejection of what is not chosen. It gives favor to that which is chosen – a relationship is established between the one choosing and the object chosen. It involves preference and selection from among many choices.⁶

Synagogue: an assemblage of persons; usually refers to a Jewish meeting place. It was the model for Christian churches.

Sabbath: The word means "rest," and is linked with God's rest after the six days of Creation (Gen 2:2-3). God gave the nation of Israel laws about the Sabbath (Neh 9:13-14), and made it a sign between Him and the nation (Ex 20:8-11; 31:12-17). The sanctity of the seventh day was a distinctive part of the Jewish faith. Some of the rabbis taught that

Messiah could not come until Israel had perfectly kept the Sabbath. This is why obeying laws about the Sabbath was very important both personally and nationally.

Calling Sunday “the Sabbath”:

- * This is to confuse the first day and the seventh day, and what each signifies.
- * The Sabbath is a reminder of the completion of the “**old Creation**,” the Lord’s Day is a reminder of the finished work of Christ in the “**new Creation**” (2 Cor 5:21; Eph 2:10; 4:24).
- * The Sabbath speaks of rest *after* work and relates to the Law, while the Lord’s Day speaks of rest before work and relates to grace.

The Lord’s Day commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead as well as the coming of the Holy Spirit and the “birthday” of the church (Acts 2).

The early church met on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:1-2). However, some Jewish believers kept the Sabbath, which sometimes led to division. Paul addressed this problem in Rom 14:1-15:13 where he gave principles to promote both liberty and unity in the church. Still, Paul always made it clear that *observing special days had nothing to do with salvation* (Gal 4:1-11; Col 2:8-17). We are saved from sin only by our faith in Christ, and keeping the Sabbath has nothing to do with it.⁷

Accusation: to speak openly against, to condemn or accuse mainly in a legal sense.⁸

Filled with: to make full, to be filled with something, i.e., to be wholly affected and influenced by the Holy Spirit.⁹

PEOPLE

Disciples: (to learn, to understand, a learner, pupil) In the New Testament, being a disciple was more than being a mere pupil or learner. It was someone who was dedicated to the cause. It was someone who accepted the instruction and made it his rule of conduct. A disciple was still a learner, but was also a person who followed a teacher and learned from his wisdom. Jesus had many disciples.

Apostles: (to send, used as a substitute, one sent as an ambassador) An ambassador is never greater than the one who sends him. The Lord chose the term *apóstoloi* to indicate the distinctive relation of the Twelve Apostles. It is a classical Greek word that was seldom used in Scripture. It designates the office as instituted by Christ to witness of Him before the world.¹⁰ He chose these men to be His special witnesses.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In Luke 6:6-11, what words best describe the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law? What words best describe Jesus in these verses? What best describe the man with the injured hand?
2. According to verse 7, how did the Pharisees view the power of Jesus?
3. What do you think Jesus was looking for at the beginning of verse 10?
4. In Matthew 10:7, Jesus was telling his disciples what they were to preach. How does it compare with what He preached and what John the Baptist preached? Does it compare with what we are to preach?

APPLICATION:

1. Jewish tradition dictated that there was to be no healing on the Sabbath. Religious leaders said healing was the same as practicing medicine, and a person was not to practice his profession on the Sabbath. It was more important to these leaders to protect their tradition than alleviating human suffering.

Jesus was more concerned with the needs of people than man-made regulations. The religious leaders were focused on their rules, and making sure they were not broken. They were focused on certain activities that were not to be done on the Sabbath. Jesus was concerned with doing good and helping others.
 - Which characteristic is true of Christianity today from the view of an objective observer?
 - Are you more concerned with opposing certain sins and cultural movements, or in advancing the kingdom of God and proclaiming his love for men and women?
 - Christianity is the most positive force that ever came to the earth. It has helped more people and restored more lives than anything else. We should make sure it doesn't degenerate into a negative religion.¹¹
2. What does Matthew 10 mean (or can it mean) for people who follow Jesus?

APOSTLES LISTED:

There are four lists of the twelve apostles recorded in the New Testament. No two of these lists coincide perfectly.

Matthew 10:2-4	Mark 3:16-19	Luke 6:14-16	Acts 1:13
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Peter
Andrew	James the son of Zebedee	Andrew	James
James the son of Zebedee	John the brother of James	James	John
John his brother	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew the publican	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James the son of Alphaeus	James the son of Alphaeus	James the son of Alphaeus	James the son of Alphaeus
Lebbaeus (Thaddaeus)*	Thaddaeus*	Simon Zelotes	Simon Zealotes
Simon the Canaanite	Simon the Canaanite	Judas*, brother or son of James	Judas*, brother or son of James
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	

* These are the same person, according to Bible authorities¹²

FACTS ABOUT THE TWELVE APOSTLES:

Name	Home Town	Occupation	Legend or Tradition
Peter	Bethsaida	Fisherman	Tradition says that he deemed himself unworthy to die in the same way as his Lord, and so begged his crucifers to crucify him upside down. ¹³
Andrew	Bethsaida	Fisherman	Tradition says that he was nailed to a cross in the form of an X ¹⁴
James	Bethsaida or Capernaum	Fisherman	His life came to an untimely end when he was martyred by Herod Agrippa ... He was the second of the martyrs and the first of the apostles to give his life for Christ. ¹⁵
John	Bethsaida	Fisherman	Tradition says he was the youngest of the twelve ¹⁶ and outlived all, or nearly all, of those who had been the friends and companions even of his mature years. The last act of his life. When all capacity to work and teach is gone — when there is no strength even to stand — the spirit still retains its power to love, and the lips are still opened to repeat, without change and variation, the command which summed up all his Master's will, "Little children, love one another" (Jerome, <i>in Gal.</i> 6). When he felt his death approaching he gave orders for the construction of his own sepulcher, and when it was finished calmly laid himself down in it and died (Augustin. <i>Tract. in Joann.</i> 124) ¹⁷
Philip	Bethsaida		Tradition says that Philip was a martyr at Heirapolis. ¹⁸
Bartholomew/ Nathanael	Cana	unknown	Many scholars believe Nathanael is Bartholomew one of the twelve apostles of Christ. ¹⁹ Tradition says that he suffered crucifixion with his head downward at Albanopolis, in Armenia Minor. ²⁰
Matthew	Capernaum	Tax Collector	Tradition says that he remained for fifteen years at Jerusalem, after which he went as missionary to the Persians, Parthians and Medes. It is also believed that he died a martyr in Ethiopia. 21
Thomas/ Didymus	unknown	unknown	Tradition says that he died as a martyr ²²
James son of Alphaeus	unknown	Tax Collector?	Tradition says that he had been a tax-gatherer. It may be his father Alphaeus was the same Alphaeus who was the father of Levi the tax-gather, who became Matthew the Apostle. ²³
Thaddaeus/ Labbeus/Jude	Nazareth	Carpenter?	Tradition says that he is sometimes identified as Jude who wrote the epistle bearing his name. ²⁴
Simon the Canaanite	unknown	Jewish patriot, Zealot ²⁵	Tradition says he was crucified in Judea in the region of Domitian. ²⁶
Judas	Not a Galilean	unknown	He hanged himself (Matthew 27:5)

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 - ³ Bible Knowledge Commentary © 1983, 2000 Cook Communications Ministries
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 - ⁹ The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament © 1992 by AMG International, Inc.
 - ¹⁰ The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament © 1992 by AMG International, Inc.
 - ¹¹ The Life Application Commentary Series © 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000 by the Livingstone Corporation
 - ¹² The Gospel According to Matthew, Volume II, Oliver B. Greene, © 1972, page 382
 - ¹³ All the Men of the Bible, Herbert Lockyer, ©1958, page 273
 - ¹⁴ Ibid, page 49
 - ¹⁵ Ibid, page 169
 - ¹⁶ Ibid, page 197
 - ¹⁷ McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia, Biblesoft © 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006
 - ¹⁸ All the Men of the Bible, Herbert Lockyer, ©1958, page 277
 - ¹⁹ Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers
 - ²⁰ McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia, Biblesoft © 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006
 - ²¹ Smith's Bible Dictionary, Biblesoft © 2003, 2006
 - ²² All the Men of the Bible, Herbert Lockyer, ©1958, page 327
 - ²³ Ibid, page 170
 - ²⁴ Ibid, page 326
 - ²⁵ Ibid, page 317
 - ²⁶ McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia, Electronic Database. © 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc