

## THE TWELVE (1)

### Called by Jesus

#### A. Introduction

1. The Twelve weren't the only ones to recognise who Jesus is.

Mary.

"The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God... For nothing is impossible with God." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered, "May it be to me as you have said." (Luke 1:35, 37-38)

Elizabeth.

"In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:42-43)

Joseph.

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus." (Matthew 1:21, 24-25)

Shepherds.

"When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them." (Luke 2:17-18)

Simeon.

"When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God saying: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." (Luke 2:27-32)

Anna.

"Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem." (Luke 2:38)

The Magi.

"On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh." (Matthew 2:11)

John the Baptist.

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness." Then John consented." (Matthew 3:13-15)

"The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)

2. The Twelve weren't the only disciples of Jesus.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus had a number of disciples.

"One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding round him and listening to the word of God." (Luke 5:1)

"From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him." (John 6:66)

"After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go." (Luke 10:1)

"Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away." (John 19:38)

"The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it." (Luke 23:55)

### 3. But from the multitude of disciples, Jesus chose twelve for the specific role of being Apostles.

"Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve – designating them apostles – that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons." (Mark 3:13-15)

The Twelve were chosen to be Apostles and over an 18-month period were trained up by the Lord Jesus for this role.

*"The selection by Jesus of the twelve... is an important landmark in the Gospel history. It divides the ministry of our Lord into two portions, nearly equal, probably, as to duration, but unequal as to the extent and importance of the work done in each respectively.*

*In the earlier period Jesus laboured single-handed; His miraculous deeds were confined for the most part to a limited area, and His teaching was in the main of an elementary character. But by the time when the twelve were chosen, the work of the kingdom has assumed such dimensions as to require organisation and division of labour; and the teaching of Jesus was beginning to be of a deeper and more elaborate nature, and His gracious activities were taking on ever-widening range.*

*"It is probable that the selection of a limited number to be His close and constant companions had become a necessity to Christ, in consequence of His very success in gaining disciples. His followers, we imagine, had grown so numerous as to be an incumbrance and an impediment to his movements, especially in the long journeys which mark the later part of His ministry." (A. B. Bruce, The Training of the Twelve)*

### 4. In this series we will seek to answer 3 questions:

Who were the Twelve?

How did the Jesus call and choose them?

What do we learn from them about what it means to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ?

## **B. The Twelve were called to believe**

### 1. The first of the Twelve to meet Jesus were Andrew and John.

"The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning round, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus." (John 1:35-40)

Andrew and John wanted to know whether John the Baptist was right when he said that Jesus was the Lamb of God so they go after Him.

Andrew and John wanted to know where Jesus was staying because they wanted to spend time with Him, to find out who He is.

Andrew and John are invited by Jesus to get to know Him – “Come and See”.

2. Jesus invites people to come.

To find out who He is.

To investigate and discover His identity.

And He promises that when they do, they will see.

3. What do Andrew and John, Simon, Philip and Nathaniel see?

Jesus is the King who saves.

“The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ).” (John 1:41)

Jesus knows the future.

“And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter).” (John 1:42)

Jesus is the One the Old Testament is about.

“The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.” Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathaniel and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathaniel asked. “Come and see,” said Philip.” (John 1:43-46)

Jesus knows people’s hearts.

“When Jesus saw Nathaniel approaching, he said of him, “Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.” “How do you know me?” Nathaniel asked. Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig-tree before Philip called you.” (John 1:47-48)

Jesus is the way to heaven.

“Then Nathaniel declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.” Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig-tree. You shall see greater things than that.” He then added, “I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” (John 1:49-51)

4. These five men were called to believe in Jesus – to place all their trust and confidence in Him.

Even though we don’t have an account of the other men who made up the Twelve doing this, we can be sure that they did.

5. Following this first encounter with Jesus, near the start of His ministry, these men went back to their day jobs.

They were followers of Jesus but they weren’t literally followers of Jesus.

“This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.” (John 2:11)

After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptised.” (John 3:22)

The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptising more disciples than John, although in fact it was not Jesus who baptised, but his disciples." (John 4:1-2)

This was to change when John the Baptist was arrested.

### **C. The Twelve were called to follow**

1. After John the Baptist's arrest, Jesus calls them to "Come" but this time to follow Him.

"After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said." (Mark 1:14-17)

"As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said." (Matthew 4:18-19)

Following Jesus meant physically following Him like the disciples of a Rabbi would, to listen and absorb his teaching.

But following Jesus is more than just listening to His teaching.

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19)

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." (Mark 1:17)

What this meant is explained in more detail by Luke in his description of this event.

"One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding round him and listening to the word of God, he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord, I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." (Luke 5:1-10)

Jesus promises that He was going to turn these fishers of fish into fishers that catch men.

In Jeremiah 16:16, God speaks of fishing for men to catch them for judgment.

"But now I will send for many fishermen," declares the LORD, "and they will catch them. After that I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them down on every mountain and hill and from the crevices of the rocks. My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from me, nor is their sin concealed from my eyes. I will repay them double for their wickedness and their sin, because they have defiled my land with the lifeless forms of their vile images and have filled my inheritance with their detestable idols." (Jeremiah 16:16-18)

But that's not what Jesus means here – He means go fishing for people who are lost in their sin by telling them to repent and believe the good news about Jesus and be saved.

But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:30-32)

2. The disciples follow Jesus.

Simon, Andrew, James and John did.

“As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” At once they left their nets and followed him.” When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.” (Mark 1:16-20)

So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.” (Luke 5:1-11)

Levi (Matthew) did.

“After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. “Follow me,” Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.” (Luke 5:27-28)

3. These five men were called to follow Jesus.

They did so immediately – without hesitation.

They did so at great cost – they left their jobs and their family; Levi had no possibility at returning to his job as a tax collector.

Even though we don’t have an account of the other men who made up the Twelve doing this, we can be sure that they did.

And it wasn’t just the Twelve who did this either (remember Jesus had other disciples who followed Him around).

#### **D. Every disciple is called by Jesus to believe and follow.**

1. Jesus says “Come and See”.

For us this doesn’t mean spending time physically with the Lord Jesus.

It means to finding out what those who did, have to say about Him and trusting that Jesus is who they say He is.

2. Jesus says “Come and Follow”.

For us this doesn’t mean physically following the Lord Jesus.

It means listening to His voice speak to us in His Word and responding in obedience immediately, and being willing to do so at a great cost.