

## **THE TWELVE (2)**

### **Chosen by Jesus**

#### **A. Introduction**

##### 1. Who were the Twelve?

The Twelve weren't the only ones to recognise who Jesus is (e.g. Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Shepherds, Simeon, Anna, the Magi, John the Baptist).

The Twelve weren't the only disciples of Jesus – throughout His ministry, Jesus had a number of disciples.

But from the multitude of disciples, the Twelve were chosen by Jesus for a specific role.

##### 2. The Twelve were called to believe in Jesus.

Jesus invited them to COME and find out who He is.

Jesus promised that when they come they will SEE who He is.

Jesus called them to BELIEVE in Him – to place all their trust in Him.

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.

##### 3. The Twelve were called to follow Jesus.

Jesus invited them to FOLLOW Him – this meant physically following Him around like the disciples of a Rabbi would.

They followed Jesus immediately and at great cost (leaving their jobs and their families).

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.

#### **B. The Twelve were chosen for a reason**

##### 1. Jesus chose the Twelve at a time of growing opposition from the religious leaders.

“One of those days Jesus...” (Luke 6:12)

They opposed Jesus for healing a paralysed man and forgiving his sins.

“When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.” The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, “Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:20-21)

They opposed Jesus for eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners.

“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?’” (Luke 5:30)

They opposed Jesus when He allowed His disciples to pick some ears of corn and eat them on the Sabbath.

“One Sabbath Jesus was going through the cornfields, and his disciples began to pick some ears of corn, rub them in their hands and eat the grain. Some of the Pharisees asked, “Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?” (Luke 6:1-2)

They opposed Jesus after He healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath.

"The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath... He looked round at them all, and then said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was completely restored. But they were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus." (Luke 6:7, 10-11)

Knowing the hatred of the religious leaders and the inevitability of His death, He chose the Twelve.

"Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus." (Mark 3:6)

He needed people to continue His work after He was gone.

## 2. Jesus chose the Twelve from outside the religious establishment.

He didn't choose a single Rabbi or Scribe or Pharisee or Sadducee or Priest.

He chose twelve ordinary men – men who were fishermen or tax collector, men who had not been theologically trained.

"These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder); Andrew; Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him." (Mark 3:16-19)

By choosing from outside the religious establishment and by choosing twelve, Jesus was judging old Israel for their rejection of Him, and beginning a new Israel.

"He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." (John 1:11-12)

## 3. Jesus chose the Twelve after a night of prayer.

The selection of the Twelve was so important that Jesus needed to pray about it.

"One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God." When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor." (Luke 6:12-16)

He prayed about who He should choose.

He prayed for the men He would choose.

## 4. Jesus chose the Twelve from a larger group of disciples to be 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)

They were to be His official representatives.

They spoke with His authority as they delivered His message.

They exercised His authority as they drove out demons and healed the sick bearing witness to the truth of the message they proclaimed.

"He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness." (Matthew 10:1)

"Then Jesus went round teaching from village to village. Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits... They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them" (Mark 6:6, 12-13)

"When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick." (Luke 9:1-2)

#### 5. Jesus chose the Twelve to be trained.

Following the selection of the Twelve to be apostles, the next 18 months became a period of intensive training to prepare them for the task He would entrust to them when He returned to heaven.

He trained them to be fishers of men.

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

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20)

They learned to fish by being with Him – watching Him, being taught by Him.

"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)

They learned to fish by fishing themselves – and reporting back to Him how it went.

"Then Jesus went round teaching from village to village. Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits. These were his instructions: "Take nothing for the journey except a staff – no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra tunic. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them." They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them" (Mark 6:6-13)

"The apostles gathered round Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught." (Mark 6:30)

#### 6. Jesus chose the Twelve for the benefit of the many.

After Jesus ascended to heaven, the Twelve would have a foundational role in the building of the church and the record of their teaching would eventually become the New Testament.

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone." (Ephesians 2:19-20)

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching..." (Acts 2:42)

### **C. The Twelve were given what they needed <sup>i</sup>**

#### 1. They lacked understanding.

"He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" (Luke 24:25)

So Jesus taught them.

"After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God." (Acts 1:3)

2. They lacked humility.

"An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest." (Luke 9:46)

So Jesus modelled humility to them.

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45)

3. They lacked faith.

"He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" (Mark 4:40)

So Jesus strengthened their faith by doing miracles.

"Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:30-31)

4. They lacked commitment.

"Then everyone deserted him and fled." (Mark 14:50)

So Jesus prayed for them.

"I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name – the name you gave me – so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled." (John 17:11-12)

5. They lacked power.

"When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. "Lord, have mercy on my son," he said. "He is an epileptic and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him." (Matthew 17:14-16)

So Jesus gave them the Holy Spirit.

"I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:49)

**D. Every disciple is chosen by Jesus for a reason and given what they needed**

1. We have been chosen by Jesus for a reason.

We have been chosen by Jesus to make disciples.

2. We have been given by Jesus what we need.

We have His Word and His Spirit.

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<sup>i</sup> Adapted from Twelve Ordinary Men by John MacArthur