

## THE TWELVE (9)

### Show the Welcome of Jesus

#### A. Introduction

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

The Twelve were men who were called to believe in Jesus and to follow Him.

The Twelve were men who were chosen from a larger group of disciples to be apostles and were given what they needed to do this role.

##### 2. What do we learn from The Twelve about what it means to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Andrew taught us that disciples of Jesus introduce people to Jesus.

Simon Peter taught us that disciples of Jesus are changed by Jesus to be like Jesus.

John taught us that disciples of Jesus love the truth about Jesus.

James taught us that disciples of Jesus learn to suffer for Jesus.

Philip taught us that disciples of Jesus never stop learning about Jesus.

Nathanael Bartholomew taught us that disciples of Jesus are waiting for Jesus.

#### B. Meet Matthew

##### 1. Matthew was a tax collector.

“These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector.” (Matthew 10:2-3)

In Israel, there were two types of tax collectors: Gabbai and Mokhes.

A Gabbai was a general tax collector who collected property tax and income tax.

A Mokhes collected tax on imports and exports, set tolls on roads and bridges, and would apply tariffs to whatever else they could find to tax.

The tax collected by a Gabbai tax collector was officially set, whereas the tax collected by a Mokhes tax collector was often set at their own discretion.

There were two kinds of Mokhes tax collectors.

A Great Mokhes was the chief tax collector who would stay behind the scenes and hire Little Mokhes to collect taxes for him. Zacchaeus was a Great Mokhes, whereas Matthew Levi was a Little Mokhes.

“Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector’s booth.” (Mark 2:13-14)

Mokhes tax collectors were hated by the Jews because not only did they steal from them, but also because those that were Jewish were considered to be traitors for collaborating with the Roman occupying power.

##### 2. Matthew was an outcast.

As a tax collector he was forbidden to enter the synagogue and would not have been permitted past the court of the Gentiles in the temple.

"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector... But the tax collector stood at a distance." (Luke 18:10, 13)

To make matters worse, Matthew was from the priestly tribe of Levi.

Unable to hear the Word of God at the synagogue, Matthew must have studied the Old Testament on his own, as it is clear he knew it well.

### 3. Matthew was an apostle.

He was called by Jesus to follow Him.

"As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him." (Matthew 9:9)

He was chosen by Jesus to be an apostle.

"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)

### 4. Matthew was a Writer.

As a tax collector he would have been used to and skilled in making detailed notes. He probably continued to do this as he listened to Jesus.

Some 20 or 30 years after Jesus had gone back to heaven he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write this book known as 'The Gospel according to Matthew'.

### 5. What do we learn from Matthew Levi about what it means to be disciples of the Lord Jesus?

Disciples of Jesus show the welcome of Jesus.

## **C. Matthew experienced the welcome of Jesus**

### 1. The welcome that calls sinners.

Matthew knew that He was a sinner – in the list of apostles, Matthew adds in his Gospel, an extra note that highlights this.

"These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector." (Matthew 10:2-3)

Matthew is called by Jesus to follow Him.

"As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him." (Matthew 9:9)

Matthew was being offered forgiveness by Jesus for all that He had done wrong.

"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." (Luke 5:27)

"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 5:31-32)

### 2. The welcome that changes sinners.

Matthew follows Jesus.

"As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him." (Mark 2:14)

Matthew leaves everything behind to follow Jesus.

"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)

#### **D. Matthew showed the welcome of Jesus**

##### 1. By hosting a party.

He held an enormous banquet at his own house.

"Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them." (Luke 5:29)

He invited a large number of tax collectors and other "undesirables" to meet Jesus.

"While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples." (Matthew 9:10)

He wasn't the only one to express the welcome of Jesus.

The disciples expressed the welcome of Jesus by accepting Matthew.

The disciples expressed the welcome of Jesus by attending the party.

"While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him." (Mark 2:15)

##### 2. By writing a book.

Although the readers of his Gospel would have primarily been Jewish, Matthew makes it clear that the Gospel is for Gentile outsiders too.

He records people from the nations putting their faith in Jesus.

"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."...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 2:1-2, 11)

"When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralysed and in terrible suffering."..."Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that very hour." (Matthew 8:5-6, 13)

"Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession."...Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour." (Matthew 15:21-22, 28)

He finishes his book with the call of Jesus to take the gospel to the nations.

"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:16-20)

3. By going to the nations.

*"For Matthew, who had at first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to other peoples, committed his Gospel to writing in his native tongue, and thus compensated those whom he was obliged to leave for the loss of his presence." (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.24.6)*

We cannot be sure who those other people were. Tradition says it might have been those in Asia, Persia, Greece or Syria.

Matthew went to the nations until his death. Legend has it that he died as a martyr either by being burnt at the stake, being stoned or by being beheaded.

#### **E. Disciples show the welcome of Jesus**

1. We who have experienced the welcome of Jesus are to show that welcome to others.

By who we are willing to spend time with.

By who we are willing to share the gospel with.

By who we are willing to be members of a local church with.

2. Does the scope of those we welcome match the scope of those whom Jesus welcomes?