

THE DISCIPLES, Details

The Twelve Chosen

The details are listed in the following Biblical locations.

Matt 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-20; Luke 6:12-16; Acts 1:13

God had to create as part of His plan of Salvation "a holy nation, a peculiar or 'purchased' people" 1 Peter 2:9,

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:"

The twelve apostles were the beginning of this new "spiritual" nation Matt. 21:43.

"Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. "

Jesus spent a night in prayer before choosing these twelve men Luke 6:12.

"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."

When He selected them, He had three purposes in mind:

- (1) To train them by personal example and teaching.
- (2) As part of training to send them out to preach the Gospel.
- (3) He also gave them authority to heal and cast out demons.

(See Mark 1:14-15; Mark 1:38-39; Mark 6:7-13) These twelve men would then be able to continue His work after He returned to God the Father. They would also be able to train others to carry on the ministry after them (2 Tim. 2:2).

In the New Testament, you will find three lists of the names of the twelve disciples:

Matthew 10:2-4; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13.

Luke tells us that Jesus gave them the special name "apostles." A "disciple" is one who learns by doing; our modern equivalent might be "an apprentice." An "apostle" is one who is sent on official service with a commission. Jesus had many disciples but only twelve apostles, His special "ambassadors."

When you compare the lists, it appears that the names are arranged in pairs: Peter and Andrew; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew (Nathanael John 1:45); Thomas and Matthew (Levi); James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus (Judas, son of James, not Iscariot John 14:22); Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot. Since Jesus sent His apostles out two by two, this was a logical way to list them. Mark 6:7.

Name changes

Simon's name was changed to Peter, "the rock" John 1:40-42

Levi's was changed to Matthew, "the gift of God."

James and John were given the nicknames, "Boanerges - the sons of thunder." We commonly think of John as the apostle of love, but he certainly did not begin with that kind of attitude, neither did James his brother Mark 9:38-41 and 10:35-39; Luke 9:54-55.

It is encouraging to see what Jesus was able to do with a group of people with such different abilities and attitude for Christian service. There is still hope for us!

Mark defined the Hebrew word Boanerges because he was writing for Roman readers. In his Gospel you will find several of these "special notes for Gentiles" Mark 5:41;

Mark 7:11,34; Mark 11:9; Mark 14:36; Mark 15:22,34.

The word Canaanite in Mark 3:18 has nothing to do with national or racial origin. It is the Hebrew word cananaean, which comes from a word that means "to be jealous and zealous." The Zealots were a group of Jewish extremists organized to overthrow Rome; and they used every -means available, including murder, to advance their cause.

The historian Josephus called them "daggersmen." It would be interesting to know how Simon the Zealot responded when he met Matthew, a former employee of Rome.