

THE CALL OF THE 12

By Keith Greer

"Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him." [Matthew 10:2-4]

This was the naming of the twelve apostles of Christ. Let us look at some facts concerning the selection process by our Lord.

"And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him." {Mark 3:13} Christ had no search committee, and no advice from the "thinkers" of the day. The choice was, His will, for His purposes. Notice these men were not consulted before their selection and there was no politicking for the office.

"Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Him; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:" {Luke 6:12,13} Before making His selection Jesus prayed about the matter. We do not know the process that lead Him to His final choices. We do know that these were men that Jesus had personally taught and been with some time.

Why did he choose just twelve? God never intended for only twelve men to take the gospel to the whole world. Please read: "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." {2 Timothy 2:2}

What type of men did our Lord choose? His calling was not partial as to occupation or qualifications. Notice, there were no noblemen, no wealthy men, no teachers of the law, but humble men, such as fishermen and a tax collector. Yet, these men were different in temper and disposition. Jesus did not want twelve "carbon copies". None of these men remind us of the others. Each man has his own character and quirks. Jesus did call them for one purpose, to teach the gospel!

To show the different temperament of these men, remember... Peter, bold and impulsive; John, quiet, with a loving heart; Thomas, a skeptical spirit, a very cautious individual; Matthew, a publican for the Roman government; Judas, who was greedy, which led him to betray our Lord.

Let us remember that these men were just men. Peter would be the one who denied the Lord: "And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you. Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly." {Matthew 26:73-75} Later Peter would have to be rebuked by Paul for failure to acknowledge the Gentiles in front of the Jews. Sadly, his conduct caused another to follow his poor example, Galatians 2:11-14. Yet, Peter recovered his

weak faith and became a very good ambassador for Christ—preaching the first sermon to the Jews and Gentiles, Acts 2 and 10.

Some might say that Judas was a mistake since he would betray the Lord, Matthew 26:15,16. Yet he had the same power to choose as the other eleven but he failed in his conduct. Truly he could have recovered too, like Peter, but he went out and took his own life, Matthew 27:1-5.

Did our Lord's choices prove to be good ones? "If indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister." {Colossians 1:23} Gospel was preached to the whole known world and all but one died a martyr's death! Sounds like He made the right choices. ***