

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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LESSONS FROM JESUS CHOOSING THE TWELVE

By: Jerry Fite

Before the twelve became the twelve apostles, they were, along with many, disciples of the Lord. The word disciple means “learner” or one who follows the teaching of another. The twelve had been called from their secular walks of life, such as being employed as a tax collector (Matt. 9:9), or working as fishermen (Matt. 4:18, 21-22), and were now dedicated to a higher calling of following Jesus, the son of God. These twelve disciples, along with many other disciples, heard the instructive and demanding words of Jesus as He described the character and nature of His spiritual kingdom (Matt. 5-7). But Jesus had a special work outlined for the twelve.

These twelve disciples were chosen by the Lord to be apostles. The word “apostle” means “one sent”. According to Mark, there was a three-fold purpose in picking the twelve from the other disciples: “And he appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that the might send them forth to preach, and to have authority to cast out demons... (Mark 3:14-15). These Galileans would spend more time now with

the Lord, continuously learning from Him. As His ambassadors, they would go out and preach the gospel of salvation, being fishers of men. The Lord empowered His twelve with miraculous gifts, such as casting out demons and raising the dead (Matt. 10:8) thus confirming to a skeptical hearer that the twelve were from God and represented one in their message who was more powerful than the Devil himself.

Following the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus into Heaven, the twelve would be instrumental in spreading the saving gospel of Christ across the known world (cf. Mark 16:15-16, Colossians 1:23). As we think upon this great spiritual work envisioned by the Lord, and His choosing of the twelve long ago, are there some lessons for us today?

First, before the Lord chose the twelve to be apostles, “He continued all night in prayer to God” (Lk. 6:12). Prayer was a constant spiritual activity in Jesus’ life, not just something He did just once in while. He prayed as was raised from the waters at his baptism (Lk. 3:21), and was praying at the end, in Gethsemane and on the

cross (Lk. 22:41,44,34,46). More than once Jesus prayed alone (Lk. 9:18). Apparently, he was alone in the mountain, just Him and His Father in Heaven, and He continued talking to Him in prayer all night before He chose the twelve the next day.

Are we in the good habit that Jesus manifests and “pray without ceasing;” (I Thess. 5:17) ? Not only in the day to day routine, but especially when we are having to make an important decision, do we pray? Do we have enough spiritual desires and insight to talk to God all night about our next important decision?

There are no inspired apostles walking on the earth today. But the already confirmed gospel message, entrusted to the twelve, needs to be preached to save souls who are on earth today. Do you spend time with the Lord, learning from Him through His word? Knowing His desire for all to be saved (2 Peter 3:9, Lk. 19:10), do you take time from your secular work and use it to teach others the Gospel?