



## The Mission of the 12 | 6:6b-13



1. With the commissioning of the 12, Jesus reaches a point for which he has carefully prepared - the call to be fishers of men.
2. Simon, Andrew, James, John in 1:16-20; Levi in 2:14, the 12 in 3:13-19 have all been commissioned with a promise - they will be with Jesus and minister with power in word and deed.
3. These are the same as in the commissioning in Matthew 28:16-20 and Acts 1:8.
4. Since their election the disciples had been with Jesus and shared his experiences. This was the key to their preaching and power.
5. Through union with Christ, Christ's experiences are our experiences as well.

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1. Phil 3:7-11, 18-21 – it is Christ's experience of sin, of suffering and death, of power, of resurrection and victory, and of glory, that we experience.
2. There is not one experience Christ shares with us in his humanity we do not also experience.
  - Christ gets a new name (Is 62:2), we get a new name (Rev 2:17, 3:12)
  - Christ judges the earth (Jn 5:17,22, Jude 1:15), we judge the earth (1 Cor 6:2-3)
  - Christ reigns (Rev 11:15), we reign (Rev 22:5)
  - Christ is seated in glory (Eph 1:20), we are seated in glory (Eph 2:6)
3. Because we have the experiences of Christ (“in Christ”), we are authorized to advance the kingdom in the same way. Our ministries are extensions of Christ's ministry (2 Cor 5:20).

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1. Sent in pairs acknowledging the provision of Moses that testimonies be established by the mouth of two witnesses (Duet 17:6, Num 35:30).
2. “Nothing except a staff . . . sandals . . . no extra tunic” (Matt 10:5-15)
  - No bread = nothing even for the next meal
  - No bag = nothing for bread or, more likely, the “beggars’ bag” indicating no begging
  - No money = smallest copper coins, no change
  - No extra tunic = no shelter like shepherds wearing two tunics had one for night shelter.
  - No rod but take a staff = the shepherd's crook symbol of the prophetic office but not the shepherd's rod or club (prohibited by Matt / Luke).
3. Constituted a demand for rigorous commitment of total dependence on God similar to Israelites eating first Passover before Exodus (Ex 12:11).

“Shake the dust  
off your feet  
when you leave,  
as a testimony  
against them”



1. Pious Jews would customarily wash all clothes from traveling outside of Israel. Jews would have understood this action. “As a testimony against them” added for gentile readers.
2. Provided warning that the disciples had fulfilled their ministry, those rejecting now answered directly to God, consigning them to judgment.
3. Like the coming of Jesus, the coming of the disciples had the character of sifting and gathering, of reaping to judgment or to blessing.
4. What Jesus did in the power of God, the disciples did in the power of Jesus (Mark 2:9 vs. Acts 3:6). The essential character of their mission was the intrusion of the Kingdom of God “with power” (2 Cor 4:3-7).

Withdraw  
Beyond Galilee |  
6:14-8:30



1. Next big section focuses on a period when Jesus often retires beyond the borders of Galilee.
2. During the ministry of the 12, Mark records the reaction of Herod Antipas, who executes John.
3. The striking repetition of the word “bread” (16X).
  - The feeding of the 5,000 (6:35-44).
  - A second feeding of 4,000 is (8:1-10).
  - These two feeding miracles emphasizes the disciples’ misunderstanding of Jesus traced to their failure to understand the provision of bread.
  - Only one account of public teaching (7:1-23) but multiple accounts of instruction to the disciples.
  - The restoring of sight to a man born blind (8:22-26) signals the beginning of “sight” for disciples.
4. Climax is acknowledgement of Jesus’ dignity for the first time (8:27-29) .

## Major Players | Herodians

- Roman Occupation presented a major challenge for Jewish ideals during this period
- Rome placed client kings in place which were not true Romans, but also not true Jews
- This compromised rule was resented by most Jews, with the exception of the Sadducees
- The dynasty of client kings, starting with Herod the Great, was called the Herodians
- Upon the death of Herod the Great, his kingdom was split between his 4 sons
  - Herod Antipas over Galilee
  - Herod Archelaus over Judea and Samaria but banished due to incompetence and cruelty
  - And was replaced by Roman Procurates, the most famous of which was Pontius Pilate

## Between the Testaments | Herodian Dynasty

- 4 BC – 50 AD | Herod the Great – Edomite vassal ruler over Palestine, slaughter of the infants in Bethlehem ([Luke 2:16](#)), 3 sons
  1. 4 BC – 6 AD | Archelaus – Ethnarch of Judea and Samaria, banished by Augustus in 6 AD, misrule caused Joseph to settle with Mary and Jesus in Nazareth after returning from Egypt ([Matt 2:21-33](#)), after 6 AD Galilee ruled by Roman governors
  2. 4 BC – 33 AD | Herod Philip – Tetrarch of northern provinces
  3. 4 BC – 39 AD | Herod Antipas – Tetrarch of Galilee, beheads John the Baptist ([Mark 6:17-29](#)), Jesus calls him “that fox” ([Lk 13:32](#)), later stood trial before him ([Lk 23:7-12](#))
- 41 – 44 AD | Herod Agrippa I – Grandson of Herod the Great, ruled Judea and all Palestine, executed James the apostle and imprisoned Peter ([Acts 12:1-3](#))
- 50 - ? AD | Herod Agrippa II – Great-grandson of Herod the Great, heard Paul’s self-defense ([Acts 25-26](#))

## Popular Notions of Jesus' Identity | 6:14-16



1. Jesus as John raised displays ignorance of both since Jesus and John were contemporaries (Jesus had been baptized by John). Note the popular concept of resurrection at the time.
2. Jesus as Elijah identifies Jesus with “the Coming One” announced by John (1:7). Probably reflects the conviction of John’s followers. Though John leaves Jesus unnamed, he points unmistakably to Jesus as “Messenger of the Covenant” (3:1, 4:5) predicted by Malachi. Thus Jesus was Elijah, precursor to “great and terrible Day of the Lord.”
3. Jesus as an unnamed prophet indicates lesser role as a prophet in the succession of prophets, but not like Elijah. Hence the people thought alternately of Jesus as Moses, Elijah, Enoch or Jeremiah.

## Imprisonment and Death of John | 6:17-29



1. Herodias’ first husband was Herod Philip, son of Herod the Great and Cleopatra. To marry her, Herod Antipas had to put away a former wife, Aretas IV of Nabatea.
2. Josephus notes that Herod Antipas had John killed because he feared a political uprising consistent with Mark’s account where John’s proclamations could be conceived as a call to insurrection.
3. Likely a Herodian princess would not dance before party guests but with prior adultery and the be arranging of Herodias, entirely plausible.
4. As weak Ahab blurted out his troubles to Jezebel, Antipas shared his troubles to Herodias, who nursed a grudge against John.

## Imprisonment and Death of John | 6:17-29



5. Antipas would not allow this as he feared John. Though John accused him, Herod was fascinated with him. So imprisonment was a compromise.
6. After biding her time, the opportunity came.
7. Herod's offer was a proverbial reference not to be taken literally. Salome, who later married Herod Philip and Aristobulus, used his generosity to request the execution of John.
8. Following the execution, John's followers took charge of the body.
9. In AD 36 the Nabatean hordes swept down on Antipas to avenge the humiliation suffered by Aretas IV, their princess. They won a stinging defeat which early Christians interpreted as an avenging act of God.

## Provision of Rest in the Wilderness | 6:30-34



1. Before feeding of 5,000 and 4,000, Mark recounts withdraw to the wilderness.
2. It is appropriate for the disciples to report how they had fulfilled their ministries (missionaries in our day do the same. And indeed we will have to).
3. Only in Mark are disciples referred to as "apostles" referencing their function as missionaries (sent ones), not an official title.
4. Their collective activity caught the attention of large numbers of people who pursued after the disciples even as they had previously pursued Christ.

## Provision of Rest in the Wilderness | 6:30-34



5. Mark references the same word “desert” in vs. 31, 32 and 35. The promise of rest and provision in the wilderness reminds us of Moses and Joshua where God provided for them “in the wilderness”. The disciples here and the people later constitute a new exodus where the Lord will provide them with bread.
6. The withdrawal of people to the wilderness was in direct response to the ministry of the 12 - “many saw them . . . recognized them . . . followed them”. Mark shows that the provision of rest in the wilderness was ultimate intention behind the disciples’ call by Jesus.

## “Sheep not having a shepherd” | 6:34 cf. Num 27:17 and Exek 34:5,



1. Num 27:17 Moses prays the Lord will appoint a leader prior to his death in the wilderness lest the people “be as sheep which have no shepherd”.
2. The shepherd appointed in answer to Moses’ prayer was Joshua, who in the Septuagint is “Jesus”.
3. Ezekiel 34 there is no shepherd for the sheep but God promises the coming of a faithful shepherd “my servant David” who will establish covenant of peace and people will “dwell securely in the wilderness”.
4. Mark paints Jesus onto background of these OT refs.
5. This is indispensable to understanding the coming feeding narratives. The time of rest in the wilderness comes when the Son of God establishes meal-fellowship with his people.