

Jesus Call His Disciples

Turning to **Luke 6:12**, we come now to the completion of this section in Luke's Gospel where Jesus calls or gathers to Himself 12 apostles who will follow Him. He sets aside a special time of prayer to seek His Father's face in the selection of the 12 who will be with Him (**v. 12**).

In **v. 13**, Luke tells us that Jesus summons or calls the twelve disciples to gather around him. The disciples' ministry will be the ministry of Jesus. In the upcoming sermon (**Luke 6:20-49**), Jesus is going to train, or equip, and send out the 12 disciples into the nation of Israel to extend and widen the Kingdom that He has inaugurated (**vv. 17-19; 9:1-2**). We are told in **Luke 24:44-49** when Jesus declares that now He has completed all that the Father has sent Him to do that he will now send them out to all the nations of the earth to testify to this work.

Therefore, we see in this next section a further expansion of the Kingdom of God. Jesus has been rejected by the religious authorities of Israel, so now He moves forward into the surrounding districts to call His elect out from among Israel (**Luke 7:1**). But just as Jesus has already been rejected, in the following section Jesus prepares his disciples for the upcoming suffering, rejection, and persecution that they too will experience at the hands of the Jews (**Luke 9:3-6; 21-27; 10:1-12**). This is the life of the disciple of Jesus who has exchanged his life for the Christ in following him.

While the religious leaders are scheming and plotting how they might kill Him (**6:11**), He takes His Kingdom to the common people, who are walking about as sheep without a shepherd.

The Kingdom of God is moving forward into the kingdom of Satan in order to reclaim God's elect and bring them into salvation. As some of the multitudes pursue Jesus, He continually proclaims the gospel of the His Kingdom to them and now He summons 12 of them, who will serve as his personal ambassadors, to take His Kingdom to those He is not able to reach (**6:17**).

A very important redemptive-theological question that we must ask of the text is why did Jesus choose twelve of the many disciples as His inner circle? Jesus could have chosen eleven or thirteen. Surely he could have been even more effective by choosing 20 disciples. Why

12? Also, why was it so necessary in **Acts 1:15-26** after Judas committed suicide that the other apostles thought it so necessary to replace Judas with Matthias (**cf. Matt. 19:28**)?

As we step back for a moment to see the larger picture of redemptive history, we realize now how the Patriarch Jacob serves here as a type of Christ. Jacob's name was later changed to "Israel" in **Gen. 32:28 (35:10)**. Jacob, or Israel had twelve sons who became the Patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Old Testament Israel.

Luke's Gospel has already clearly emphasized Jesus's Kingdom is no mere patching up of the Old typological Kingdom of Moses nor can it contain within it's boundaries the New Wine of Jesus (**Luke 5:36-38**).

Jesus comes therefore as the New, True Israel. Just as with Father Jacob, the entire nation is embodied in One perfect Israelite who comes under the Law of Moses to perfectly obey it in every detail unlike the whole previous nation of Israel. What Jesus does to the temple, the priesthood, the sacrifices, in fact the whole Law of Moses, He is now doing to the 12 tribes of Israel. He comes as the true Israel who now chooses 12 new heads of the fulfillment of the nation of Israel. Paul emphasizes this fact as the answer to the first century Jew-Gentile problem of the early church. **See Ephesians 2:11-22; Gal. 3:16, 26-29; 6:16; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Rev. 21:12-14; cf. Rom. 9-11**. What the saints under the Old Covenant in Moses had in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the forms of types and shadows, now finds its perfect and complete fulfillment in Christ (**Heb. 3:1-6**).

Jesus Christ is the final fulfillment and goal of the Old Testament Israel. Here he now extends his ministry as the complete foundation of the new, fulfilled tribes of the new Israel. As Jesus now brings an end to the types and shadows of the Old Testament by fulfilling them with the reality and substance of the true Kingdom of God (**IN HIMSELF – KEY**), we see both continuity with the past Old Covenant under Moses, while also seeing the radical discontinuity with the New Covenant under Jesus Christ. As the author of Hebrews emphasizes:

When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is read to disappear . . . (and) He takes away the first in order to establish the second (**Heb. 8:13; 10:9b**).

As Jesus said, he did not come into the world to destroy or abolish the Law and Prophets, but to fulfill them. Jesus came to the immature house of Moses, which was fading in glory, and

he filled it full with Himself. Jesus is now the complete, perfect fulfilled reality of the whole Old Testament. Therefore, we are no longer to place our hopes in the Old Testament types but in the reality and substance of the unshakable Kingdom of God (**cf. Heb. 12:18-24, 28-29; 13:10-16**).

The symbolism here is extraordinary! Luke sees Jesus as the Messianic King who has come to establish the final form and substance of the Kingdom of God (**Luke 4:43**). He is bringing together the completion of the eschatological community of the Kingdom of God.

Together with the twelve tribes of Israel, we see the panoramic display of God's redemptive history in bringing together His covenantal people as the new creation of the New Heavens and the New Earth. In the New Heavens and the New Earth, the New Jerusalem descends out of Heaven having the glory of God displayed throughout (**Rev. 21:9-14**). This is the Church whom Jesus purchased with His own blood. This is the covenant people of God who will live with Him forever in paradise. Jesus selection of the twelve is the beginning, in concentric circles, until the glorious consummation of the age and bringing forth of the people of God into their new heavenly life before the glorious throne of the everlasting God.

Until that glorious day of consummation, the Twelve will be given a mission. Jesus' mission will be their mission, empowered by the Holy Spirit of God. But, they are only the foundation of the Church (**Eph. 2:20**). They stand for its new beginning. There are many more to be added to this new building that Jesus is forming (**Eph. 2:21-22**).

Jesus appoints the Twelve first to be with Him (**Luke 6:17**). They will follow Jesus and watch and listen to what he does and says. They will learn from Him to preach the gospel and heal those who are sick. They will see how the Kingdom of God is extended to the hearts of people. Then Jesus will send them forth in order to extend His mission throughout Galilee and beyond. Jesus is multiplying His forces. There are now Twelve more who will intrude Satan's kingdom to call out God's elect.

And what kind of people did Jesus call to Himself? We know from the previous accounts that at least four of them were fishermen (**cf. 5:1-11**). As a craftsman, you can imagine that Jesus had regular contact with these men, maybe in building or repairing their boats. We are also told that at least one of them was a tax collector, while another was a zealot. You can imagine the conversations between these two men: one who sided and made compromises with the Romans government and another who was a revolutionary with plans to throw off the chains of the Romans. Finally, we know that one of them was a traitor to Jesus. In the

book of Acts, the rulers in Jerusalem sum up this motley crew as “uneducated, common men” (**Acts 4:13**). What was Jesus thinking? Surely He could have chosen a much better lot of men from within the surrounding area. Further, we know that it was not the disciples who chose Jesus, but Jesus chose each of them (**cf. John 15:16**).

The kind of men Jesus chose to follow Him were made up of the same kinds of people who will make up His Kingdom (**cf. 1 Cor. 1:26-31 READ**). Jesus came to fill up His Kingdom with “tax collectors and sinners” – those who are sick and in need of a physician (**Luke 5:30-32**).

Jesus will give them His power and authority to accomplish their mission. He calls them “apostles” (**6:13**). They are His ambassadors; His emissaries who carry His authority to extend the Kingdom throughout the world. Their primary task will be to be witnesses to the resurrection (**cf. Acts. 1:21-22**). They are the core of the new movement in a new era of God's activity on the Earth. Their work will increase in significance after the resurrection and when they receive the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. But until then, their apostolic mission begins here where they will share in the power of the coming of the Kingdom of God which Jesus brings.

Through the commission of the Twelve disciples, the mission of extended the gospel of the Kingdom of God throughout all the Earth is transferred to the Church. Jesus' ministry will be the ministry of the disciples and the disciples' ministry is now our ministry. The twelve are the beginning of a stream of workers in the church who will continue the work of proclaiming the presence and glorious power of the Kingdom of God. The story of Acts is just the beginning of this redemptive work in which the gospel goes to the nations. Through the work of missionaries, new church plants, existing churches and her ministers, Jesus continues to extend the gospel of His Kingdom throughout all the world. It is this task that consumes the interest and faithful laborer of the Church until the end of the age. And as long as the harvest is abundant, it is our earnest prayer to the Lord of the Harvest to continue sending forth faithful laborers. It is in the context of the fulfillment of this glorious labor that Jesus Christ promises to be with His Church until the end of the age. Christ poured out His Spirit at Pentecost to assist the Church with his own presence and power that She might go into all the world and preach the Gospel of Christ that all men everywhere might turn from their sin and in faith rest upon the person and work of Jesus Christ alone for their salvation. It is this glorious labor that is ours and it is this work that we must be about unto the glory of our God.

Amen! -SDG-