

Covenant People's Ministry

CALLING OF THE TWELVE



by Pastor Jeromy John Visser

(Introduction:)

The twelve disciples are certainly an area of Bible study that Christians should be familiar with. There are many theories behind why Jesus initially chose these twelve special men to Himself so this will be the topic of this morning's lesson. Many followers are familiar with Matthew, Mark, Luke and John because they wrote our beloved Gospels while even more know who Judas Iscariot was because he was 'the betrayer.' This Sunday, I intend to expand upon all of these men who were chosen by "God manifest in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16)" and who also helped to change the world for the better alongside our beloved Messiah.

It's my prayer that I might also provide a handy 'reference manual' on the twelve apostles for our internet visitors. We will be addressing each of the twelve in separate sections beginning with the mighty John and ending with Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor. I will also be providing choice passages from the Ferrar Fenton Bible published by [Destiny Publishers](#). This nifty Bible was released in 1908 and translated into English directly from the original Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek languages by [Ferrar Fenton](#). Next to the authorized King James Version, this is my 'second-favorite' rendering of our scriptures.

Before we begin, I'd also like to thank the numerous people around the world that have contacted us and linked to our website in the past few weeks -- the e-mails of support have been both edifying and inspiring. Surprisingly, [Herb For The Service of Man: God or](#)

[Mammon?](#) was the one sermon that I was most nervous in presenting and it was received well by those that read it while [Trees and Stars In The Garden of Yahweh](#) I was more proud of but it created a lot of controversy among the 'non-seedliners.' Our brothers and sisters in Europe have also been much more supportive of the website than our American friends.

That being said, I feel it only fair to warn you that this ministry will continue to preach Biblical truth as it is found in the scriptures and not turn aside to any of the 'Christian trends' that are so rampant among the movement today. In the past few months I have been shocked by the sheer amount of dishonest literature and teachings released by so-called 'identity teachers' that are actually designed to tear apart the very Biblical foundation of the Anglo-Israel truth. Anything from 'no-devil doctrines' to attacks on the Textus Receptus and King James Version itself, without a doubt these 'new dogmas' will be addressed in future messages.

Another exciting update concerns our online audio section which should be completed in April of this year. It will feature several full-length MP3s of our past and upcoming sermons and also give internet users the ability to download and burn their own compact discs so they'll be able to hear what they've been missing. The vast global outreach for this section of Covenant People's Ministry is practically immeasurable and should eventually lead to cassette and CD orders or a tape-trading ministry for our 'brothers in bonds.' If you'd be interested in helping in this area or need literature, please contact me right away.

[\(Peter & Andrew:\)](#)

Andrew and another with him were the two that John the Baptist had directed to Christ (John 1:37). The Bible doesn't say who the other person is although some think that it was Thomas (John 21:2) while others hold that it was John himself who was known to conceal his name. Notice that Andrew in turn brings his brother Peter to Christ as we read in John 1:42; "And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, **Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas**, which is by interpretation, A stone."

We also read in Matthew 4:18-20; "Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, **Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men**. And they straightway left *their* nets, and followed him."

Simon is a very common name in scripture being the name of nine different Israelites so thankfully our LORD renames him Peter (or: Petros) which literally means "rock (Strong's #G4074)." This is also why Jesus later tells Peter "**I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven** (Matthew 16:18-19)."

Andrew is taken from the Greek word Andreas (pronounced an-dreh'-as) and it literally means "manly (Strong's #G406)." Based on the two names of 'rock' and 'manly' I feel it's safe to say that these two brothers were both very strong fishermen.

(Philip & Nathanael;)

Let's keep reading; "The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, **Follow me**. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, **Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile** (John 1:43-47)!"

Philip has an interesting name -- it's taken from the Greek word Philippos (pronounced fil'-ip-pos) and it literally means "fond of horses (Strong's #G5376)." Nathanael is obviously a name of Hebrew origin that means "Given of God (Strong's #H5417)" and this particular disciple quickly disappears from the scriptures until a later transfiguration of our Christ (John 21:2)."

Nathanael is also called Bartholomew in scripture because his name is always linked to Philip making him Nathanael Bartholomew or the son of Tolmai. Both of these apostles seem in total contrast to one another.

(James & John:)

"And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him (Matthew 4:21-22)."

The same day and a little further along His path, Jesus simply calls out to James and John and they join the gathering. Both of these brother's names are rather common in as is the name of their father Zebedee. James is transliterated from the Iakōb (pronounced ee-ak-obe') which is the same root word as Jacob or "supplanter (Strong's #H3290, #G2384 & #G2385)." John's name is treated in the same manner being of Hebrew origin and means "Yahweh-favored (Strong's #H3076& #G2491)."

James was the first apostle to be martyred when he was put to death in Jerusalem by the sword at the command of Herod as found in Acts 12:2 and this calling of Peter, Andrew, James and John should not be confused with the 'second calling' accounted in Luke 5:1-11. The circumstances are very similar yet there is a distinct difference. Here, Peter and Andrew are casting their net while James and John are in their ship mending their nets. In Luke, the ships were standing by the lake and the fishermen were gone out of them and washing their nets.

John is considered 'the apostle that Jesus loved' in both John 13:23 & 21:20 most likely due to the fact that he seemingly never left His side. He was present throughout most of our Savior's miracles and was present during the trial of Jesus when the remaining disciples had fled (John 18:15-16). He also stood by during the crucifixion; "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that

disciple took her unto his own *home* (John 19:26-27)." It is also because of John that we have the book of the Apocalypse (Revelation) in addition to his great Gospel and several later epistles in the New Testament.

(Matthew & Thomas:)

"As Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, **Follow me**. And he arose, and followed him. And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. (Matthew 9:9-10)."

The Ferrar Fenton Bible renders the account this way; "After this, He went out and observed a tax-farmer, named Levi, sitting at the custom-house; and said to him, "Follow Me!" And leaving all, he got up and followed Him. Then Levi prepared a large reception at his own house; and a great company of tax-farmers and others were reclining together with Him."

From the other accounts found in both Luke 5:27-29 and Mark 2:14-15 we can deduct that Matthew was the son of Alphaeus and also called Levi. Personally, I prefer the term tax-farmer because it's a lot more descriptive than 'tax-collector' which was Matthew's trade of choice. Jesus' choosing of Matthew lead to even more disputes with the Pharisees who later asked "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" and both the names of Matthew and Levi are common.

'Doubting Thomas' is well-known for his disbelief but sadly he's not recognized for his loyalty to Jesus (John 11:16& 20:28). He was present at the raising of Lazarus (John 11:16) and also asked Jesus the way to the Father's house as found in John 14:5. Thomas was also called Didymus which means 'a double or twin (Strong's #G1324)' which gives us a little background information on this apostle just like the 'horse-loving Philip.'

I suggest you obtain a copy of [The Gospel According to Thomas](#) if you're able to. It's not a canonized book so it doesn't appear in our Bibles but it makes for an inspiring read nonetheless. Some of you might be aware that there was a big-budget Hollywood movie that came out a few years back called [Stigmata](#) -- the entire plot of that movie revolved around this one coptic text that the Roman Catholic Church tried so hard to cover-up. I proudly boast the hardcover first edition translated by a team of scholars on my bookshelf today, all thanks to Rome's idiocy!

(James II & Simon:)

Easily the least known of the disciples are Simon the Zealot and James the lesser. Simon the Canaanite isn't mentioned as much in scripture as Simon Peter but fortunately there are a few clues to his character. As mentioned in Luke 6:15 and Acts 1:13, Simon is considered a 'Zealot' which is also an Israelite freedom-fighter. Zēlōtēs (pronounced dzay-lo-tace') means "a partisan for Judean political independence (Strong's #G2208)" and obviously Simon was or remained a member of this political organization during Christ's ministry on earth. Simon is also mentioned alongside James, Joses and Judas as a 'brother' to our LORD in Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3.

Even less is known of James the younger than Simon the Canaanite. With James II we have less than one word to go on and all we know of this James is that he was a son to Alphaeus and his mother was a devout Christian follower. This younger James was also brother to Judas, not Iscariot and this would have also made him the younger brother of Matthew the tax-farmer and based on these small tidbits he is also considered 'The Unknown Apostle.'

Again, based on these two descriptions we can see that a majority of Jesus' chosen men were not 'peace-seeking liberals' but rather common Israelites with great strength and moral conviction. Many schools of thought believe that each of these men were a representative of a particular tribe of Israel which would only be fitting considering Jesus said; **"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel** (Matthew 15:24)" but the truth is this is only a theory.

(Judas & Judas:)

Two of Jesus' apostles were named Judas -- there was Judas Thaddaeus and Judas Iscariot. While Thaddaeus was 'steady' and unmovable, Iscariot was wavering and shaky in his faith. The steadfast Judas Thaddaeus is always connected to the lesser James in scripture and considered his brother but Judas Iscariot is arguably the world's most-known traitor and villain because he betrayed his own master and ours, Jesus Christ.

Judas Thaddaeus was the 'brother of James (the lesser)' and asked Jesus a very important question. Turn with me to John 14:22-24 and we'll read what was asked; "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, **If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.**" Judas Thaddaeus is also called 'Jude' and he is naturally the author of the epistle of Jude which begins like this; "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and* called."

On the other hand, Judas Iscariot was a thieving 'treasurer of the disciples' (John 12:6 & 13:29) and Peter says in Acts 1:17 that he "obtained part of Jesus' ministry." Needless to say, Judas the traitor is one of the most-studied of all the disciples because he was a chosen 'vessel of dishonor' to Yahweh and as well-meaning Christians we should hearken unto his example so that we don't do what he did. Note that Jesus allowed Iscariot to be an active part of His ministry and treated him as an equal even unto the betrayal.

Let's read of an unneeded issue caused by Judas Iscariot from John 12:3-8; "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, **Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.**"

Judas carried the very bag of the treasury and would've rather carried the extra weight of the coins than see Jesus anointed as a proper offering for Israel's deliverance. Notice that John says he could've cared less about the poor but was looking to line his own pockets as he did for thirty pieces of silver not long after this squabble. All four Gospel accounts record the betrayal of Judas Iscariot and are in agreement that he ran to the chief priests and scribes and gave them the location of Jesus Christ for thirty pieces of silver.

I like the rendering in Luke 22:3-4 that says; "Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them." We also discover in Luke 22:47-48 that he betrayed Jesus with a kiss to which he was asked by Jesus; "**Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?**" There is much speculation as to what motivated Judas to deliver over Jesus to His enemies ranging from good intentions to downright evil motives but it must be noted that through Iscariot's nonsense we have Salvation and the fulfillment of prophecy. Let's not be counted in those numbers by bringing evil!

Judas Iscariot eventually went on to commit suicide as noted in both Matthew 27:5 and Acts 1:18 -- a sad end to an even sadder apostle. From these two Biblical accounts we learn that he bought a section of land with the thirty pieces of silver he received for betraying Jesus and hung himself there so violently that "he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out."

(Sons of Thunder:)

Now that we've covered the main twelve that were called and walked with Jesus, we should also briefly cover a few additional apostles and the different titles these men possessed. In Mark 3:17 we read; "He surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder" and Jesus later changes their title from disciples to apostles in Luke 6:13; "When it was day, he called his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles."

Jesus taught His twelve; "**Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, unto the end of the world. Amen** (Matthew 28:19-20)" and "**Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned** (Mark 16:15-16)."

These great men are responsible alongside Christ for the Faith as we have it today. It is because of them we have our beloved scripture and from them we can learn great lessons for our own Christian walks. It is true that many cultic religions place these men up on the level of 'lowercase gods' and worship them as Saints but I'm sure that most of us are wiser than that. Let's look at a couple more apostles before I explain my intention behind this sermon.

Filling in for Judas after Jesus' departure is Matthias and "he was numbered with the eleven apostles" as we read in Acts 1:26. Notice that in this account that Joseph called Barsabas (who was surnamed Justus) and Matthias were both 'appointed' but only Matthias was

'numbered' or 'counted' as an apostle. Tradition holds that he preached the Gospel for more than 30 years in Judea, Cappadocia, Egypt, and Ethiopia and was stoned to death at Colchis in the year 80 a.d.

Paul (also known as Saul) was a "zealot for ancestral traditions (Galatians 1:14)" and while under man's rule he "persecuted the Church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it (Galatians 1:13)." It was at his feet that those who stoned Stephen laid their cloaks (Acts 7:58) but on one of his journeys of persecution the Lord Jesus called him to repentance and Saul experienced a profound conversion being given eyes to see Truth. He preached and founded churches throughout Asia Minor in his mission as apostle to the Gentiles and is responsible for a majority of The New Testament.

(Intention:)

My intention with this sermon is to show that a majority of the disciples were closely related, even to Jesus. Each one had their own strengths and weaknesses that they brought to the body of Christ. Some were unlearned (Matthew 11:25 & Acts 4:13), others were slow to receive Jesus (Matthew 14:33). Some completely forsook Christ (Mark 14:50) and most failed to comprehend the nature and mission of the Messiah altogether. I pray that today we can serve Jesus in all Truth and He gets the glory.

We can certainly learn a lesson from Christ's ministry because he had all manner of Israelite men as understudies but a few were there for the purpose of deception. We're later taught that "There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of (2 Peter 2:1-2)." Notice how false apostles or teachers slander the Truth and many follow their ways? I pray that we will be granted 'eyes to see' like Paul was and expose the false prophets if only among our own ranks.

Jesus says in Revelation 2:2; **"I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars"** and the description of a false apostle is given 2nd Corinthians 11:13-15; "For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." I pray that you'll go back and read this account for yourselves and take on 'the whole armor of Yahweh' to withstand their teachings.

Post a comment here.

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[Covenant People's Ministry](http://www.covenantpeoplesministry.org)

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