



Introduction to the Twelve

Transformed People: The Twelve Apostles

(B.L. Newberry, Spring 2020)

Why Study the Apostles?



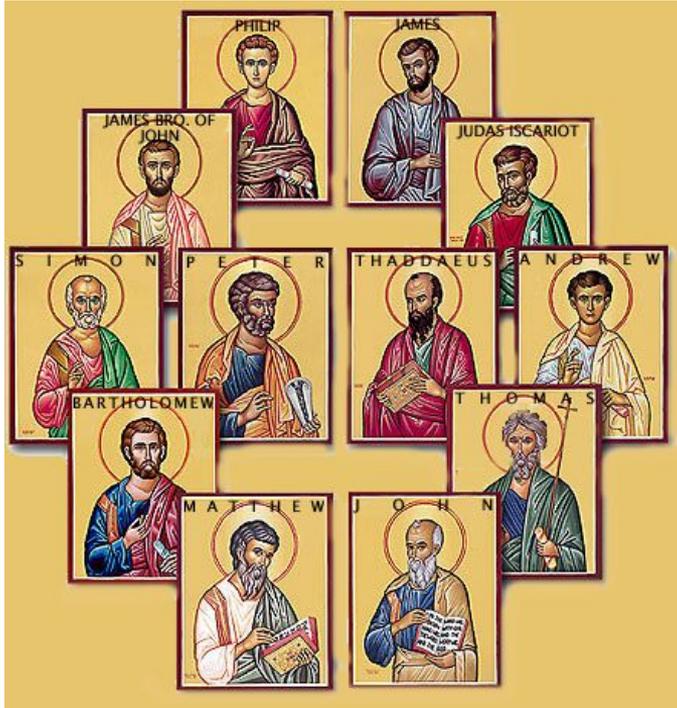
At times, the story of the apostles seems rather hard to understand:

- Jesus walks along the sea and says “follow me” ... and they follow
- These men forsake all to give their lives to an overwhelming mission
- All of this, and more, from “nobodies”

Yet, consider the following:

“So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. *They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching* and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (**Acts 2:41-42**)

Setting the stage



- Looking at the New Testament story, the propagation of the early church outwardly hinged on the actions of the twelve (empowered by the Spirit).
- This is incredible by today's standards. We would start a movement with known people of influence, armed with a detailed PR strategy.
- The New Testament presents no "Plan B".
- **What does this say of the nature of Christ, His church, and how He sees people?**

Understanding the Calling



- The word disciple (*methetes*) and apostle (*apostoloi*) carry very different fundamental meanings.
 - A disciple is a student or learner; an individual under the tutelage of a master. The twelve were routinely called disciples ([Matt. 10:1](#), [Mark 8:27](#), [Luke 8:9](#), [John 2:2](#)).
 - An apostle is one that is sent (messenger, envoy, delegate). In the NT, the title of apostle is used almost exclusively for the twelve ([Matt. 10:1-4](#), [Acts 1:26](#)).
 - The title of apostle is primarily used by Luke and Paul (68 of the 79 times in the NT). Often, the simple term “the twelve” (dodeka) is used.
- **Are we apostles or disciples today?**

The Nature of the Twelve



- They began as ordinary, messy, flawed men ... not superheroes
 - They had diverse, contradictory stations in life.
 - At least one was a Zealot ... think militant freedom fighter.
 - One was a Roman sympathizer. Few if any were hated more than Publicans (aid the enemy and get rich in the process).
- They had flawed motives and aspirations, often fighting with each other over position (**Mark 9:33ff, Luke 22:24ff**). Jesus often said they failed to “get it” (**Luke 24:25-26, Matt. 15:16**).
- Yet, Jesus chose them anyway (**John 15:16**). **Why would he do that?**

God's Way: I Cor. 1:18-31 (NRSV)



Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God.

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So how did this happen?

Do we understand the transformation?

The Stages of the Journey

(Referencing John MacArthur's "Twelve Ordinary Men")



Call to
Conversion



The Stages of the Journey

(Referencing John MacArthur's "Twelve Ordinary Men")



- **Call to Conversion**

- Read **John 1:35-51**
- **What do we learn of the apostles at this early stage? What did they believe about Jesus?**
- Yet, this beginning conversion stage was limited. It wasn't a full time occupation. Subsequent to this event, we still see them in day jobs (fishing, mending nets, etc.)
- **Does this surprise you at all? Why or why not?**

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Call to
Conversion

Call to
Ministry



The Stages of the Journey

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● Call to Ministry

- The call to full-time ministry occurs In Luke 5. Jesus gets in a boat (belonging to Peter ... still working) and teaches the people from the boat. After this sermon, a miraculous event occurs (**Luke 5:4-11**).
- Imagine this scene. Jesus calls them to be “fishers of men” (also in **Matt. 4:19** with less detail) and they “left everything and followed” (**Luke 5:11**).
- **What is different about this event than the first encounter (prior slide)?**
- **What, honestly, disturbs you about this event? What would it take for you to forsake all and follow?**

The Stages of the Journey

(Referencing John MacArthur's "Twelve Ordinary Men")



- **Failed “Calls” to Ministry**

- Consider **Luke 9:57-62**
- **Do you think Jesus is overly harsh with these individuals? Would he say the same today? Does he say the same today?**
- **What do we learn of the twelve from this contrasting story?**

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Call to
Conversion

Call to
Ministry

Call to
Apostleship



The Stages of the Journey

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- **Call to Apostleship**

- Read **Luke 6:12-16**
- “It was at this time” or “Now during those days” refers back to the events prior in Luke 5.
- It was time to prepare a core group; Jesus knowing what is ahead.
- It is approximately two years (perhaps only 18 months) until the crucifixion.
A rather short time to prepare them for the mission!

The Stages of the Journey

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- **Call to Apostleship**

- Historically, the Jewish system of education began around age 6. The education was both practical (vocational) and religious in nature (memorization of the Torah). By age 15 most Jewish kids had completed their education and were employed in the family trade, but the best of the best could become a Rabbi's disciple. S
- **Why would Jesus call the leftovers rejected by other teachers to be His apostles (Shaliah)?**

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Call to
Conversion

Call to
Ministry

Call to
Apostleship

Call to
Martyrdom



The Stages of the Journey

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- **Call to Martyrdom**

- History records that all eleven of the faithful original twelve gave their lives for the mission. All but John are believed to have been martyred.
- **Why would they die for the mission?**
- The part that Western Culture so often misunderstands is that “to die for the mission” was always the plan! **Philippians 3:20-4:1**.
- From a mere 2 years of training, they lived into a calling that changed the world. They became foundational to the church (with Jesus being the cornerstone, **Eph.2:19-22**).



Series Overview

Why Study the apostles?



GOALS

Learn to appreciate what we have in common with the apostles



Come to understand our Lord's approach to transformation



Gain insights into the unique qualities of each apostle



QUESTIONS

Can our Lord use us in similar ways to how He used the apostles? If so how? If not, why not?

What are we to expect in a life of transformation? “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed..” Rom. 12:12

Why are the stories that are recorded preserved for us? Can each helps us to see people, and ourselves, differently?

Series Schedule



1. Introduction to the Twelve
2. Peter
3. Andrew
4. James
5. John
6. Philip
7. Nathanael
8. Matthew
9. Thomas
10. James the Less, Simon the Zealot, & Thaddaeus
11. Judas Iscariot
12. Paul
13. Apostolic Writings

What more would you like to get from this study?