

Jesus Chooses Twelve Apostles Mark 3:7-19

~Other Speakers S-Z: David Servant:

As time went on, Jesus' fame spread far and wide. Curiosity seekers and spiritually hungry people journeyed as far as one hundred miles to see Him, which was quite a distance at a time when there were no cars, trains or airplanes. People had to walk or ride a donkey. But it was worth their effort to see the Son of God, especially for those who needed healing or deliverance from demons. Lots of those kinds of people sought Jesus. One day, there were numerous sick people trying to touch Jesus as He taught along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. So many of them were pressing their way through the crowd that Jesus instructed His disciples to have a boat ready---just in case He was forced into the water by the mob of people! Imagine what that must have been like!

We have to wonder why Jesus would need a boat in such a situation, when we know that on another occasion He walked on the water of the Sea of Galilee. The answer is that, although Jesus was the Son of God, when He became a man, He emptied Himself of some of the qualities that God possesses. For example, Jesus was no longer omnipresent (present everywhere), omniscient (all-knowing) or omnipotent (all-powerful). He didn't know everything about everybody, and He couldn't work a miracle at any time, but only as the Holy Spirit willed. That is why Jesus had to be anointed by the Holy Spirit before He began His ministry, and why He did no miracles until after He was baptized in the Holy Spirit. Although Jesus was God, in His ministry He operated as a man anointed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which operate as the Spirit wills (see 1 Corinthians 12:11; Hebrews 2:4). Therefore, we shouldn't doubt Jesus' deity when we read about Him relying on a boat to keep Him above water or asking questions to obtain knowledge.

Today we read about Jesus choosing twelve men to be apostles. The word apostle means "one who is sent," and that is why Jesus chose His apostles---to send them out to preach the gospel. Jesus never could have, by Himself, preached the gospel to everyone who needed to hear it. These twelve men would be His helpers. Notice that there were two sets of brothers in the list: Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, and James and John, the sons of Zebedee. There were also three sets of people with the same name: Simon called Peter and Simon the Zealot, James son of Zebedee and James son of Alphaeus, and Judas son of James (here called Thaddaeus) and Judas Iscariot.

Q. Jesus gave authority to cast out demons to the twelve men He chose to be His apostles. Why do you think He did that?

A. To help them in their task of spreading the gospel. When people were delivered from demons by the apostles' command, it would advertise their ministry and draw more people to hear the gospel.

Q. Why do you think Jesus nicknamed James and John the "sons of thunder"?

A. To be a "son of thunder" would mean to be the product of something powerful and loud that startles people and gets their attention. For example, you may have heard the expression, "son of a gun." It's not a compliment to call someone the offspring of something that kills. Jesus would never have given James and John a nickname that would have been a continual criticism, so it must have been either a compliment or an encouragement. Probably it was an encouragement that God would transform them both into powerful preachers who would startle people like thunder and arrest their attention.

Application: Just as Jesus chose twelve apostles to help Him reach more people with the gospel, so Jesus is still choosing people for the same task. Everyone who is a believer in Jesus is given some kind of ministry that contributes to the expansion of His kingdom.