

Twelve Unlikely Men

Mark 3:13-19

Review

- **I. The Moment (13a)**
 - "And He went up on the mountain."
 - Cf. Luke 6:12-13 - It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. 13 And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles.
- **II. The Master (13b)**
 - "...and [He] summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him."

Review

- **III. The Mission (14-15)**
 - "And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons."
 - A. That they might be with Him.
 - a) Education
 - b) Eyewitnesses
 - B. That He might send them out...
 - a) To preach – to act as a herald
 - b) To have authority to cast out demons
 - c) To have power to heal (Mark 6:12-13)

IV. The Men (16-19)

- Record of their official appointment
 - Mark 3:13-19
 - Luke 6:12-16
- Two other lists
 - Matt. 10:2-4
 - When Jesus sends the 12 out on a ministry tour to the cities of Galilee.
 - Acts 1:13
 - When the 11 are about to decide a successor for Judas Iscariot.

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| ■ Mark 3 | ■ Luke 6 | ■ Matt. 10 | ■ Acts 1 |
| ■ Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter), 17 and James, the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; 18 and Andrew, | ■ Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; | ■ The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3 | ■ Peter and John and James and Andrew, |
| ■ and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, | ■ and Philip and Bartholomew; and Matthew and Thomas; | ■ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; | ■ Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, |
| ■ and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot; 19 ¶ and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him. | ■ James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. | ■ James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him. | ■ James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James |

Preliminary Observations & Conclusions...

- 1) The 1st 6 names in the synoptic gospels include the five earliest known converts (John 1:35-5 1), plus James, the brother of John.
- 2) There was within the 12 apostles a discernible structure or hierarchy of leadership.
 - 3 groups of four men in all four lists (except Acts doesn't include Judas).
 - Same name is always at the head of each group of four: Peter (1st), Philip (2nd), James of Alphaeus (3rd).

Preliminary Observations & Conclusions...

- 3) The lists reflect a decreasing degree of intimacy to Christ.
- 4) With the exception of Judas Iscariot, the lists reflect a decreasing amount of information available about the men.

Preliminary Observations & Conclusions...

- 5) There were a number of family connections.
 - Among the disciples
 - Peter and Andrew
 - James and John
 - James, son of Alphaeus and Judas, brother of James
 - With Jesus Himself
 - John 19:25 - standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.
 - Cf. Mark 15:40 – There were also some women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses, and Salome.
 - Salome is the mother of James and John, and the wife of Zebedee.
 - Compare the two lists, and Salome is probably also the sister of Mary, Jesus' mother.
 - That means, if Mary and Salome are sisters that Jesus and James and John are cousins.

Preliminary Observations & Conclusions...

- 6) They all shared certain points in common.
 - Men
 - Jewish
 - All were from Galilee (except for one)
 - All had been eyewitnesses since Jesus' baptism, 1 ½ years before (cf. Acts 1:21-22).

Preliminary Observations & Conclusions...

- 7) Of the 12, 3 were to write books in our NT:
 - Peter – 2 epistles; through Mark, Mark's gospel
 - Matthew – gospel of Matthew
 - John – John, 3 epistles, and Revelation
 - So, members of the 12 wrote 9 of 27 NT books.

Simon (17)

- Greek name, but probably a contraction of Simeon (cf. Acts 15:14), which means "God has heard."
- In addition, Jesus gave him the name rock (John 1:43).
 - Petros in Greek.
 - Cephas in Aramaic
 - Neither were names of that time.
 - Jesus coined this nickname.
 - Why?
 - Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20-21
- Brother: Andrew (John 1:40)
- Father: John (John 1:42; cf. Matt. 16:17)
- Native of Bethesda (John 1:44)
- But had moved to Capernaum and built a nice home near the large synagogue there.

Simon (17)

- They were Jewish—but both Simon and Andrew are Greek names, so the family was apparently open to at least limited Greek influences.
- Peter had married—in fact, we met his mother-in-law in chapter 1.
- Together, Andrew and Peter had built a successful fishing business.
 - According to Luke 5, Peter owned his own boat.
- Lived with his wife and mother-in-law in Capernaum (Mark 1:29ff).
- Spiritual condition: according to John 1, Peter had apparently been influenced by his brother Andrew who was a disciple of John the Baptist.

James & John (17)

- Father: Zebedee
 - Very successful commercial fisherman
 - Hired servants (Mark 1:20)
 - Good social standing...
 - This Galilee fishing family was even known and respected in Jerusalem.
 - In fact, John was even known to the high priest (John 18:15).
 - The family of Zebedee had formed a partnership with Andrew and Simon.
 - Cf. Luke 5:10 - James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.
- Mother: Salome
 - One of the women who contributed to the support of Jesus and the apostles (Matt. 27:55; Luke 8:3)
 - A woman of ambition and intensity
- Mark 3:17 – and James, the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, "Sons of Thunder");
 - Why?
 - Their temperament: Mark 9:38ff; Luke 9:52-56*; Matt. 20:20-24*

James

- James is always mentioned first in the NT (with two exceptions), so he was probably the oldest of the brothers.
- The name James is the Old English form (used from Wycliffe on) for the OT name Jacob.
- One of the three most intimate disciples.
- After Matthew 20:20, James is mentioned as being present at Gethsemane, in the list of Acts 1:13.
- Then in Acts 12:2, where James becomes the 1st apostle to die as a martyr—beheaded by Herod Agrippa I.

John

- John comes from the Hebrew, Johanan, which means "YHWH graciously gave."
- A disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:35-41 – one unnamed).
- Became very close to Peter.
 - With Peter, prepared the Last Supper (Luke 22:8).
 - With Peter and James, his brother, witnessed the agony in the garden.
 - With Peter followed the trial (John 18:15).
 - With Peter: John 20:2ff; 21:2ff; Acts 3:1ff; 8:14; Gal. 2:9
- Of course, is known as the disciple whom Jesus loved.
 - Along with James, he became part of the inner circle of Jesus' disciples.
 - Only disciple at the cross.
 - Charged with caring for Mary.
- He wrote 5 of our NT books: the gospel that bears his name, three inspired letters, and Revelation.
- He was the last apostle to die—at the end of the first century on the island of Patmos (Rev. 1:9).

Andrew (18)

- Parents, residence, occupation, background, and early discipleship were the same as those of Peter.
 - John 6:8-9 – brought the boy with the five loaves and two fish to Jesus
 - John 12:22 – brought the Greeks to Jesus
 - Mark 13:3 – with the inner circle questioning Jesus.
- Andrew's most notable accomplishment was that He brought Peter, his brother, to Christ.

Philip (18)

- Greek name, means "lover of horses"
- Native of Bethsaida (John 1:44)
- Disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:43)
- Brought his friend, Nathaniel (Bartholomew) to Jesus (John 1:44ff)
- Leader of the second group of four.
- Only recorded incidents: John 6:5-7*; 12:21-22; 14:8ff
- The analytical, administrative type.

Bartholomew (18)

- Means: Bar Tolmai = "son of Tolmai"; an OT name (Josh. 15:14 – LXX)
- Also known as Nathaniel
 - Philip brought Nathaniel to Jesus.
 - Nathaniel was one of the 12 (John 21:2).
 - Bartholomew's name follows Philip's name in all the lists in the gospels, but no Nathaniel is in the list.
 - So Bartholomew and Nathaniel are the same person.
- Native of Cana (John 21:2)

Bartholomew (18)

- John 1:45-51
- A student of Scripture:
 - John 1:45 - Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote-- Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."
- Without guile
 - John 1:47 - Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!"

Matthew (18)

- Levi = his given name.
- Apparently Jesus gave him the name, Matthew.
- He was Jewish – both names are.
- He lived in Capernaum—and may have been from there.
- It's likely because of the size of the town and because of his tax business that Matthew knew the other 4 disciples, Peter, Andrew, James, and John, and had even collected taxes from them.
- Father: Alphaeus.
- From his gospel, we discover that he knew three languages: Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic.

Matthew (18)

- A customs house tax collector in a strategic location...
 - 1) The city of Capernaum
 - 2) At the dock on the north side of the Sea of Galilee.
 - 3) On the main international highway running from Egypt to Damascus.
- Irreligious
- A traitor to his own people—complicit with foreign oppressors.
- A pariah to his family and neighbors.
- He was the worst of the sinners.
- God can rescue and redeem the worst life.

Thomas (18)

- Means "twin."
- Greek, Didymus (John 11:16), which also means "twin."
 - John 11:16; 14:4ff; 20:24-28; 21:2
- Ready to believe the worst
 - John 11:16 - Therefore Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, so that we may die with Him."
- Slow to believe the best
 - John 20:25 - the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."
- Once convinced, most profound confession of any in the NT
 - John 20:28 - Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

James, the son of Alphaeus (18)

- Also called: James the Less (micros) – either small in size or the younger in his family (Mark 15:40)
- Leader of the 3rd group of four.
- Father: Alphaeus, or Clopas
- Mother: probably Mary
 - Stood near the cross with three other women.
 - Mark 15:40 - There were also some women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and James, and Salome.
 - Cf. Matt. 27:56; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10

Thaddaeus (18)

- Matthew and Mark list a man by this name.
- Not in Luke and Acts.
- Luke includes instead, "Judas, the brother of James."
 - By comparing the lists, it's clear that Thaddaeus is another name for Judas, the brother of James.
 - Cf. Mark 15:40 - There were also some women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and James, and Salome.
- Only NT reference outside of the lists:
 - John 14:22 - Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?"
- A humble, tender-hearted disciple.

Simon the Zealot (18)

- Simon is a Greek name, but a contraction of Simeon.
- Matthew and Mark: Aramaic, Kananaios
- Luke and Acts: Greek, Zelotes.

The Zealots

- Began under Judas the Galilean (Acts 5:27).
 - He refused to submit to the Roman census in 6 AD.
 - Put down by the Romans, but continued under the surface.
- Josephus writes 30 years after Jesus about a party who called themselves the Kananaios or the Zealots.
- Zealous for the nation and the national religion.
- They insisted that any political submission to Rome was an outright denial of God's lordship.
- Motto: "No King but God."

The Zealots

- Their patron saint was Phinehas.
 - Num. 25:7-8 - When Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he arose from the midst of the congregation and took a spear in his hand, and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and pierced both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman, through the body. So the plague on the sons of Israel was checked.
- Any act was justifiable if it recovered their national freedom.
- In 66 AD they openly revolted against Rome.

Traditions

- Peter: crucified upside down at Rome about 66 AD.
- James: preached in Judea; beheaded by Herod Agrippa I about 44 AD
- John: Jerusalem, Ephesus, Asia Minor; banished to Patmos; freed; died a natural death at Ephesus.
- Andrew: preached in Greece and Asia Minor; crucified on a St. Andrew's cross (x-shaped).
- Philip: preached in Phrygia; died a martyr at Hierapolis.
- Bartholomew: missionary in Armenia; flayed to death.
- Thomas: Parthia, Persia, India; martyred near Madras, perhaps speared to death.
- Matthew: Ethiopia; martyred.
- James the son of Alphaeus: preached in Palestine and in Egypt, where he was eventually crucified.
- Thaddaeus: preached in Assyria, Persia, where he was eventually martyred.
- Simon the Zealot: crucified.

Major lessons from Twelve Unlikely Men

- 1) God uses ordinary and even unlikely people to accomplish His work.
- 2) There is no particular background or character type that unites the people Christ uses.
- 3) God uses us in spite of who we are.
- 4) Jesus' love for His own is not based on their worthiness of it.
- 5) Studying what is revealed about the 12 reminds us that they weren't the main point of the story.
- 6) There is reward for faithful service, regardless of how well-known or far-reaching.