

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

103- Beseech the Lord of the Harvest to Send Out
Workers into His Harvest- Part 3

Church June 30, 2024

Matthew 9:36-10:4

36 Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.

37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

38 "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

10:1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

4 Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Now last time- I told you that there were at least five things in **Matthew 9:33- 10:4** that we need to try to understand:

1. The *Amazement* of the People (v. 33)
2. The *Rejection* of the Leaders (v. 34)
3. The *Ministry* of Jesus (v. 35)
4. That which *Motivated* Jesus' Ministry (vs. 36b & 37a)
5. The *Method* by which Jesus carried out His Ministry (vs. 37b-10:1)

... and we covered #'s 3&4 last time- so, let's continue on by looking at the final one:

5. The Method by Which Jesus Carried out His Ministry

Matthew 9:37b-10:1

37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

38 "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

10:1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

Now I am aware that the Statement by Jesus in verse 38 is *routinely* used by those involved in Missionary Work. And that is both true and correct- as we may certainly *apply* this Passage to that Work of Missions. But the actual Context of our Lord's Statement in verse 38 has to do with His Command for His Disciples to literally "**beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest**"- right then as He spoke this to them; and then to see the Answer to their "beseeching" come to pass in **Matthew 10:2-4** as Jesus chose the 12 Apostles.

In other words, what Jesus did in **Matthew 10:2-4** was in *response* to the Request He made in **Matthew 9:38** for His Disciples to "**beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest**". So, the Choosing of the 12 Apostles was the Answer to the Prayer Jesus asked His Disciples to pray.

So, why did Jesus do it this Way? Why didn't He simply choose the 12 Apostles? Why ask His Disciples to pray and then choose the Apostles? Didn't Jesus know He was going to choose them anyway? So, why go to the trouble of asking His Disciples to pray first? I believe that one of the Reasons Jesus did it this way- was to show them as well as us- how vital Prayer is with God. Jesus NEVER did ANYTHING of any Importance without praying first. And we should emulate our Lord in this as well.

But there is another Aspect of all this that we need to keep in mind. There is Evidence to suggest that Jesus NEVER went to anyone outside of the Nation of Israel. So, Jesus fulfilled the Law of Moses; and

brought in the New Covenant; and paid the Price for the Salvation of all of God's elect- throughout all History- and yet, He NEVER left Israel! So, Jesus' Ministry was very Narrow and very Precise.

But as He was about to ascend to the "Right Hand" of the Majesty on High- Jesus commissioned His Church to EXPAND the very NARROW Ministry that Jesus began in Israel and propagate the Gospel around the world. And this is what Jesus meant when He said this in **John 14:12**:

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.

Now this verse has been used by some- *especially* Pentecostals to suggest that we will do MORE IMPORTANT Works than Jesus did while He was here. But that is NOT what Jesus said here at all. The word that was translated into English here as "greater" comes from a Greek word (*meizon*; Strong's #3185) that has to do with something done on to *larger scale* or in a *wider scope*. So, Jesus was NOT saying that the Works we would do after Him would be "greater" as in more Important- but that those Works we would do- would be "greater"- in the sense that they would exist on a larger scale or in a wider scope than His. So, Jesus, very narrowly, did His Work in Israel- while the Works we will do after Him- will encompass the whole Earth!

And that Aspect of Jesus' Ministry- expanding past what He could do alone- began right here as Jesus is now going to *multiply* Himself by choosing twelve Apostles and empowering them- at least *initially*- to do everything He was doing- with one notable Exception. Jesus forgave Sin and no human- no matter how spiritual and no matter how godly- has the Ability to forgive Sin- in the Way that God does. And even the Pharisees recognized that when they said this in **Luke 5:20-25**:

20 Seeing their faith, He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you."

21 The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"

22 But Jesus, aware of their reasonings, answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts?"

23 "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"

24 But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to

forgive sins,"—He said to the paralytic —"I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home."

25 Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God.

Now we can't see the Forgiveness of Sins with our natural eyes. So, Jesus could have simply said that this man's Sins were forgiven and nobody would have ever known. But we CAN see the RESULTS of Sin being forgiven. So, when Jesus told the paralytic to pick up his stretcher and go home- the Pharisees knew that Jesus had just forgiven that man's Sins.

Now the Apostles COULD forgive a person if they had sinned against them *personally* (even as we can). In fact, Jesus COMMANDED them as well as us to not only forgive the Sins that people commit against us- but that we forgive a BROTHER seven times seventy in a single Day!

But neither the Apostles- nor anyone else- has the Power to forgive the Sins that individuals commit against God. Only God can do that. *But, Brother Blair, what about what Jesus said in John 20:23?"*

If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have have forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."

This verse has been grossly misinterpreted by the Roman religious System to mean that Popes and Cardinals and Bishops and even Priests have the Power and the Right to either forgive Sin or to cause those Sins to be "retained" by the Sinner.

But that is NOT what Jesus meant when He said this. To understand what Jesus meant by what He said here- all we have to do is to put this verse into its correct Context.

So, who is Jesus talking to in this verse? He is talking to the 120 people who believed and obeyed what Jesus said and who waited on Him in the Upper Room after His Resurrection. So, it is the twelve Apostles and then around 108 other people including Mary the Mother of Jesus and Mary Magdalene.

Yet neither Mary the Mother of Jesus; nor Mary Magdalene; nor the majority of the other people ever ministered the Gospel. So, we can narrow this group down to probably just the Apostles and perhaps the

70 Disciples that were used by Jesus *before* He chose the Apostles (**Luke 10:1**). So, at most, Jesus is talking to around 82 people. And what did those 82 people do? They *heralded* the Good News that Jesus forgives Sins!

So, here is how verse 23 works. The Gospel was preached and the people either responded in Faith or they walked away. And the Apostles were given the Authority to tell those people that if they trusted in Jesus and in His finished Work- that God would forgive them; give them new, spiritual Life; drape the Righteousness of Jesus over them; and make them “fit for Heaven”. So, in that sense- their Sins would be “forgiven”.

But these men were also authorized to tell the people that if they *rejected* Jesus- their Sins would NOT be forgiven; they would NOT be given new, spiritual Life; they would NOT receive the Righteousness of Jesus; and they would remain in their Sins- to be damned by God. So, in that sense- their Sins would be “retained”.

And we, who minister the Gospel today, have that SAME Authority! And so, as we herald that glorious Gospel- we have been authorized by Jesus Himself to tell the people that if they *embrace* Jesus; turn from their Sins; and put all their Faith and Hope and Trust in Jesus and in His finished Work- ALL of their Sins would be forgiven.

But we have also been authorized to tell the people that if they *reject* Jesus- if they refuse to embrace Jesus and if they refuse to trust that Who Jesus is and WHAT Jesus alone has done- is sufficient for God to forgive their Sins- their Sins will be retained; they will die in Sin; and spend all of Eternity in a devil’s Hell. And THAT is what **John 20:23** means.

Now back in the 1st Century- when the Apostles preached the Gospel to the Jews- they had to also tell them- that now that Jesus has come; and lived; and died; and has risen from the Dead- the Jews CANNOT act like this hasn’t happened and simply continue on with what they have been doing for hundreds of years. No!

In other words, when the 1st Century Jews heard the Gospel and were given the Gift of saving Faith so they could believe- they now had to ABANDON both the dietary and ceremonial Aspects of the Law of Moses. In other words, they had to immediately stop sacrificing animals. They had to categorically reject the Levitical Priesthood as being the ones who would lead them. They had to ignore the Rulings of

the Sanhedrin Court. They had to cease the Belief that they had to go to the Temple in Jerusalem to worship God in the Temple. And this was very difficult for them. And so, they struggled with this for many years- even AFTER Jesus rose from the dead.

So, from the Time the 120 people received Power as the Holy Spirit now descended to remain on each soul who had trusted in Jesus until around 68AD- a period of approximately 40 years- genuinely saved Jews- were trying as hard as they could to walk the “spiritual Tightrope” of continuing to obey the Law of Moses while also embracing Jesus as Lord and Savior.

So, as you can imagine, there was great Confusion and a sort of “schizophrenic spirituality” of saved Jews worshipping Jesus Christ in the New Covenant while continuing to remain in the Old. So, there was some “Overlap” between the two Covenants. There wasn’t a “clean break” as the Old Covenant came to an End and the New Covenant began. There were Aspects of the New Covenant already operating BEFORE Jesus rose from the Dead; and there were Aspects of the Old Covenant still in force AFTER the Resurrection.

And that is *why* God the Holy Spirit “moved” on the unknown writer to give us the **Epistle to the Hebrews**. And it is also *why* He “moved” on Matthew to write his Gospel Record from the Jewish Perspective. Genuinely saved Jews could now read these two Books and begin to understand how they could be pleasing to God the Father while NOT continuing to obey what God gave to Moses.

So, as I told you last time- these verses at the End of **Matthew 9** and the Beginning of **Matthew 10**- are *transitional* verses. They mark a decisive *Change* in the Way that Jesus conducted His Ministry. So, from the time Jesus uttered the Words that we read at the End of Chapter 9 until this very Day that you and I live in- Jesus will no longer operate in the earth alone. From then until now- there will be an *ever-increasing* number of men, who will be heralding the Gospel.

You see, Jesus ministered the Gospel by Himself until this Moment. But that is now coming to a Close- as Jesus is now going to choose the Apostles. And the number of “heralders” of the “Good News” that Jesus saves Sinners- has *continued* to grow and multiply so that, today, there are literally *millions* of men, who faithfully preach and teach the biblical Gospel- in nearly every Nation on earth!

Now the word that was translated in **Matthew 9:38** into English

as “**beseech**” comes from a Greek word (*deomai*; Strong’s # 1189) that has to do with “*making one’s Needs known with great Empotion; to desperately ask for something; and to pray earnestly for something.*” So, this is NOT the normal word for Prayer that is used throughout the New Testament. This word is only used three other times besides this Event in all 27 Books of the New Testament.

But what was it that *motivated* Jesus’ Call to His Disciples to pray EARNESTLY for the “Lord of the Harvest” to send Laborers into the Harvest? What compelled all of this? Look again at **Matthew 9: 36&37:**

36 Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.

37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

Now the English word, “**Compassion**” that we see in verse 36 literally means: *to be moved in one’s stomach with Pity*. So, how long has it been since you or anyone you know were “*moved in your stomach with Pity*”? How long has it been since you or anyone you know could, “*see the people as being distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd*”? That’s the Motivation behind WHY Jesus did what He did.

And I have asked myself and tested myself about this Issue: Do I feel that kind of Pity for my unbelieving neighbors, colleagues, and friends? Do I weep over the Sins of the people- or do I simply get angry about their Wickedness? Do I feel Compassion because of their great spiritual Need. Do I even care?

You see, being “like” Jesus is so much more than simply knowing some Facts about the Bible. It is loving and caring like Jesus did. And I suggest that we start by being honest and admitting that Compassion like this- does NOT come easy for us. It isn’t normal or natural for us to have this kind of Compassion. It is a sovereign Work of Grace in our hearts. Matthew said,

Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd

... and that was the Motivation behind the Request that He made to the Disciples:

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.

So, what Jesus was saying to His Disciples was that- AT THAT MOMENT- many of the 1st Century Jews were “ripe” for receiving the Gospel. So, even though the overwhelming majority of Jews *categorially* rejected the Gospel with great Hostility- a limited number of elected Jews- who were mixed together with other Jews- who were NOT chosen- constituted an abundant “Harvest”. So, Jesus categorized this group of believing Jews as a “plentiful Harvest”. And that tells us that Jesus valued even a *limited* number of chosen people much more than He valued the rest of the entire world- who were NOT chosen and who continued to reject Him!

And when Jesus called Himself the “**Lord of the Harvest**” He was saying that God- in all three Persons- is absolutely Sovereign over every Part of Salvation. And that is an Aspect of Salvation that far too many people, who make up the modern Church, seem to have either forgotten or have never known. Because God is completely Sovereign over these Elements of Salvation:

- The Desire and Ability of Sinners to *hear* and *understand* the Gospel
- The Desire and Ability of Sinners to *believe* the Gospel
- The Desire and Ability of Sinners to *obey* the Gospel
- The Desire and Ability of Sinners to *hate* Sin and “*turn away*” from it (Repent)
- The Desire and Ability of Sinners to faithfully *continue on*- after initially believing

... ALL of these are sovereign Acts of God- in giving the chosen person- both the Desire and the Ability to engage them.

So, when people reject the Doctrines of Grace, for example, we should remind them that God- in all three Persons- is the “Lord of the Harvest”. And it is precisely because God IS Sovereign over every aspect of Salvation that proves how interested and involved He is in the saving of sinful Souls.

Now because of the great Confusion that exists with so many people who attend the modern Church- please allow me to say this in another Way:

NONE of these Elements of Salvation are engaged by individuals without God empowering and enabling the individual to do so. So, NONE of these are the Products of what is called, “human Free-will” or “humanly engineered Choices or Decisions”

Let me say this in still another Way- unless and until God sovereignly moves on the individual to *empower* and *enable* him- NOBODY would be able or even desire to hear and understand the Gospel; NOBODY would have either the Will or the Power to believe and obey the Gospel; NOBODY would have the Desire or the Ability to hate Sin, be convicted of Sin, and repent; and NOBODY would have the Will or the Power to continue on in these things.

And this is *why*- even when we do the “Right Thing”- God receives ALL of the Glory and we receive NONE! Every single thing that we “believe” or “embrace” or “do”- is nothing more than a frail and weak human Response to the Work of sovereign Grace that God has ALREADY accomplished in us!

Now some would say, “*No, Brother Blair- you’re wrong! I did all of these things because I love Jesus!*” And my Response would be, “*That’s correct! But WHY do you love Jesus? You didn’t always love Him- but now you do. So, what happened? What changed? Why is it that you now love Jesus and seek to obey Him?*” And there is ONLY one Answer that comes from an old Negro spiritual that says,

Somethin’ got ahold of me!

... and the Bible says that what “*got ahold of you*” was the sovereign Work of God the Holy Spirit to make sure that ALL of God’s elect are saved!

So, God is NOT ONLY absolutely Sovereign over the Harvest itself- but He is also absolutely Sovereign over the Means by which the Harvest of souls is realized!

So, Jesus tells His Disciples to pray- to beseech HIM- the “Lord of the Harvest”- that He would “**send out workers into His harvest.**” So, God is also completely Sovereign over who He sends to reap the great Harvest that Jesus said 2,000 years ago- was “**plentiful**”!

And then in the very NEXT verse- that somebody thought should belong at the beginning of the 10th Chapter- Matthew infallibly gives us

the ANSWER to that “beseeching” when he wrote,

Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

So, even back then- Jesus saw that the Harvest of souls was going to be so great; so powerful; so all-encompassing- that He was going to need Help to make it happen. And that means that Jesus was going to have to “*multiply*” Himself. And so, the Apostle Matthew was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit to pen down the Answer to the Command for Jesus’ Disciples to pray. And the Answer is that Jesus chose His twelve Apostles! So, Jesus personally *choosing* and then *training* the twelve Apostles was the “Method” by which Jesus was going to carry out His Ministry!

And this former tax-collector knew that it was important for him to list for his Jewish readers (and us) the names of the twelve Apostles:

1. Simon Peter
2. Andrew (Peter’s brother)
3. James (the son of Zebedee)
4. John (James’ brother/also a son of Zebedee)
5. Philip
6. Bartholomew
7. Thomas
8. Matthew (the writer of this Gospel Record)
9. James (the son of Alphaeus)
10. Thaddaeus
11. Simon (the Zealot)
12. Judas Iscariot (the one who betrayed Jesus)

... and then Matthew was careful to tell us:

Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. (Matthew 10:1)

So, Jesus is now *multiplying* Himself to the factor of twelve. So, after He teaches them- there are now twelve times the number of people

Jesus can reach; twelve times the souls that will hear the Gospel!

Now this section of **Matthew** is going to be like a small mini- Series as we look closely at the men whom Jesus chose to be the Apostles of the Lord. And I think that you're going to find this Study of these twelve men very interesting. You're also going to find this Study to be very encouraging because you're going to find that these were very common, very ordinary men- called and equipped and empowered for a very important and powerful and earth changing Ministry. These men literally changed the world.

And this is very consistent with the Way that God chooses people. God always deals with the common people- most of the time- God deals with the poor and the uneducated and the unimportant and the weak and the feeble and God uses the people that the world looks down on and despises to alter the course of History and bring great Glory to His Own Name. And I want you to turn with me to read what the Apostle Paul said about this in **1Corinthians 1:26-29**:

26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;
27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,
28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,
29 so that no man may boast before God.

So, we see that God Almighty takes these very *unassuming* and very *ordinary* people and God calls them; and He sovereignly saves them; and God cleans them; and empowers them; and then He lifts them up to amazing, and inexplicable Usefulness. And when their Lives do have a very powerful impact on the world- it is very clear to everybody and to them as well that it certainly was not because of any Good or any Nobility in them. And that is why all the Glory and all the Honor and Praise goes to God.

So, this mini- Series will be about the Apostles- the men that God called and chose and used to begin the Christian Church; and the men that God used to receive and write down the final and completed Revelation of God that we call today- The New Testament. So, these

men represent the Method that Jesus chose to bring Salvation to all the elect.

Now one thing about these men that we need to know- is that they *should have* failed in their Mission to- firstly- understand the Gospel; and then to articulate that glorious Gospel in the 21 New Testament Epistles; in the four Gospel Accounts; in the Diary of the first 30 years of the Church; and in the final Prophecy about the final glorification of Jesu Christ. They *should have* failed in their Mission to leave Jerusalem with this new Religion and spread the Gospel as far away as Britain to the West and India to the East. And they *should have* failed in their Mission to begin the Christian Church; to set it up as a real and functioning Entity according to inspired Scripture.

They *should have* failed. Yet they did *not* fail! They succeeded! And they succeeded against unbelievable odds. They succeeded against intense and relentless Persecution from both the Jews and the Gentiles as well as the Roman Government. They succeeded even though none of these men ever gained any personal financial Benefit from their Efforts. And they succeeded even though each one of them- with the exception of John- were brutally martyred for their Efforts.

But they did not succeed merely for themselves; or for their own generation. These men succeeded for ALL Believers everywhere and throughout all time! So, today- millions of called and chosen men preach and believe and teach and read and trust in what God did in and through and with these men. And 2,000 years later- we stand in part of the world-wide Church that God used these men to establish. And we stand firm in the Gospel that God used these men to articulate. And we stand firm in the Scriptures that in large part- God used these men to write.

And so, the fact that these men did *not* fail; and the fact that they did succeed; and the fact that they succeeded to this extent- is one of the most astounding Accomplishments in all of human History! And that is *why* they deserve whatever time we spend in learning about them.

So, let's begin with what Dr. Luke wrote about this moment when Jesus chose twelve very ordinary men- who were all Sinners- to use them to multiply Himself to the world. So, please look at **Luke 6: 12&13:**

12 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:

Now in His Account- the Apostle Matthew goes right into what these men did. But Luke's Record gives us a more detailed Account of what went on in the background that led to these men being chosen by Jesus. And the *first* thing that we see is that Jesus prayed all night long. And so, once again, we see how vital Prayer was to Jesus. Before He did anything of any Importance- Jesus always prayed. And here we see that before He chose the Apostles- He prayed to His Father all night long.

Now think about that. Jesus prayed all night long about which men- out from the larger Group of Disciples- He could choose and train and use for His Glory- in multiplying Himself. And so, Jesus went over each one- very carefully- as hour by hour of His Prayer time with God went by. And by doing this- by being so careful as which men out from the larger Group of Disciples He could choose- Jesus was also doing two other things:

1. He was NOT choosing others
2. He purposefully chose Judas- knowing he would betray Him

... and that's the Way that Sovereign Election works.

By choosing this one- Jesus was NOT choosing another one. So, each of the twelve Apostles were hand-picked by Jesus- *including* the man who would betray Him. And that means that Jesus chose Judas *on purpose* as one who could *resist* the Grace of God more than anyone before or since. So, Judas's Betrayal was NOT an Accident or something that could have been prevented. No! Jesus chose Judas on purpose- so he WOULD betray Him!

Now in the flow of Matthew's Record about the Life of Jesus Christ- we have already been introduced to the Pharisees and the scribes- who were Teachers of the Law and who were hostile toward Jesus. And we have been watching this amazing Hostility escalate with each Chapter that goes by.

And in Dr. Luke's Record, that Hostility has reached a boiling point in the verse just before Jesus goes up and prays all night. **Luke 6:11** says:

... they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

Now the "they" here is referring to the scribes and the Pharisees- who were so filled with "madness"- that unreasonable rage- that they began to discuss together what they might do to Jesus. Now back in Mark's Gospel and Matthew's Gospel it says that what they wanted to do to Him was destroy Him. So, these religious Frauds wanted to murder the Prince of Life and the ONLY sinless Man who ever lived!

And so, that is the Background about what was going on- just BEFORE Jesus asks for Prayer that God will send Laborers into the Harvest! So, this was NOT a time of Peace. It was NOT a Time of Tranquility. It was NOT a Time of Joy. It was a time of escalating Hostility. It was a time of blind- unreasonable Hatred of Jesus among the religious Leaders of Judaism. And this Hatred has now reached its highest point to Date.

And it was also the Time when Jesus knows that He only has a short time left before He will die by Crucifixion. At this Point- His Death is less than two years away. So, there is less than 24 Months to train twelve Sinners to take what Jesus did- and accomplish God's Plan on the earth.

So, this was the time for Jesus to begin to prepare His official Representatives who will pick up His Mantle and carry it forward after Jesus has returned to Heaven. And so, Jesus- feeling the Hatred, feeling the Hostility, and sensing the inevitability of His own Execution- comes to the Realization that He is going to have to choose and call and teach and empower and anoint some key men- who will carry on the proclamation of the Gospel for the Salvation of ALL of God's Elect; who will receive and write down 27 additional Books that will make up the New Testament; and who will establish the Christian Church on the earth!

But there is another Aspect of Jesus choosing these original twelve men that we need to understand. Jesus spent all night in Prayer to choose twelve very common men- yet He didn't choose a single Rabbi; He didn't choose a single Scribe; He didn't choose a Pharisee or a Sadducee. He didn't choose a single Priest; He didn't choose a member of the Sanhedrin. He didn't choose a single Ruler of the Temple in Jerusalem; and Jesus didn't choose a single high- ranking Government

Official! Not one!

And that was done on purpose. And there is no other way to look at this than to say that the choosing of these particular men was a purposeful Insult to those Groups. But it was much more than a mere Insult. By *refusing* to choose a single man from any of those Groups- Jesus was pronouncing Divine Judgment on Judaism! He was *purposefully* condemning the men, who had totally corrupted Israel's religion.

Instead, Jesus chose men who were not theologically trained; men who were not Scribes; who were not Priests; who did NOT have single Day's training in being a Pharisee or a Sadducee. Jesus chose men who were not politically or socially connected. Instead, our Lord chose twelve very common and very ordinary men!

And four of them were fishermen; One of them was a despised tax collector; one of them was a Terrorist; and one of them was a money grubber- who turned out to be a Traitor. Now we don't know the Occupations of the rest of them, but they were all very simple and common men.

And in choosing the men, who would accomplish the single most important Task that anyone has ever Accomplish- save Himself- Jesus *purposefully* ignored the elite religious Establishment. He totally ignored ALL of the theologically trained men. And He totally looked past those who saw themselves as the religious Nobilities of Israel.

We need to remember that, in the first official Act of Jesus' Ministry- He went to Jerusalem at the Passover time; when it was most populated of all the times of the year; and when the Temple was completely filled with all of the people coming to celebrate the Passover and offer sacrifice. And Jesus walked right into the Temple in broad daylight- right in front of all those people and according to **John 2**- Jesus made a whip and He struck a devastating blow at their religion of Judaism. He struck a blow at their religious Nobility. He exposed their spiritual Bankruptcy; He exposed their false Teaching; He exposed their Apostasy; He exposed their demonic Religion; He exposed their Sin; He exposed their Corruption; and He exposed their Deception.

And He was just getting started because that's how Jesus *began* His Ministry- by an all-out full- frontal Assault against the established religion.

And now, many months later- many months into His Galilean

Ministry- a long- ways from Jerusalem up into Galilee- the Resentment that must have been inaugurated at that first Event has reached a fever pitch. And those religious Hypocrites are blood thirsty to the point where they're doing everything they can to come up with a Scheme to execute the Prince of Life.

The entire religious Establishment of Israel is hostile to God's Gospel; hostile to God's Grace to save unworthy Sinners; hostile to Repentance; hostile to Forgiveness; and hostile to Faith.

So, in spite of the many, many Divine miracles which have proven beyond any doubt- the full Messiahship of Jesus; in spite of the casting out of demons; and literally the Destruction of the Kingdom of Darkness- those men will not accept the fact that Jesus is God in human flesh. So, they *totally* reject Him- *personally*. They *totally* reject His Message of Hope and Salvation- and Jesus has *totally* rejected them.

And now their Hatred has reached the point where they seek to murder God in human flesh- Immanuel- God with us! And so, feeling the Heat of all that and knowing that His time is short- Jesus knows that now is the time to start training the men who are going to take over after He's gone. And as I said, He can't pick any of these religious men- because they are uniformly in opposition to Him.

Yet- in spite of all this Hostility- it's Harvest Time! And so, Jesus asked His Disciples to **“beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.”** And the Way that God the Father answered that Prayer is by Jesus choosing the twelve Apostles! So, now it's time to identify those twelve men. And Lord willing, we will begin that task- next week.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.