

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Jesus Chose Twelve to be Apostles

By Guy Roberson

After being victorious against Satan and his temptations in the wilderness, Jesus began preaching throughout Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom as described in Matthew 4:23-25. Shortly after beginning His monumental task of preaching and preparing for the coming Kingdom, Jesus selected 12 men to serve as Apostles (Lk. 6:12-16).

Luke informs us that after Jesus restored the hand of a man, the people were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus (Lk. 6:11). Then Luke said, it came to pass in those days that Jesus went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God (Lk. 6:12). After a long night in prayer, no doubt to seek the wisdom of God in selecting the men to serve, Jesus called His disciples to Himself and from them He chose twelve whom He also named Apostles (Lk. 6:12, 13). Jesus often said, He came to do the will of the Father (Jn. 6:68) and this explains, to me, why He prayed to His Father first before appointing the Apostles. Then Luke gave us the names of those chosen: Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor (Lk. 6:14-16). Therefore, from many disciples Jesus chose 12 men to serve as leaders because He knew He only had a short time to prepare His disciples to take over when the people would finally cause His crucifixion. Jesus told His disciples, ***“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you”*** (Jn. 15:16). These twelve men would serve Jesus long after His crucifixion, burial and ascension back into heaven, and their work would impact the church until He comes again through the Scriptures.

One of the things we learn is that a disciple is not the same as an Apostle because all the disciples were not Apostles. The twelve were specifically called and appointed to be Apostles. Later Jesus called Paul and appointed him to serve as an Apostle also. The number 12, like the number 7, suggested completeness and perfection. Jesus said to them, ***“I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel”*** (Matt. 19:28). We must remember that old Israel will not be restored because the Lord nailed the old law to the cross (Col. 2:14-17; Eph. 2:14-16) to establish a spiritual Israel, the church, composed of Jew and Gentile together.

These were ordinary men who were chosen by Christ to do extraordinary things. God used those ordinary men to turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6). Human history has never been the same since God’s people went everywhere preaching the gospel and exalting Jesus Christ and His message to a world lost in sin.

The Apostles provided the authentic interpretation of the life and teaching of Jesus and their teaching was considered normative for the church. They were considered the ***“pillars”*** (Gal. 2:9) and the ***“foundation”*** (Eph. 2:20) of the church and their teaching is the norm for Christian faith and practice today (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Their deposit of the revelation, given to them by the Spirit, and preserved in its written form in the New Testament forms the basis of post-apostolic preaching and teaching for the church in every generation.

Since women did play a very important work during the ministry of Christ some have asked why Jesus did not select one or more of those women to be Apostles? In the first century, the culture of Israel was primarily patriarchal. Women had very few rights and were often regarded as possessions. However, that is not the reason. God assigned roles for men and women from the very beginning of time and expects those roles or functions to be fulfilled today and unto the end of time. Notice carefully what Paul wrote to Timothy and for all the church: ***“Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless, she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith,***

love, and holiness, with self-control” (1 Tim. 2:11-14). Space will not permit a lengthy discussion of this subject, but let it be understood that this answers the question as to why the Lord did not appoint a woman to be an Apostle. Along with this passage notice how Peter advises wives to be in subjection to their husbands (1 Pet. 3:1-6). This proves God wants His created design of male leadership and female submission in the family to extend into the functioning of the church. Though these different roles of men and women, both in the family and the church, were determined by God, we must not think, even for a moment, that there is any kind of inequality personally or spiritually between men and women. Both men and women are created equally in the image of God. Therefore, Paul wrote: **“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise”** (Gal. 3:26-29). ■

The Broad Way or Narrow Way—Which Is Best?

By Dennis Abernathy

Jesus speaks of the narrow and broad way in Matthew 7:13-14. One is traveled by the few and the other is widely-traveled. One way leads to life and the other to destruction. The narrow way is the way of intolerance, discipline, commitment, and is rife with difficulty, and the broad way is the way of tolerance, indulgence, selfishness, and the way of least resistance.

Many believe that being intolerant is wicked and bad. But, when God is being blasphemed, when truth is under attack, or when opinion is substituted for God’s Word, it is right to be intolerant i.e. we must firmly stand for what the Bible teaches and refuse to accept wrong beliefs and practices.

God’s way is narrow because the way of truth and holiness, by necessity, is narrow. Christians are often called “narrow-minded,” as if to say being “broad-minded” is desirable. But Jesus advocated the opposite.

People wrongly think being “broad-minded” is the same thing as being “open-minded.” But being “open-minded” is good because it can aid us in seeking and understanding the truth. In contrast, “broad-mindedness” equates to “anything-goes” religion, morality, or variant lifestyle.

All lifestyles and all religions are not equally good, leading to the same destination. Christ says there are only two roads in life and they lead to radically different destinations. The broad way may look very inviting and the narrow way may look very daunting. We all stand at the cross-roads and the road we choose is literally a matter of life and death! Think on these things. — **Truth Magazine** featured article. ■

Narrow Gate And Difficult Way

By Joe R. Price

“13 Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13–14, NKJV).

As Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, He discussed entry into it. Far from teaching there are “many ways that lead to heaven and everyone must find their own way to God”, Jesus Christ said there is a narrow gate through which one must enter, and a difficult or confined way one must walk. Few find it. Few are willing to jettison sin for the disciple’s life of submission, sacrifice and service. In stunning contrast, the entrance is wide and the path is broad that leads to eternal destruction. The wages of sin is death, and many choose to travel the easy freeway of sin. The implication is clear: You are not on your way to heaven when you are walking the path of sin. Jesus is the only way to the Father (Jn. 14:6). He demands all your faith, all your obedience, all your love (Jn. 14:6; Lk. 9:23-24; Matt. 22:37). His gospel reveals the narrow gate and difficult way to eternal life. Which way are you traveling today? — **Sword Tips**, July 23, 2015. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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