



John the Baptist preached to people of the coming Christ. Many people believed John and excitedly looked for the Promised One.

John saw Jesus walking by one day. Two of John's own disciples were standing by him. (A *disciple* is one who receives instruction from another, a follower.) John told his disciples: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me."

These two men knew that a lamb's blood could not take away sins. Jesus was to be the Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, even yours and mine. Jesus' blood would take away all sins! He is the Lamb of God.

So, the two disciples left John the Baptist to be disciples of Jesus. Jesus saw them following Him and said, "What seek ye?" They said, "Rabbi, where dwellest thou?" Jesus said, "Come and see." They saw where Jesus dwelled and stayed with Him all that day.

One of these disciples was a man named Andrew. He was excited about Jesus. He went to get his own brother, Simon. Andrew told him that they had found the Messiah (which means "The Anointed One" or "The Promised One"). The One who would die for man's sins was finally here! Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Jesus told Simon, "Thou shalt be called Cephas." Cephas (*SEE-phus*) means "a stone." We call him Simon Peter. Peter also means "a rock."

Andrew and Peter were fishermen who lived by the seaside in Galilee. Jesus also called two more brothers

Church of God Sunday School

THE TWELVE APOSTLES ARE CHOSEN

Mark 1:16-20; 2:13-17; Luke 6:12-16; 9:1-6;
John 1:29-30, 35-50

who were fishermen: James and John. They were mending their nets by the Sea of Galilee with their father, Zebedee (*ZEB-uh-dee*). So, they left their father in the ship with the servants and straightway (or quickly) followed Jesus. They wanted to hear and learn what Jesus had to say. They wanted to be fishers of men's souls. They trusted God to supply their physical needs.

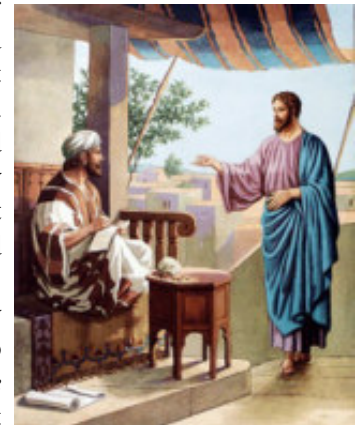
Jesus also called Philip to follow Him. Philip lived in Bethsaida (*beth-SAY-uh-duh*), the same town that Andrew and Peter lived in. They may have told Jesus about him.

Philip then went to find his friend, Nathaniel (Bartholomew). Philip told him he had found Jesus of Nazareth, the One Moses and the prophets had written about. Nathaniel lived close to Nazareth, and he wanted to know if anything good could come from Nazareth. Philip told him to come and see Jesus for himself.

When Jesus met Nathaniel, He said Nathaniel was an Israelite who was an honest man. Nathaniel wanted to know how Jesus knew him. Jesus told Nathaniel that He had seen him under a fig tree, before Philip ever called him. Nathaniel said, "Thou art the Son of God . . . the King of Israel."

When Jesus found Matthew, or Levi, he was not a fisherman. He was a tax collector, a publican. The Jews did not like tax collectors for they worked for the Roman government. Many tax collectors cheated the people out of their money. As Jesus walked by, He could see that Matthew would make a good disciple. He called to him and said, "Follow me." Matthew gladly left his office and followed Jesus.

Now, Jesus had many disciples, but He also had *apostles*. An *apostle* is someone who is sent



forth with a special message. From the many followers of Jesus, He ordained twelve men to learn from Him and learn about Him. Then they went forth to spread the message of salvation. They healed the sick and also cast out devils. These men were the Twelve Apostles.

Before Jesus chose these twelve men, He went up on a mountain and prayed to God all night. Jesus was in need of God's help. In the morning, Jesus called to His disciples, and of them He appointed twelve men to be Apostles. The twelve men chosen were: Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew (Nathaniel), Matthew (Levi), Thomas (Didymus), James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus (Jude), Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot.

Each of these twelve men was different in his personality and abilities. For example, Peter often spoke without thinking first. John was a quiet and thoughtful man. Every one of these men was different, but Jesus needed all of them. Some of the twelve wrote books of the Bible. Some were evangelists. Some were missionaries.

The Twelve Apostles all died as martyrs, except for John and Judas Iscariot. John died a natural death. Judas Iscariot hanged himself after betraying Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. He could not get free from his guilt.

You Can Be a Disciple Too: Do you want to be a disciple of Jesus and serve Him? Do you want to follow Him and tell others about Him? You can, but first you must have a clean heart. You must truly be sorry for committing sin. You must be sorry that you hurt God. This is godly sorrow. If you have godly sorrow, Jesus will forgive you. Why not pray to Jesus and ask Him to forgive you? He will give you new desires. Then you can follow Jesus, be His *disciple*, and do what He wants you to do.

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."*

—Luke 14:27

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NAME THE APOSTLES:

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