

Mark 3:13-19: Choosing of the twelve

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[0 : 00] We've had a lot of guest speakers the last three weeks, and so we had Tim Board here with us and his family on Father's Day, and then Joel McGarvey. Who enjoyed Joel McGarvey? I had never met him before.

I was really glad to hear from him last Sunday morning, talk about the family and what the Bible has to say about that. And then he did a Q&A; on Thursday night that we joined. There was just a small group there, and that was tremendous as well.

We talked mostly about in-time stuff, when there were some things that he brought up that I had never considered before. But now we're back into Mark, where we were at, in Mark chapter 3. And today we're going to talk about Jesus' choosing of the 12 disciples. His choosing of the 12 disciples. So if you've got your Bible, open it up to Mark, Mark chapter 3, and we're going to read from verse 13 to verse 19.

Let me see if I can find it. I guess this gives everybody else a chance to find it. All right, Mark chapter 3, starting with verse 13.

[1 : 20] And he went up on the mountain and called to him those he himself wanted. And they came to him. And then he appointed 12, that they might be with him, and that he might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sickness and to cast out demons.

I don't know if that's the right way to pronounce it, but we'll go with it.

So we're going to focus on that.

This is just a few scriptures, and really most of it's just a list. But we're going to talk about his choosing of the 12, and then get into a little bit about each of these 12.

Why he chose them, a little bit about the 12 disciples, what they accomplished, what they're known for. Some we know very little about, some we know more about.

[2 : 38] But heading back up to verse 13, it says, He went up on the mountain and called to him those he himself wanted, and they came to him.

So he said, hey guys, I want you to come up with me. And I'm not sure here if he, because Jesus had at this time many people following him. And those who followed him, they were called disciples. Disciples of somebody who follows somebody. Jesus wasn't the only rabbi at the time, called teacher or master, who had disciples. John had disciples.

There were others who had disciples. But Jesus had quite a following, and many people followed him. But during this time, Jesus specifically chose out 12 for a special purpose.

And we're going to talk about that more in just a second. But one of the things I want to point out that it says here is it says, He called, and he called to him those he himself wanted.

[3 : 41] And they came to him. So Jesus chose 12 out of many disciples. And they were the ones that he wanted. Jesus made the selection.

It wasn't they that decided, well, I'm going to be one of the 12. Maybe that was something that you were vying for. I don't even know if those 12 knew that this was a thing, right?

They were just following Jesus. I don't know that there was any indication that, well, at some point, Jesus is going to choose 12 special disciples for a special purpose.

And so there's some kind of a competition. I can't imagine. I think this was probably just, well, this is news. What is this thing? He's choosing 12. But in the book of John, chapter 15, Jesus says something to his 12.

John, chapter 15, he's speaking. This is this long session that he has with his 12 disciples. And he says to them, one of the things he says to them in this long passage, John, chapter 15, verse 16, he says, You did not choose me, but I chose you, and I 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.

[5 : 04] Jesus was talking to his 12 disciples, and he says, listen, I want you to be encouraged. It's not just that you decided that you're going to come follow me. There's lots of people who did that.

But listen, I chose you for a specific purpose and a specific cause. And one of the things that he says, and he says other things to them about what their role was, but one of the things that he says, I chose you to bear fruit, that your fruit should remain, and that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give you.

He gave them like special permission to ask the Father for anything. They had kind of a special, we call it today a dispensation, to ask for things that they would actually get when maybe somebody else who would ask wouldn't get it.

Some people use this verse out of context, and I actually hear this quite often, to teach a doctrine of that there are only some people that God chose to save.

It's a doctrine you call election, which the Bible talks about God choosing people all over the Bible.

But if you have to look closely at the context, well, what is God choosing people for?

[6 : 25] And there's many who will say, well, whenever God's choosing, he's choosing people, or most of the time, many times, when God's choosing people, he's choosing them to be saved. And only if God chooses you can you actually be saved.

Everybody else that God doesn't choose, they're just lost. They can't be saved. They can't go to heaven, because God only chooses some. He doesn't choose others. And they'll use this verse, you did not choose me, but I chose you.

But that's not what this is talking about. This isn't talking about, well, I chose you to salvation, while the rest of those guys out there, let them all just go to hell. Let them all just, leave them all to their own devices.

The Bible says that Jesus died for everyone. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whosoever believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

And so, when Jesus here said, I chose you, he's going back to what we're reading about today in Mark. Hey, I brought you up to that mountain, remember?

[7 : 34] And I chose you for this special purpose. We'll continue on in verse 14. Then he appointed 12, that they might be with him, that he might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sickness, and to cast out demons.

And so, let's focus in on this. The first question I have to ask or talk about is, well, how many did he choose? 12.

Well, why 12? We'll talk about that in a second. We have different names for this group of 12.

Sometimes we call them the 12 disciples, because they were disciples.

But they were not just any disciple, because there were many disciples. They were the 12 disciples. It's a smaller group, the 12 disciples. Sometimes they're not just called disciples, but they're called apostles, the 12 apostles.

Apostles is a different word. Apostles means sent ones. And in looking up that word, the word apostles is not something that was typically used for that purpose.

[8 : 41] It just meant a sent one. It could be a messenger, maybe an ambassador of some kind.

And that's really what his 12 disciples were. So they were ambassadors. But just not any ambassadors.

They were part of the 12 ambassadors. Sometimes, as you read through the scriptures, you'll see that these men were just called simply the 12.

And that's it. Simply the 12. You'll see that in many different places, both in the Gospels and also in the book of Acts. Just another call out about Jesus' many disciples.

In Luke 10, verse 1, it says this, After these things, the Lord appointed 70 others also. So Jesus had appointed these 12 disciples.

Later on, he appoints 70. And he sent them two by two before his face into every city and place where he himself was about to go.

[9 : 45] So he had a special purpose for the 12. And then he had maybe a different purpose. And I don't know if the original 12 were with the 70 or if it was just these 70 were a part.

In some places, it says 72 were a part of those 70. But there were many disciples who followed Jesus.

And Jesus chose out these 12 men for a special purpose, to be part of a special group, to have special tasks that they accomplished.

So the next question I'm going to ask is why? Why is it 12? How come? Why not 10? 10 is a good number. 10, you've got 10 fingers. That's a good round number.

A favorite number in the Bible is 7. How come not 7? Why is it 12? And I'm seeing a hand raised here. I'm going to take a comment.

[10:44] What's your comment, young man? Oh, okay. Very good. Yeah, one of the interesting things that Jesus said to his 12 disciples later on.

This is in Matthew 19, verse 28. And Jesus says this interesting thing. So Jesus said to them, it's talking to the 12 disciples, assuredly, they were asking, they said, you know, Jesus, we've left everything and we followed you.

And our lives are in danger constantly. And we're suffering many things. We've left our jobs. We've left our families. We've left our homes.

We've left our lands. Is there anything we're going to kind of, you know, what are the benefits going to be of doing this? And so this is what Jesus responded to, one thing that Jesus responded to them with.

So Jesus said to them, assuredly, I say to you, that in the regeneration, that's a funny word, that word is just is talking about the kingdom that's coming, the ones that the prophets spoke of.

[11:54] The prophets spoke of a kingdom that was coming in which the Jews would be restored, their kingdom would be restored. They would no longer be dominated by the Romans or other nations.

And that there would, everything would be made new. There would be peace and not conflict. This coming kingdom. So he's talking about that kingdom when he says that in the regeneration, when the son of man sits on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel.

He said, listen, I haven't told you this before, but I have a special purpose for you. And this is one of the reasons why he chose 12. Because in this future time in which the kingdom of Israel will be restored, and the nations or the tribes, the 12 tribes will be restored.

At this time, they were all messed up. I'm sure most of the Israelites had no idea even what tribe they belonged to. They had been taken captive, taken into captivity, taken captive by other nations. And then some of them had come back, and most of the nation had been, were inhabited by other Greeks and Romans.

[13:15] But in that future kingdom, the 12 tribes will be restored. And Jesus said, one of the plans I have for you is that you 12, because of what you've done for me, because of your service during these three years, I will give you the honor of sitting on 12 thrones, ruling over those tribes.

Of course, Jesus will be at the head, but they will serve under him. You know, it's hard ruling a lot of people, right? You have to have people under you, right?

To help, you know, you have magistrates and judges and all these kinds of different things. He says, I'm going to put each one of you over a tribe to rule over those 12 tribes.

I think that's the primary reason Jesus chose 12 disciples, because he had a future plan. You know, it's interesting. One of those 12 disciples turned out to be a fraud, right?

We'll talk about that in a bit. But do you know what happened after Judas Iscariot turned out to be a fraud and he ended up killing himself?

[14:23] Did they just say, well, I guess there's just 11 now? No, actually, we read in the very beginning of Acts, they said, you know, we have to have 12 legitimate apostles.

It's important that we have 12. So in Acts chapter 1, it talks about this whole thing where after Jesus ascended into heaven, he said, all right, guys, we need to make sure we got 12.

And so they looked for somebody. You can read about this in Acts chapter 1 who could replace Judas. They had two candidates. They said, well, one of the stipulations is it's got to be somebody who was with us from the beginning.

And we'll maybe talk more about, well, why would that be the case? How come it wasn't somebody that joined maybe a year into Jesus' ministry? Somebody who was from the beginning and has been with us through that whole time.

And so they chose two candidates and then they ended up rolling dice, casting lots to decide. And they were basically looking to the Lord, help us to decide who the right candidate is.

[15 : 25] And they chose a man named Matthias. So when that kingdom is established in the future, Matthias is going to be sitting on one of those 12 thrones, ruling over one of the tribes.

I don't know which. He probably doesn't know which right now. Maybe in the future. I mean, obviously, yeah, in the future, he will.

So ruling over the 12 tribes, that was important. And then let's talk through the tasks. It says here why it says he appointed 12, and then he says that they, he gives the reasons.

Here's their purpose, that they might be with him, that he might send them out to preach and have power to heal sickness and to cast out demons. So let's focus on that first one, to be with him.

He had these disciples. They didn't go home at the end of the day. Did you know that? His 12 disciples that were with him. They didn't at the end of a long week, go back home to their wives and children or their parents or wherever it was that they lived.

[16 : 35] They were with him 24-7 for three years. They slept outside with him. If Jesus was under threat, they were under threat.

They were with him that whole time. When Jesus ate, usually, they ate with him. They were together with him. When Jesus was teaching the crowds, they were with him, listening.

That they might be with him. A couple of things. Well, why? Why was that important? How come they couldn't go home on the weekends? Well, one, to be taught by him, right?

The disciples were taught by Jesus. And a lot of times, he gave them inside information that he didn't give to the other crowds or even some of the other disciples.

Remember the parable? In a few weeks, probably. I don't know when it'll be. We'll talk about the parable of the sower. And Jesus told this parable of the sower to the crowds, and his disciples, they heard it.

[17 : 33] They said, Hey, Jesus, what does that mean? I don't get it. And so he explained it to them. But he told them, he says, You know what? I'm just going to explain it to you.

I'm not going to explain it to everybody else. We'll talk more about that in a few weeks. But here's the really big thing. This was, I think, one of the primary jobs of the disciples.

In Luke chapter 24, this is at the end. This is the last chapter in Luke. This is after Jesus has risen from the dead. Jesus is talking to his disciples.

He's giving them instructions. Marching orders. Luke 24 verse 46, he says this, Then he said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ, he's talking about himself, to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

And you are witnesses of these things. I think the number one job of those 12 disciples was to be witnesses. They were witnesses when Jesus ate, when he slept, when he did miracles, when he struggled in the garden of Gethsemane, struggling to go to the cross, when he died, when he was buried, and then also when he was raised from the dead.

[19 : 12] They were witnesses to those things. That, it turns out, is going to be very, very important to their ministry after Jesus ascended and went into heaven.

I'm going to list through a bunch of verses that really brings this out. And I'm just going to read through them very quickly. In the beginning of Acts, Acts chapter 1, verse 8, They were to be witnesses of what was accomplished during those three years and specifically at the end of that ministry.

Acts 1, 21, Therefore, this was at the, oh, this is actually choosing of Matthias.

Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when he was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.

We need somebody, we need, as part of the 12, somebody who was there from the very beginning when Jesus was announced to the world at the baptism of John and who was with us that whole time until Jesus died and he was rose again.

[20 : 37] That's important. And so here's these two candidates that have been here the whole time because they must become witnesses with us of his resurrection.

The next chapter, Acts chapter 2, Peter is preaching to all these men of Israel on the day of Pentecost. And one of the things he says, verse 32, Acts 2, 32, he's talking about Jesus.

This Jesus God has raised up of which we were all witnesses. He's talking about the resurrection. And all the people you see here were all witnesses. We saw Jesus alive with our own eyes.

The next chapter, verse 3, Peter and John heal the lame man at Solomon's porch. And he's preaching again because people are like, what just happened?

We just saw this man be healed. He's been with us for years and years begging and now he's walking on his feet. What just happened? It's a great opportunity to preach, isn't it?

[21 : 45] Chapter 3, verse 14, But you, he says to the people of Israel, you denied the Holy One and the just and asked for a murderer to be granted to you and killed the Prince of Life whom God raised from the dead, of which we are all witnesses.

You killed him. We saw him rise from the dead or saw him after he rose from the dead anyway. Acts chapter 4, and with verse 33, And with great power, the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all.

I got a bunch more verses. It's just all throughout the book of Acts. We are witnesses. We're here to witness to all of you that this man, Jesus, you all have probably heard of him, the things that he did, the crowds that came, the miracles, and that he was ultimately crucified on a cross and buried in a tomb.

But I want you to know that he is alive today. And we saw him. We saw him. So this was a major task of the 12, that they would be witnesses to his life, his death, and especially his resurrection. It says also in this passage that they were to preach. What were they to preach? What was their message that they were to preach to these people in Israel?

[23 : 17] Well, in Mark, when we read through Mark chapter 1, in verse 15, we read about the message that Jesus preached. And his message, it says in verse 15, was this, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe the gospel. The time is at hand and the kingdom of, or excuse me, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe the gospel. That was Jesus' message. So what message did he give to the 12? Well, it doesn't say here, but if you look in Matthew, the book of Matthew, verse, or chapter 10, verse 17, this is a parallel passage talking about the choosing of the 12.

So it's the same subject matter. It's just a different, a different author. And he says this, As you go, preach, saying, the kingdom of God is at hand.

Their message was the same as Jesus' message. The time is fulfilled. Hey, Israel, the prophets have spoken of a time in which the kingdom will be restored and there's a Messiah coming who will bring the restoration of Israel and establish peace, not just in Israel, but across the whole earth.

[24 : 35] So Jesus preached that message and his 12 disciples also preached that message. I want to point out something that, that to, to clarify because he talks about, he uses the term, the gospel, the gospel.

That means good news. And so, we as Christians, we share the gospel. In fact, when we were talking this morning about our fair ministry, we're going to go talk to people about, one thing we're going to talk about is about the gospel, the good news.

The message that we're giving out to people is what? Is it that the kingdom is coming? That the kingdom of Israel is going to be restored and established?

That's not what we need to tell people. Even though that's true, that's not the important message that we need to share. But the message that we share with people today, that wasn't, that, it wasn't ready yet.

The 12 apostles, their ministry was specifically to Israel to prepare them for this kingdom. And a lot of people kind of mix what Jesus and his disciples taught during that time with what we see in the future, specifically in the book of Acts, when Paul is called to reach out to the Gentile people of the world, those who are not Jews.

[26 : 06] And the message to the Gentiles, because we find out later as part of the story, the Jewish people, they rejected their Messiah. And so God said, you know what?

I'm going to turn to the Gentiles and I'm going to do something special with them. So the message that we as Gentile believers share with those around us is not that the kingdom is coming, though that is true, it is coming, but it's that Jesus died for the sins of the world.

It's the message of the cross. Why do Christians wear a cross as jewelry around their neck? The cross is, what is it? If you think about it, right, sometimes we don't think about it, you're just kind of used to it, you see the cross everywhere, right?

What is the cross? It's an implementation, it's an execution method. And that's what Christians wear as jewelry and it's the cherished symbol of Christianity is the cross. The gospel that we preach is not the same that these 12 preached.

Jesus hadn't even died yet. And as you read through the gospels and Jesus talked about his death, what did the disciples think? They said, oh, okay, that's great. We'll just tell people about your future death.

[27 : 21] Is that what they said? No. They said, what is he talking about? He's going to die? He's the Messiah. He's supposed to conquer the nations. They were confused.

It wasn't until later that they found out. So they weren't preaching the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. They were preaching the kingdom that was to come and that's what Jesus gave them to preach.

It's important for us that we don't mix up these messages. We let people know, hey, there's not all these things that you need to try to do to enter into the kingdom. That's a different message.

We need to tell people, listen, there's nothing you have to do except trust that Jesus died for your sins and that's all. That's the message that we preach.

And then he gave them power to what? Heal sickness and to cast out demons. And why was that?

Was that just kind of to make it kind of like a carnival sideshow?

[28 : 24] No. We see throughout the scriptures that the purpose of miracles and demonstrations of power were to confirm a message. Jesus gave them an important message and he gave them a tool to confirm that the message that they preached was true.

The prophets had spoken of a Messiah that was to come and a kingdom that was to come but now they're saying, well, it's here. It's at hand. It's just around the corner. You need to be prepared.

You need to be ready. And so he gave them basically miracle working power to confirm the message that they preached. In Acts chapter 2, again, this is the day of Pentecost, Peter is preaching to the people of Israel.

He says this, Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through him in your midst as you yourselves also know.

He's saying, hey, listen, you guys know Jesus did all these miracles so it's not like he was just some crazy nut out there that was just, because there were lots of crazy nuts at the time. There were people for hundreds of years who claimed to be the Messiah, but Jesus was attested by additional witnesses.

[29 : 46] The miracles which he did, which attested to what he was saying was true. The other thing I want to point out here is, you know, Jesus, I would think, if it was me that had, you know, these guys, these 12 disciples, we'll talk more about them in detail, but were they like these amazing men who were like flawless and didn't have any character flaws or issues.

No, they were, they were kind of like us, right? I would think, if I'm going to give somebody miracle working power, you know, you got to give it to somebody you can really trust.

Somebody who's got their act together. Somebody who's not going to, you know, turn coat and run at the least little bit of trouble like Peter. I won't say the least little bit of trouble.

I think he stood up in smaller things, but ultimately, he denied Jesus, didn't he? But Jesus is comfortable giving authority to individuals, giving authority to people.

In Matthew chapter 10, verse 8, again, this is a parallel passage when Jesus is basically handing them miracle power. I'm going to give you authority. Not just the, not just the, the ability to pray and ask, God, would you, would you heal this person?

[31 : 16] We never see the disciples doing that. We never see Jesus doing that. Jesus doesn't pray. Father, would you heal this person? That doesn't happen. He says, stand up and walk. Those, they, they have this power that they have the authority to, to give out.

You can be healed. God gave me, Jesus gave me this authority. Stand up and walk. That's what John, Peter and John said to the man there in Acts chapter 3.

Jesus is not afraid to delegate authority to flawed men. They, these were men who spoke out of turn. They showed judgmentalism.

They showed the same kind of weaknesses that we do. They were supposed to just stay awake. Just stay awake for a few hours and they couldn't even do that, falling asleep. You know, God delegates authority to us as well.

It's different. In 2 Corinthians chapter 5, 20, Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, that's us, says this, now then we, we Gentile Christians, we are ambassadors for Christ as though God were pleading through us.

[32 : 34] We implore you on Christ's behalf be reconciled to God. God has given us authority to preach the message of the gospel that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world.

He made us ambassadors, every single one of us. And so we have an opportunity and a privilege and the authority to give out that message, to give out that message to a lost world that needs him. Let's go through these 12 disciples and just talk one by one about each of them. Some of these disciples we're very familiar with, some of them we know almost nothing about.

We're going to start with the ones that are the most prominent. So verse 16 there, it says, Simon to whom he gave the name Peter. So there was this guy, his name was Simon.

Well, where does the name Peter come from? Was that his last name? No, because a lot of times we call him like Simon Peter, right? You can think, oh, Simon Peter, like Nathan Rambeck.

[33 : 44] No, this was a name that Jesus gave to Peter. He was really the only individual anyway that Jesus gave, of the 12, that Jesus gave a new name to.

And what does Peter mean anyway? Why would he give him that name? Rock. Gave him the name of Rock. That's a pretty cool name. I wouldn't mind that name. There's also another name that's used for Peter.

It's the same name, but it's just the Aramaic version. And sometimes you'll see that in the Bible and it can be confusing. You'll see the name Cephas, usually spelled C-E-P-H-A-S.

And you might read it and you think, well, who is that? I've never heard of Cephas. That's Peter. It's talking about Peter. It's just an Aramaic, so it's a different language for Rock. Speaking of Rock, so as we were naming our children, I liked to come up with really cool names for the kids.

And my wife was not exactly thrilled with some of the creative names that I came up with. So sometimes I got shot down. But that's okay.

[34 : 58] She has a lot of wisdom. And looking back, she's like, okay, when you're 25 years old, who had the idea of a 23 or 25 year old naming kids anyway?

Look back and like, why are we allowed to do that? One of my sons, David, we gave him a middle name of Stone. Stone.

So I wanted something to signify strength. So his middle name is Stone, similar to Peter's. So what else about Peter?

Peter seemed to be the leader of the 12. In fact, of all the 12, he seems to be the most prominent. He seems to be the spoke person. He usually speaks for the 12. If there's an opportunity where all the 12 are there, he's usually the one that speaks up.

He's known for being kind of bold and brash, speaking quickly, sometimes out of turn. One of the things that happened when Jesus was arrested he pulls out his sword and he hacks it, one of the high priest's servants, and cuts his ear off.

[36 : 11] That was Peter. So that tells you a little bit about his personality. He also told Jesus, when Jesus said, you know, you guys are going to scatter.

Basically, when things get rough and they arrest me, you all are going to scatter. Peter said, not me. I'm not going to do it. I would never do that.

I've been with you these three years. I would never deny you. And then we, and then Jesus says, I'm telling you, you're going to hear a cock crow three times.

And, well, I forget what does he say about the cock throwing three times. but you will deny me. Is it before the cock crows three times?

Three times, yeah. And when Peter heard that, after he had denied Jesus three times, can you imagine how that sunk in? It was difficult for him.

[37 : 20] But later, we see Peter was one of the most bold and outspoken of all those preaching the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ.

But even then, it's not like Peter became, you know, he went from being a coward to being only a bold preacher of the gospel.

You know, when Paul comes on the scene and Paul starts going to the Gentiles and he says, well, the Gentiles, they don't need to be keeping the law of Moses because that's just for the Jews and God doesn't require the Gentiles who come to faith to believe or to follow the law.

And there was a controversy around that. And there's a time described in Galatians where Paul says, you know what, Peter, he was with me, I can't remember where it was, Antioch, I think, and he said, you know what, I had to confront Peter to his face because he was a hypocrite and he was doing things that was going against what God told me needed, you know, was the message to the Gentiles that they don't need to keep the law.

And he played the hypocrite and I had to confront him to his face. So it's not like, well, Peter was, you know, had these character flaws and then after Jesus rose from the dead and Peter was this bold preacher and believer and they never had any issues after that.

[38 : 48] No, he was a hypocrite. as we read through each one of these disciples, I think, you know, we see a variety in these 12 disciples and I think in most of them we can see some of ourselves.

Some of us might have a personality of Peter where we're quick to declare our commitments but maybe not always keeping those commitments.

sometimes we can play a hypocrite just like Peter did. The next that we're going to look at is James and John.

James and John, these two were brothers and Jesus said, it says here that he called them the sons of thunder. The sons of thunder. Well, how did they get that name? Did somebody else give them that name?

Did they grow up with that name? Were they really loud as children? And that's kind of how they got their nickname. I don't know, but there's a passage here about these two that I think might play into this.

[39 : 55] It's a little bit of conjecture, but this is in Luke 9, verse 51. This tells us a little bit about James and John, these brothers, and might speak a little bit about how they got their name. Now, it came to pass when the time had come for him to be received up, he's talking about Jesus, that he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem and sent messengers before his face.

And as they went, disciples, they went ahead, they prepared for Jesus to arrive, but they did not receive him because his face was set for the journey to Jerusalem.

So, they were probably offended because the Jews in Jerusalem and the half Jews that were in Samaria, because they had intermarried with Gentiles and they weren't supposed to do that, and so they were quite at odds.

So it sounds like when the Samaritans heard that Jesus was heading towards Jerusalem, they were probably offended. Well, I don't have anything to do with this guy. And when his disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them just as Elijah did?

But he turned and he rebuked them and said, you do not know what manner of spirit you are of, for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

[41 : 20] You know, these guys were zealous for God and they saw sin and a rejection of Jesus and they said, hey, this is a good opportunity to judge these people.

God is judgment wrong? Is it inherently bad? No. In fact, there's going to be a judgment day in which everyone will be judged.

And God will be doing the judging. It will be a good thing. But the Bible also says that there's something that's better than judgment.

Mercy triumphs over judgment. Mercy triumphs. It's better to have mercy, to provide an opportunity. Not everybody will receive it, but it's better to have a merciful attitude towards people, especially during this part of Jesus' ministry.

So they were zealous for judgment and, you know, they saw something in the scriptures, right? Elijah, he called down fire. But Jesus said, hey, you don't know what manner of spirit you are of.

[42 : 37] They also, these two were known for asking for a special favor of Jesus. In Mark 10, verse 37, they said to Jesus, hey, grant us that we may sit one on your right hand and the other on your left in your glory, so in the kingdom.

And the book of Matthew records the same incident, but it wasn't them in that account that asked it, it was their mother. That's funny. So, I don't know if they're the ones that asked their mom, hey, could you ask Jesus?

Maybe he'll listen to you. Or if maybe it was the mother who kind of did it and maybe it was embarrassing to them, I don't know. Specifically about James, there's actually two apostles named James.

So, this one is James the son of Zebedee, just like John the son of Zebedee. James is actually the name in Hebrew, it's Jacob. So, there was actually a popular name.

In fact, it can be confusing, the name James, because Jesus had a brother named James. There are actually several Jameses in the New Testament, as well as several Jacobs in the Old Testament.

[43 : 45] So, sometimes throughout, if you read like church history, you'll hear people reference James the Greater. So, this James is many times called James the Greater. He was more prominent among the disciples.

Interestingly enough, James was the first one of the disciples who was killed. He was murdered. He was murdered by Herod, the puppet king over Israel.

It says that he was put to the sword, so that usually indicates he was executed. And that's quite a change, right, from his zeal for judgment, and now he's willing to lay down his life for a message, to get the message out to anyone who will listen.

To anyone who will listen. He's willing to lay down his life for that message. John was his brother. This is one of the apostles who actually wrote one of the gospels.

John wrote one of the gospels. He is referred to as the disciple whom Jesus loved. The disciple whom Jesus loved. These three, Peter, James, and John, seem to be, they have a more prominent relationship with Jesus, prominence among the twelve, than the other twelve did.

[45 : 12] And there are actually three different occasions where Jesus asks these three, only these three, to accompany him somewhere. One was at the healing of Jairus' daughter, if you read that account.

That's in, if you want to read it later, it's Mark chapter five, verse 37. It says, he permitted no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James.

It's kind of strange. Well, why is that? And then there was the account of Jesus being transfigured on the mountain, where Jesus met with, it shows he met with Moses and Elijah, and he brought three with him.

It was these same three, Peter, James, and John. And then lastly, at the Garden of Gethsemane, he brought three with him, Peter, James, and John. And that's where they fall asleep.

Jesus asked them to watch and pray. Just stay awake and pray. That's all. They fell asleep. The next one is Andrew. We don't know too much about Andrew.

[46 : 17] In fact, really the only thing that we know, one of the only things we know about Andrew is that he's Peter's brother and that he's actually the first one to introduce Peter to Jesus. We actually read about that whenever it was in Mark.

Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist. And then when he saw Jesus and said, this is the Messiah, I'm going to go follow him. I want to follow the Messiah.

And he goes to his brother and he says, Peter, I think I found the Messiah. Come check it out. And Peter did. Now, Andrew wasn't even among the top three.

Imagine you have your brother, he's kind of one of the top dogs in the 12, and you're kind of lower on the totem pole. Sometimes wonder, was there any kind of conflict there? You know, one was more preferred or more prominent among the others?

Who knows? The next is Bartholomew. Bartholomew is interesting because we have actually a list of all the 12 disciples, and Bartholomew is mentioned, or I guess we have the list, but we have in all four gospels, we have most of the disciples named.

[47 : 35] John is the only one that doesn't have the list of the 12. It mentions most of them individually and references the 12, but doesn't ever share a list like Matthew, Mark, and Luke do.

But Bartholomew is only ever mentioned in the first three. Bartholomew is never mentioned in the book of John. There are others who aren't, so it's not necessarily surprising.

But the name Bartholomew is actually not a first name. It's not a given name. Bartholomew means the son of Tolmai.

And so that's not somebody's first name. And so there's actually another disciple that is referenced in the book of John that is not mentioned at all in Matthew, Mark, or Luke.

Let's read about that. John 1, verse 43. John 1, 43. The following day, Jesus wanted to go to Galilee and found Philip.

[48 : 45] And he said to him, follow me. We'll read about, we'll talk about Philip later. Follow me. Now, Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 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. And Nathanael said to him, can anything good come out of Nazareth? Philip said to him, come and see.

Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and he said of him, behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit. That's quite a compliment. Nathanael said to him, how do you know me?

Jesus answered and said to him, before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you. Nathanael answered and said to him, Rabbi, teachers, you are the son of God.

You're the king of Israel. And Jesus answered and said to him, because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these. And so, who is this Nathanael?

[49 : 52] This is somebody who seemed to be one of Jesus' disciples. Well, many people connect Bartholomew and Nathanael. Nathanael was one of the twelve disciples.

His last name was Bartholomew. And one of the other kind of clues that we see with that is that who was buddies with Nathanael?

It was Philip, right, in this account. Philip was buddies with Nathanael. And whenever we see Bartholomew's name, it's always paired with Philip, several times in the scriptures.

So that seems to indicate. Okay, Philip. There's only a few interactions that are all recorded in John. We have the one related to Nathanael.

There's another one in which Philip asks Jesus. This is John 14, verse 8. Philip said to Jesus, Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us. And Jesus said to him, have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known me, Philip?

[50 : 54] He who has seen me has seen the Father, so how can you say, show us the Father? He said, you're looking at him. You're looking at him. So that's basically all we know about Philip.

Matthew, Matthew we know was a tax collector. And he was also another, with John, one of the gospel writers. he wrote his account down of what he saw.

Thomas. Thomas is also called the twin. So some people say, well, he must have had a twin brother. In fact, there are some skeptics who think, well, Thomas was a twin.

Maybe he was Jesus' twin. and maybe when Jesus died, or maybe it was Thomas that died, and when they said that he rose from the dead, they just presented his twin.

Maybe that explains the resurrection account. It's kind of crazy. There's not much to it, except that he was named the twin. You extrapolate all kinds of crazy things from that.

[52 : 10] But his name is actually Hebrew for twin. And so it just may be that his name just so happened to mean twin, not necessarily that he was one.

What was Thomas famous for? Was it for something great and wonderful? He was bold? No, he was the one who would not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead.

What did he say? I won't believe unless what? You show me the holes in his hand and the hole in his side. And Jesus appeared to him and said, Hey, Thomas, here's my hands.

You want to put your fingers in there? Here's my side. You want to put your hand there? My Lord and my God, he said. And then what did Jesus say?

Blessed are those who believed when they have not seen. Right? The next, James, the son of Alphaeus. We don't know, again, he's barely ever mentioned.

[53 : 09] In fact, he's not mentioned at all outside of just these lists that we have. Some say, well, maybe he's the brother of Matthew because Matthew also is said to be a son of Alphaeus. But, you know, you can't know that for sure.

There's multiple Alphaeuses, I'm sure, that could have had sons. He is referred to as James the Lesser. So if you ever heard James the Lesser, that's this other James that is less well-known.

Then there's this guy named Thaddeus. Well, who is Thaddeus? It's interesting, you see three lists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Thaddeus is not listed at all in Luke or in Acts because Acts also lists the 12.

Well, what's going on here? Was there a mistake in the Bible? Like, did somebody get the names wrong? Thaddeus, he's in Matthew and Mark, but he's not in Luke and he's not in Acts. In fact,

there's another name that's in those lists, in Luke and Acts that are not in Mark and Matthew and that is the name of somebody named Judas.

So what's going on here? Did somebody screw things up? Well, most likely those two are the same person. In fact, it's common to have multiple names. One is actually Judas is a Hebrew name and Thaddeus is a Greek name.

[54 : 27] It was very common back then for people to have names that were a Greek name and a Hebrew name, a few Hebrew. Judas was actually a very common name.

So you would imagine that, in fact, Jesus had a brother whose name was Judas. So you might use your Greek name to differentiate yourself from the other Judases. For example, if your name is John, right, today, and you go by your last name, so somebody calls you Harris, so everybody calls you Harris instead of John, because your last name is Harris, especially if you're in the military, they just call you by your last name.

In one place in John chapter 14, this Judas is referred to as Judas, not Iscariot. And so you could also imagine that this Judas might want to go by a different name to distinguish himself from the other Judas that he did not want to be associated with.

So it's most believe it's Thaddeus and Judas and Judas are the same person. Then there's Simon the Zealot. Zealot is a word that means Canaanite. And so people aren't quite sure, but there was a group of people called the Zealots, and they were basically the political activists of the day.

They're the ones that would have gone out to the capital and held up signs and protests and all those kinds of things. Jews. And so many believe that that was kind of Simon's thing.

[56 : 01] He was part of these activist groups that was against the Romans and their occupation of our nation, Israel. And Jesus called him to a different cause. And not even necessarily that that cause was wrong or bad, but Jesus' cause that he called Simon to was even more important.

And the last one on the list is Judas Iscariot. he's known as the one who betrayed Jesus. You know, people might wonder, well, why did Jesus choose Judas, who was a fraud?

Why did he do that? Did he not know? Did he make a bad decision? And I don't think that's the case at all. I think Jesus chose Judas intentionally because he knew that he was a fraud.

In fact, it says somewhere, I guess I don't have it written down, but Judas would steal money from the poor bag. They had a bag of money that they would use to distribute alms among the poor, and Judas would steal money from that.

So it's not like he turned coat kind of at the end. It seems that Judas was a fraud from the very beginning. Turn to 1 Corinthians 15, and we'll end with this.

[57 : 19] 1 Corinthians 15. 15. This is a passage that I hope most of you know, because this is the gospel that we preach, 1 Corinthians 15.

And this speaks to the importance of these apostles in the ministry that they provided, not just back then, but they provide even still today. 1 Corinthians 15.

1 says this, Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which you also received, and in which you stand. Your salvation, the salvation that you stand in, is this gospel message, by which you are also saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you, unless you have believed in vain.

And he's kind of saying there, you know, maybe the message isn't true. Maybe it's a lie. And in that case, you believed in vain. He's saying that kind of tongue in cheek. For I delivered to you from the first all that which I also received, that Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.

Jesus died just like the prophets said he would do. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. And that he was seen by Cephas, who's that?

[58 : 43] Peter? Oh, I lost my hand. He was seen by Cephas and then by the twelve. He was seen by them.

And this is the most important role of these apostles, that they witnessed his resurrection from the dead. Now, maybe it was all a hoax.

You know, twelve guys can get together, right? This has happened before. conspiracies. People get together and they conspire together to tell a lie, to create a hoax.

And maybe this whole thing was a hoax in which they made up this story about this man who was crucified on a cross and he rose again, and now we must follow him.

We'll create our own religion. We'll create our own religion. Was it a hoax? Well, so many people have been convinced that Jesus really died and rose again.

[59 : 53] Do you know what happened to these twelve men? Did they gain riches? Did they gain political power? Almost all of them died gruesome deaths.

Many of them were crucified. Peter, it says in early church history, was crucified upside down. He did not want to die like his savior. Crucified me upside down.

I'm not worthy to be crucified like he was. Some of them were flayed. They were just cut up, skinned. Others burned. John is the only one that we know of that actually survived to old age. Their testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is confirmed by their own blood. They died so that that message that Jesus rose from the dead could be confirmed as true.

Because anyone will tell a lie to gain money, prestige, power, fame, fortune, but no one will die so that they can receive a gruesome death.

[61 : 14] No one will do that. And especially not 11 or 12 men. So it seems like God's purpose for these 12. And he mentioned, he said, if you're going to come follow me, remember Jesus said, you have to bear your cross to come follow me.

You have to be willing to die. If you want to come follow me. It's not for everyone, but if you're willing to die, come follow me. And this was part of his purpose for these 12, was to die, to confirm the testimony that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

They were living witnesses when they were alive, and their testimony of his death, burial, and resurrection is sealed in their own blood.

It speaks to us today. It speaks to everyone across the world, that the testimony that Jesus rose so that our sins could be forgiven and that we could have eternal life with him.

It's true. Amen? Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for what you've done. Humbled yourself, became a man, lived a life that was difficult, humbled yourself, and as it says in the scriptures, somebody might dare to die for a good man, but who would ever dare to die for sinners like us?

[62 : 45] But that's what you did for us, and we're so grateful. Thank you for what you've done and the witnesses that you established that we might know, that we might have confidence, that you were risen from the dead, that we might have life.

May our lives also be a testimony to you and what you've accomplished in us and for us and through us. In Jesus' name, amen.