

Jesus begins His ministry

(John the Baptist, Calls Disciples- Part 1)

(I wrote) Matthew 4:18-22, Mark 1:14-20, John
1:35-51

Today, we are going to hear how Jesus' ministry began. We are going to hear about a man named John and then we are going to learn a little bit about some of Jesus' disciples.

When I say the name "John", you might think that I am referring to any person named John. But when I say "John the Baptist," most of you would know exactly who I am talking about.

John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin. He was about 6 months older than Jesus.

We can find John mentioned in the Bible when he was born, but we don't really read anything else about John until much later in his life.

Now, normally when a young boy was born, he would follow in his father's footsteps.

Jesus followed in His earthly father footsteps.

Joseph was a carpenter and so was Jesus.

So you would think that John would become a priest like his father Zachariah.

But no...not John...John was called by God to be a prophet.

Instead of serving in the temple, John went out... into the wilderness and left the priesthood behind.

Now this doesn't mean that John was not educated...quite the opposite was true.

John would have learned and participated in all the priestly teaching while he was growing up.

But when he was old enough to leave home...John set out to do what God had intended for him to do from the beginning.

Now being a priest would have been a much easier lifestyle for John...but...when God calls...we must be willing to give up whatever we have and serve Him fully.

And that is exactly what John did.

When John does reappear in the pages of the Bible, he is living in the wilderness. He is unshaven and shaggy.

He is wearing clothing made from camel's hair and he is wearing a leather belt around his waist.

For food, he eats locusts and wild honey. A locust is like a grasshopper. How many of you would like to eat a grasshopper?

This was quite a different lifestyle for John wasn't it?

But John was doing EXACTLY what God had intended for him to do.

He was preaching and telling the people about the coming Savior.

Often he would call out "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is drawing near."

Many people came from Jerusalem and Judea and all the area around the Jordan River to hear John preach. He had quite a following.

The people would confessed their sins, and then he would baptize them right there in the Jordon River.

Now the people knew that the Messiah was coming...so many of them thought that John himself was the Messiah.

“Are you the Messiah?” they would ask.

But John would quickly tell them “I am not the Christ.”

Again and again they asked John “Are you the Messiah? But again and again, he said “No”.

“Well then, who are you?

Are you Elijah?” they asked. “No I am not” he replied.

“Then WHO are you”? they asked once more.

And John replied “I am a voice crying in the wilderness, making straight the way of the Lord!”

“There is one coming after me who is greater than I.

I am not good enough even to kneel down and untie his sandals.

I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

And one day...the promised Savior arrive just like John had proclaimed.

On this particular day, John was standing in the Jordan River...baptizing people.

And **Jesus** comes walking up along the shore line.

When Jesus saw John baptizing people, he asked John to baptize Him as well.

Now this was quite puzzling to John.

John knew that Jesus, the Messiah was without sin and that he had no need to be baptized

So John spoke to Jesus and said “I have a great need to be baptized by YOU, yet you come to me to be baptized?”

“Permit it, for it is fitting and proper for me to set an example for those who do need to be baptized” Jesus said.

Jesus wanted to be an example to all the people, He wanted to show them how important it was to confess their sins, ask God for forgiveness, and be baptized.

So John did as Jesus requested, He baptized Him.

As soon as Jesus was raised back up out of the water. Heaven opened up, and he saw God's Spirit coming down on him like a dove.

Then a voice was heard from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I love, and am very well pleased."

Can anyone guess why John was called "John the Baptist"?

That's right, because he went before Jesus telling everyone to repent of their sins and be baptized. He baptized many, many people in Jesus' name.

He even baptized Jesus Himself.

Can you imagine how awesome it must have been to be the one to baptize Jesus and then to actually HEAR the voice of God? That would have been incredible.

After Jesus was baptized, He went out into the wilderness to fast and pray.

He was there for 40 days fasting and praying.

You see...Jesus was getting ready to start His ministry and He wanted to make sure that He was physically, mentally and spiritually ready for the journey.

He had spent the first 30 years of His life learning and teaching and preparing to do the work that God had sent Him to do.

He had done all the preparation work...but before He began His physical work...He wanted to pray and spend time with God so that He was spiritually ready.

This is a great lesson for all of us.

When God calls us to serve, we need to bathe our calling in prayer.

Jesus knew that His journey would not be an easy one...He wanted to make sure that He was in God's will and that God would be with Him

every step of the way... He knew that Satan
would attack from all sides

And that is exactly what Satan did.

During Jesus' 40 days of praying and fasting,
Satan did his best to trick Jesus into serving him
instead of serving God.

But Jesus was not fooled. No matter how hard
Satan tried, Jesus could not be tempted.

Instead, Jesus said "Be gone Satan! For it is
written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God,
and serve Him only!'"

Then Satan...knowing that he had been defeated
by God...left.

And angels came and ministered to Jesus.

At the end of His 40 days of fasting and
praying...Jesus appeared before John once
again.

John was at the Jordan river preaching to people.

When John saw Jesus walk by, he said “Behold the lamb of God.”

The next day...once again Jesus walked by and John said “Behold the lamb of God.”

This time, two of John’s followers decided that they would follow Jesus to see where He was going.

Jesus knew these young men were following him, so He stopped and called to them.

“What are you looking for?” He asked.

The two men said, “Teacher, where are you staying.”

Jesus answered “Come and see.”

So the two men followed Jesus to where He was staying, and they stayed with him throughout the entire day.

The Bible does not tell us what Jesus said to the two men, but when they left Jesus' side, there was no doubt in their minds that He was indeed the Savior that they had been waiting for.

How glad they were because they had found him!

The Bible tells us that one of the men was named Andrew.

After Andrew had spoken with Jesus, he was so excited that he ran to find his brother Simon so that he could tell him all about Jesus.

“Simon, we have found the Messiah” he said.

Then Andrew took Simon to meet Jesus as well.

When Jesus met Simon, he said, “You are Simon son of John, from now on, you will be called Cephas.”

Cephas means Peter, so from that day on, Simon was know as Simon Peter.

Andrew and Peter had a wonderful time with Jesus but soon it was time for them to go home.

However, a few days later, as Jesus was walking by Lake Galilee, he saw two brothers again.

Andrew and Simon Peter were throwing their nets into the lake because they were fishermen.

When Jesus saw them, He said “Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

So Andrew and Simon Peter got up immediately and follow Jesus.

Jesus, Andrew and Simon Peter soon saw two other men. They were brothers as well.
Their names were James and John.

James and John were in a boat with their father,
mending their fishing nets.

Jesus called out to them “Come, follow me.”

Immediately James and John left their boat and
their father, and they followed Jesus too.
These 4 men were Jesus’ first 4 disciples.

Andrew, Simon Peter, James and John.

As Jesus and his 4 disciples were on their way to
Galilee, they found another man named Philip.

Jesus called out “Follow me.”

And just like the other four followers, Philip got
up and followed Jesus.

Philip was from the very same little town that
Andrew and Peter were from.

As the 5 followers walked along the road with Jesus, Philip listened closely to everything that Jesus was saying.

He had waited a longgg time for the Messiah, and now he, too, believed that Jesus was the promised Savior.

Philip and his neighbor; Nathaniel; had talked often about the glorious time when the Savior would appear.

Philip was so excited about meeting the Savior that he just had to run and tell his friend Nathaniel.

“Nathaniel”; he called out, “We have found the Messiah.”

At first, Nathaniel didn’t believe that Jesus was the Messiah that he had been waiting for; for so long.

But when Jesus revealed some things that He knew about Nathaniel...things that no one else could possible know....Nathaniel believed.

The only way that Jesus could know these things was if He truly was the Messiah.

At once Nathaniel believed and he too followed Jesus.

Now many of you won't remember a disciple by the name of Nathaniel. That is because Nathaniel was also known as Bartholomew.

I don't know about you, but I think I would rather be called Nathaniel than Bartholomew.

How many disciples does that give us so far? 6

Can you name them? Andrew, Simon Peter, James, John, Philip and Bartholomew.

Next week, we will learn about the other 6 disciples.

Jesus Chooses His Apostles (Week 2)

I Wrote

Last week, we learned about 6 different disciples; or followers, of Jesus.

6 different men who believed in Jesus enough to leave their homes, their families, their jobs, their security... to follow Jesus.

Their names were Andrew, Simon Peter, James, John, Philip, and Nathaniel; otherwise known as Bartholomew.

Now although these men were disciples of Jesus', they were not called into full time ministry until later.

They had jobs...but they would leave those jobs from time to time to follow Jesus and to learn from Him.

But then they might go home for a period of time.

Now it was on one of these particular trips with Jesus...a trip to the synagogue on the Sabbath...that Andrew, Simon Peter, James, John and Jesus were met by a huge crowd of people.

Right in the center of this crowd...was a man...a man whom Satan had placed a evil spirit inside.

When the man saw Jesus, he cried out loud.

“Let us alone! Jesus of Nazareth? I know you are the Holy One from God.”

When Jesus heard this...He was not happy. So He commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man.

“Be quiet and come out of him.” Jesus said.

At the sound of Jesus’ voice, the spirit threw the poor man on the floor...right there in front of all the people.

He threw him down...but he obeyed Jesus; without doing any harm to the man.

When all the people at the synagogue saw this, they were amazed.

They had never seen ANYONE with the power to rebuke an evil spirits.

Quickly the news spread around every part of the city and everyone became interested in the great teacher who was among them.

As the news spread, the number of followers began to grow.

Soon everyone wanted to meet Jesus and hear the Good News that He had to share.

That afternoon, Jesus and His disciples returned to the home of Simon Peter in Capernaum.

When they arrived in Capernaum, they were met with some bad news. Simon Peter's mother in law was lying sick with fever.

Jesus was called to her bedside.

He looked at Simon Peter's mother in law, reached down and took hold of her hands and lifted her up.

The instant Jesus lifted her up...her fever departed and her strength returned to her.

In fact, she felt so good that she rose from her bed and helped to prepare food for the 4 men and their wonderful teacher.

Now remember, this was the Sabbath, a day when Jews were not allowed to work.

But at sunset, as the Sabbath-day closed, they were free once again to begin their work.

So on this particular Sabbath, just as the sun began to set....

Hundreds of people were making their way to the house where Jesus was staying....the house of Simon Peter.

From every direction, people were coming, some with crippled friends leaning on their arms, and others with blind friends walking by their side.

Still others were carrying cots which held their sick children or other relatives.

And all of them were coming to ask Jesus to drive away the sicknesses and diseases and

to make their friends and loved ones well again.

One by one...Jesus touched the people and they were healed.

Finally, when the last group of people left, Jesus lay down to sleep.

How very tired he must have been!

But after sleeping only a few hours he rose up VERY EARLY and left the city.

Jesus wanted to find a place where He would be alone to talk with his heavenly Father.

Many times in the Bible, we will read how Jesus slipped off to a quiet place to pray.

Not only did He pray...but He prayed FIRST THING in the morning. Long before His hectic day began.

Jesus prayed for strength and help in doing the great work that He had to do.

He didn't start working and then try to find time for God...He found time for God FIRST and then began His busy day.

When daylight broke, people began coming again to Simon's home, asking for Jesus.

But Jesus was not there. Simon and his friends began to search for Him.

They searched and searched and searched until they found him at his place of prayer.

They told him about all the people who had come early to find him again.

However, Jesus said, "I must preach the kingdom of God in other cities also, for I am sent to do this great work."

So the disciples went with him to visit other cities of Galilee, and Jesus taught in the synagogues of those cities and cast out evil spirits, as he had done in Capernaum.

And many people believed in him.

Now, we have heard about 6 men who helped Jesus, but as you recall, Jesus had 12 special helpers.

The Bible tells us about the first 6 and today, we are going to hear about a 7th.

This man's name was Matthew and he was a publican; or tax collector.

Now in the land where Jesus lived, a publican was despised by the Jews.

The publicans worked for the Roman government.

They collected taxes...but most of them were crooks.

They would collect the government's portion of taxes, but most of the time, they would collect even more and stick that money right into their own pockets.

So it came as quite a surprise when Jesus actually called one of these publicans to follow Him.

One day, while Jesus was passing along a street in the city of Capernaum, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at a publican's table, taking the tax money from the people.

Although Matthew was a publican, whom other Jews despised, Jesus saw the heart of this man and he knew Matthew would make a good disciple. So he called this publican to follow him, and Matthew gladly left his money-table and obeyed the call.

When Jesus called Matthew, it surprised many people. They couldn't believe that Jesus had called someone like Matthew to follow Him.

They didn't understand...but Jesus did.

He saw Matthew's heart and that is what Jesus always looks at. He doesn't look at our outward appearance. He looks at our heart.

Now the Bible tells us that Jesus had many, many disciples; or followers.

His teachings were so wonderful, and He performed such amazing miracles.

But the time came...when Jesus wished to choose 12 extra special men from among the hundreds or thousands of followers.

These twelve men would be sent out to places where He had never yet been. They would preach to the people in those places about the kingdom of God.

Although Jesus could see into the hearts of all men, he felt that he needed help from God to know which of His followers He should choose to be among His 12 special helpers.

So one night, Jesus quietly climbed up a mountain. He wanted to find a nice quiet spot where no one would disturb Him.

When He reached the top of the mountain, He knelt down to pray, and all night he prayed to God for help and wisdom, and for strength to do his work.

When the morning light returned Jesus was ready to choose his 12 special disciples.

Jesus climbed back down the mountain and re-joined the group of disciples who had been waiting for Him in the valley.

From all of His disciples, Jesus chose Simon whom he called Peter, and Andrew, his brother.

Then he chose James and John, the fishermen who had been partners with Simon and Andrew at the seaside.

Afterwards he chose Matthew, the publican, and Philip and Nathaniel, and Thomas, and another James, and then another Simon, then he chose Judas the brother of James, and last of all Judas Iscariot.

To these twelve men Jesus gave power to cure diseases and to cast out devils.

He also appointed them to preach the kingdom of God.

From now on...these 12 men would be called His apostles...which means those who are sent out.

Because He sent them out to preach to other men.

Of these twelve apostles we read the most about Simon Peter, James, John, Andrew, Matthew, Philip, and Thomas.

Little mention is made of the others, except of Judas Iscariot, who near the end of Jesus' ministry became untrue and betrayed Jesus.

If Jesus could see into the hearts of men....and if God helped Jesus to choose His twelve apostles...why do you think they chose Judas Iscariot?

Because it was God's plan.

When Jesus was born as a little bitty baby...He knew that He was coming to earth to die for our sins...He knew that Judas would betray Him...but this was all part of God's plan.

Do you think that Judas loved Jesus? I am sure that He did...but it seems that he also loved money.

However, after he betrayed Jesus...he was remorseful.

He even tried to give the silver back.

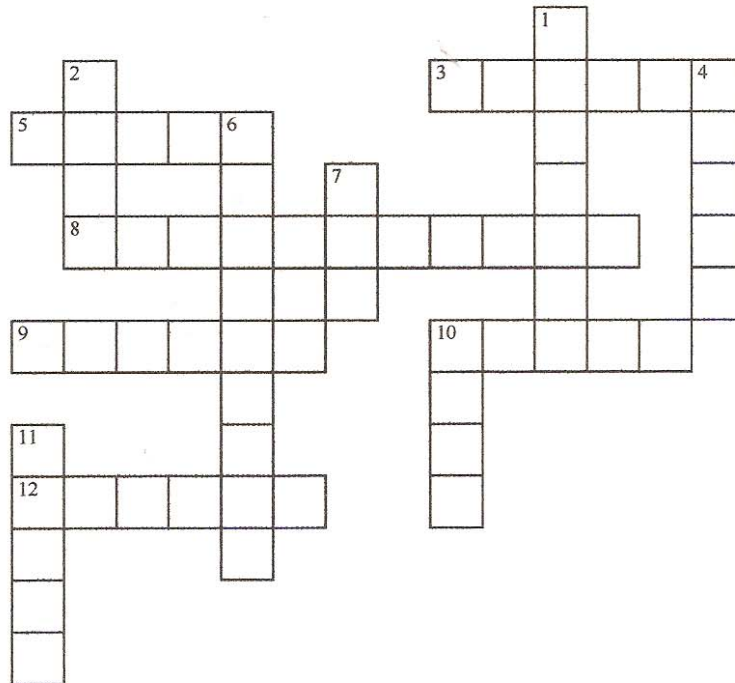
And he was so sorry for what he had done...so ashamed...that he actually hung himself.

We will hear some more about Judas in a few weeks.

For now...who can tell me the names of the 12 apostles?

**Andrew
Peter (Simon Peter)
James
John
Philip
Bartholomew- Nathaniel
Matthew
Thomas
James (The Less)
Simon
Judas (Brother of James the Less)
Judas Iscariot**

Jesus' Disciples



ACROSS

- 3 Friend of Nathaniel
- 5 Tempted Jesus in the wilderness
- 8 Friend of Philip
- 9 River where John Baptized Jesus
- 10 Who said 'It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only'?
- 12 One of the first Disciples chosen by Jesus

DOWN

- 1 "Follow Me and I will make you _____ of men
- 2 Behold the _____ of God
- 4 Brother of Andrew
- 6 Another name for Bartholomew
- 7 "Thou art My beloved _____, in whom I am well pleased
- 10 Cousin of Jesus
- 11 Brother of John

Unscramble the letters to find the words in our

Twelve Disciples Anagram

Word List:

disciples, fishermen, follow, friends,
Galilee, James, nets, preach, teaching,
twelve



eeltvw _____

eefhimnrs _____

acehgint _____

flloow _____

cdeiilpss _____

acehpr _____

definrs _____

enst _____

aejms _____

aeegill _____

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disciples, fishermen, follow, friends,
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eeltvw twelve

eefhimnrs fishermen

acehgint teaching

flloow follow

cdeiilpss disciples

acehpr preach

definrs friends

enst nets

aejms James

aeegill Galilee

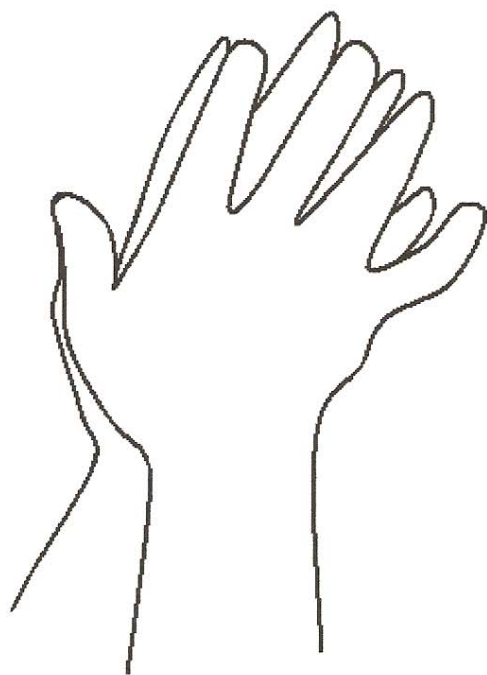
Twelve Disciples Word Search

K D W O R C T L

L I F E C O A O

S T E N F E O V

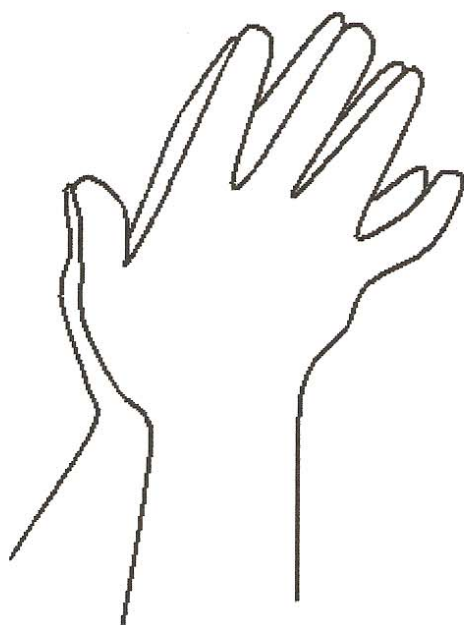
F O L L O W B E



boat
crowd
follow
life
love
nets

Twelve Disciples Word Search

Z T F V K G S E Q N E N H H P
T M I R A C L E S R F E E C F
T E A Y V P G Y F A I M A A L
V S A E I A X B R E L R L E T
W W V C L V J X I L I E A R M
Y O S I H R W N E S O H C P C
L I L B S I M O N E T S F Y R
D E F L O Z N Z D S Z I M H O
E K G V O A B G S C T F E L W
S E M A J F T T W E L V E J D



boat
chosen
crowd
disciple
fishermen
follow
friends
Galilee
heal
James

learn
left
life
love
miracles
nets
preach
Simon
teaching
twelve