

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
XLIV. Christ's Necessary Organization Of The Twelve
(Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16)

I. Introduction

- A. Jesus is recorded in Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 6:12-16 as choosing twelve disciples and also commissioning them as apostles, and that after He had spent a sleepless night in prayer alone on a mountain.
- B. The dynamics behind this occasion reveal that it was a watershed occurrence in Christ's ministry, and it provides an important lesson for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

II. Christ's Necessary Organization Of The Twelve, Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16.

- A. Events just preceding Christ's commissioning of the twelve reveal a several great needs had developed in Christ's ministry that He was required to address immediately (as follows):
 - 1. The intensifying opposition to Jesus by Israel's religious leaders required that He prepare His followers to be able function effectively in the world in spite of His eventual physical departure from it:
 - a. Mark 3:6 reported that after Jesus had healed a man with a withered hand in a Jerusalem synagogue on the sabbath, the Pharisees took counsel with the Herodians on how they might destroy Him.
 - b. The Herodians were a Jewish party that favored Herod's dynasty and "peace at any price" in appeasing Rome (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Matt. 22:16) where the Pharisees strictly heeded the Mosaic Law, so these two parties were in sharp political conflict with each other (Ibid., fn. to Matt. 3:7).
 - c. For such political opponents to unite to plan to kill Jesus meant that opposition to Him was growing greatly, what would inevitably lead to His death, resurrection and ascension. All of this required that He prepare His followers to function in His physical absence once He had ascended into heaven.
 - 2. Also, Christ's attraction of huge crowds from Israel and Gentile lands required that He prepare His followers to function as an edifying unit worldwide in His eventual physical absence:
 - a. Mark 3:7-10 recorded how when Christ withdrew to Galilee, throngs of Hebrews and Gentiles as far away as 100 miles in each direction swarmed toward Him for healing. Jesus even had to direct His disciples to set aside a small boat for His escape were the crowd to start a lethal stampede because so many people were pressing close about Him to touch Him to be healed, Mark 3:9-10.
 - b. Accordingly, Jesus foresaw the time when the Church would begin where the Gospel of His death, burial and resurrection would spread worldwide, requiring that His followers from many different parts of the world with their different cultures, languages and heritages would need to function in edifying unity!
 - 3. Further, we know from passages like Mark 8:14-21 that Jesus' followers were still relatively spiritually immature, that they needed more discipling before He could delegate more oversight to them.
- B. Thus, to address these great, immediate, and intensifying needs, Jesus went out to a mountain apart from His followers to pray in private to God the Father, and He continued all night in prayer regarding His selection of the right men, Luke 6:12!
- C. Then, when it was morning, Christ called His disciples to come to Him, and He chose twelve of them to be His immediate disciples, and He commissioned them to be His apostles, Luke 6:13. We explain:
 - 1. "The Greek word for 'disciple' signifies a learner . . . one who is willing to listen to a teacher" (J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 170).
 - 2. Jesus also named these disciples "apostles," ones who are sent, Ibid. A disciple does not necessarily carry any authority from his teacher, but "authority is essential to the concept of an *apostle*." (Ibid.)
 - 3. Thus, Jesus needed to teach these twelve men while also giving them increasing levels of authoritative responsibility to prepare them to lead His people not only in the era of the Church (Ephesians 3:19-20), but also in the later Messianic Kingdom when they would rule over the kingdom of Israel (Matthew 19:28)!
- D. Luke 6:14-16 lists the names of the twelve as Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas, son of James, and Judas Iscariot. (Ibid.)

Lesson: *To meet the great need of organizing His followers worldwide in view of His coming death, resurrection, and ascension when His followers worldwide would need to function in edifying ways in His physical absence, Jesus appointed and trained twelve men to lead His people.*

Application: *(1) If we see that God's people need organizational depth, may we like Christ prayerfully rely on the Lord for His guidance. (2) May we then train the qualified men God selects to lead His people, 2 Timothy 2:1-2.*