

## Twelve Are Chosen

**N**ow, as more and more people came to Jesus, he saw that they were like a great harvest that lies ripening in the fields without workers to gather it. And he was troubled about this, and so he went up into the hills alone and spent the whole of a night in prayer.

When the sun rose, he called twelve men to come to him, and these were Peter (who had been named Simon at birth) and his brother Andrew, James and John the sons of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Thaddeus, Matthew (who had been a tax collector until he met Jesus), Simon who was called the Zealot, James the son of Alphaeus, and the disciple named Judas Iscariot.

Jesus explained to the twelve that they would now become his apostles, to help him carry on his ministry. "The people of Israel are like lost sheep," he told them. "Go and be good shepherds to them. Heal them and cast out demons, for I will give you this power. Bring them the news that God's kingdom is at hand; and teach them to live according to his will."

Their lives would not be easy, Jesus warned them. Leaving their families behind, they must travel from place to place, as he himself did, without having any home. They must take no money with them, nor extra clothing; nor should they ask any fee for their services, since their powers were freely given to them.

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“When you come to a village,” Jesus said, “seek out an honorable person and go to his door, saying, ‘Peace be in this house!’ If you are welcomed, accept the food and drink that are set before you, for the worker deserves his keep; and if you find good people there, share your peace with them; but if they are evil, let your peace return to you.”

The faces of the twelve apostles were bright with joy and eagerness as Jesus told them all of this, but he looked at them tenderly, knowing of all the trouble and hardship they would have to endure. “I am sending you forth like lambs among wolves!” he exclaimed. “You will enter some towns and be badly treated by the people there, and they will not listen to your words. When this happens, leave that town and shake the dust of it from

your feet.

