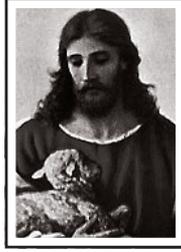


The Twelve Apostles of the Lamb



As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word... John 17:18-20

Chapter Fourteen



The Twelve Apostles Their Mission Continues...

Were the *Twelve Apostles of the Lamb* successful in carrying out their mission to preach the Kingdom to the “*uttermost part of the earth?*” *Acts 1:8* From their examples as shown in the Scriptures, we know they were. Sometimes under great discomfort and suffering, but always rejoicing in the privilege, they carried forth the message that Jesus died for all and will someday bring peace and everlasting life to the world.

Some people think that the only ones who will receive everlasting life are those who accept Jesus now. But we know by the writings of the Apostle Paul, “*God is the savior of all men, but especially of those who believe.*” *1 Tim. 4:10* The Apostles’ mission was not to convert the whole world now. They were sent to call out a people for God’s name from every part of the earth. If the Apostles’ mission was to convert the whole world, then we would have to say that they have failed. But, they did not fail, because Jesus told them that he only wanted a *little flock* of true believers who would sacrifice everything, including life itself, to one day bring the promise of Abraham to all the people of the earth. “*In thee, Abraham, and in thy seed, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*” *Gen. 22:16-18, Isa. 26:9 & 1Tim. 2:6* Although Jesus and the Apostles are well known throughout the world today, it is still just a *little flock* who truly believe.

Jesus appointed these twelve Apostles alone to be special *mouthpieces* to the Church. This meant that he would speak to his followers through the words of his Apostles. He said that whatever they would set forth as truth on earth would be the

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same in heaven. Therefore, we should respect what they say in the Scriptures as more important than any worldly wisdom of men. These twelve humble men, despised by the haughty and proud religious rulers, were able to impress kings and are still the most well respected writers to have lived. It was not by their own greatness as men, but by the holy Spirit of God that they were able to bring about the greatest change in human history—a love of Jesus and a hope in the hearts of men that he will save them.

Now that we know the different Apostles better, we can see why Jesus sent them out in pairs of two to preach. Each one of the Apostles had certain strengths and weaknesses. For example, the Apostle Peter was bold and quick to act before thinking things through. He was paired with the Apostle Andrew who was more cautious and mild mannered. Jesus was able to make *one* wise and complete man out of *two* imperfect men. *Reprint 2261:1-2*

Now that we know more about God's dealings with the Apostles, we can see why Jesus told them not to take extra money and clothing with them on their journeys. They had to learn to totally trust that "*God would supply all their needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*" *Phil. 4:19* They were not to *ask* for extra money and clothes from the various homes that took them in. They were to watch for the Lord's providence to give them a welcome place to stay, food, water, and, when needed, clothing and money. The Apostles did just this, and by their experience they gained total trust in providence.

There is a similarity in the twelve Apostles to the twelve tribes of Israel. From the twelve sons of Jacob came the entire nation of Israel—God's chosen people set apart for His wonderful purposes on earth. From the twelve Apostles of God came the entire nation of *spiritual Israel*—chosen and set apart for His wonderful purposes in heaven. There is a new Jerusalem in heaven for spiritual Israel. In Revelation 21:14 we read: "*And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb.*" The twelve tribes of Israel were similar to the twelve spiritual tribes in that they were provided for in their wilderness journeys. But unlike

Their Mission Continues . . .

spiritual Israel, natural Israel did not learn the lessons of trust and obedience. Instead, they constantly murmured against God for not giving them what they wanted. It is this spirit of ingratitude that hardened the hearts of the Jews, and they rejected the opportunity to be a part of the spiritual calling. They should have accepted release from their burden to the Law and embraced the freedom in Christ offered by the twelve Apostles.

How thankful we should be if we have accepted the blessings offered through these twelve foundations of the Kingdom. Through their lives we can see why Jesus cared for them so much. We can see how their lives changed from simple, sometimes rough characters, to God's special workmanship. We know that by their hardships we have the Scriptures today, and we can trust that they are true. And now, since our Lord's second presence, these twelve Apostles are in Heaven beside the Lord Jesus and in the presence of God: Simon Peter, Andrew, James the brother of John, John, Philip, Nathanael who was also called Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James the Less, Jude Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite and Paul. These wonderful men of God are now glorious immortal spirit beings who will live on forever. When we read the Scriptures and listen to their words, we can now have a love and respect for them as never before. These are and always will be the *Twelve Apostles of the Lamb*—a firm foundation for the Church. And their mission continues...

