

THE CALL OF JESUS' DISCIPLES

BIBLE TEXT: Matthew 4:12-25; John 1:35-51; Luke 5:27-32.

LESSON 18 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Matthew 4:12-25;

¹² ¶ Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;

¹³ And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

¹⁴ That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

¹⁵ The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;

¹⁶ The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

¹⁷ ¶ From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand

¹⁸ ¶ And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

¹⁹ And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

²⁰ And they straightway left *their* nets, and followed him.

²¹ And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

²² And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Jesus' First Contact with His Disciples

1. John the Baptist's testimony pointing the disciples to Jesus, John 1:35, 36;

Psalm 107:2;

² Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so*, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

Matthew 10:32.

³² Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

2. The disciples' heeding the words of John and following Jesus, John 1:37;

John 10:27.

²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

3. The Master's message to hungry hearts, John 1:38, 39;

Isaiah 55:1;

¹ Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Revelation 22:17.

¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

4. Peter's meeting with Jesus, John 1:40-42;

James 5:20.

²⁰ Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

5. Jesus' call to Philip who led Nathanael to Christ, John 1:43-46;

Daniel 12:3.

³ And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

6. Jesus revealed as the Son of God and Nathanael's doubts dispelled, John 1:47-51;

Psalm 32:2;

² Blessed *is* the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no guile.

Revelation 14:5.

⁵ And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

II Jesus' Departure from Judæa into Galilee

1. The change made at the time of John's imprisonment, Matthew 4:12;

Luke 3:19, 20.

¹⁹ But Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, ²⁰ Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

2. Nazareth rejected, Matthew 4:13;

Luke 4:28-30;

²⁸ And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

²⁹ And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

³⁰ But he passing through the midst of them went his way,

23 ¶ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jerusalem, and *from* Judaea, and *from* beyond Jordan.

John 1:35-51;

35 ¶ Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of

Mark 6:3-6.

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

4 But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*.

6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

3. Capernaum chosen and the responsibility thereof, Matthew 4:13;

Matthew 8:5;

5 ¶ And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

Matthew 11: 22-24.

22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

4. Prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled, Matthew 4:14-17;

Isaiah 9:1, 2;

1 Nevertheless the dimness *shall not be* such as *was* in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict *her by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

II Timothy 3:16.

16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

III Response to the Call

1. Peter and Andrew, Matthew 4:18-20;

Mark 1:16-18;

16 Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.

Mark 10:28-30;

28 ¶ Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

James 2:5.

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

2. James and John immediately obedient, Matthew 4:21, 22;

Acts 26:16-19;

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

43 ¶ The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

Luke 5:27-32.

27 ¶ And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.

28 And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

29 And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there

17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

18 To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

Luke 19:6.

6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

3. The mighty preaching of the Gospel in all the country, Matthew 4:23-25;

Mathew 11:28.

28 ¶ Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

4. The invitation to Matthew, Luke 5:27-32;

Ezekiel 33:11;

11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn *ye*, turn *ye* from your evil ways; for why will *ye* die, O house of Israel?

Revelation 3:20.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

NOTES:

In Isaiah 43:10 these words are found: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen." John was witnessing for the Lord when he gave his astounding testimony, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Given under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as all edifying testimony must be, it pointed the disciples to the Christ. They heeded wisdom (**Proverbs 10:31**; ³¹The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out), and followed Jesus. The keen edge of their hunger was perceived, and the Son of God immediately responded with a reverberant "Come," which no doubt penetrated to the very depths of their hearts. The resulting contact with the "Lamb of God" so thrilled Andrew (**Psalm 34:8**; ⁸ O taste and see that the LORD *is* good: blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in him) that immediately he called Peter and testified of the Lord. Throughout the centuries, everyone who has truly discovered the Gospel of the Son of God has sought out those to whom he could tell the glad story. Thus Peter was brought to Christ. We do not know what Peter said, but Jesus called him Cephas, which is the Hebrew word for stone.

Philip, in turn, after coming in contact with the true Light (**Isaiah 9:2**; ² The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined), began to do what every disciple does -- bring in converts. God expects His people to shine for Him on the earth (**Luke 8:16**; ¹⁶ ¶ No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth *it* under a bed; but setteth *it* on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. **Matthew 5:14**; ¹⁴ Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid). Thus the message was given Nathanael, who possessed that honesty of heart necessary for the establishment of a contact with Jesus. Immediately the realisation that in His presence was the One of Whom Moses spoke (**Genesis 3:15**; ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel; **Genesis 22:18**; ¹⁸ And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice; **Deuteronomy 18:15**; ¹⁵ ¶ The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto

was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

QUESTIONS

1. What means was first used to draw the disciples' attention to Jesus?
2. What was Christ's attitude toward the inquirers?
3. What is the attitude of every convert toward the Gospel message?
4. Give an outstanding characteristic of Nathanael.
5. At what time did Jesus depart from Nazareth?
6. What caused the departure of Christ from Nazareth?
7. What prophecy was fulfilled as a result of this change?
8. Is a college degree necessary to the hearing and understanding of the call of God?
9. In our lesson today how many disciples do we find have been chosen?
10. What is the important part of this gathering of the band of disciples at the beginning of Christ's ministry?
11. Out of what province in Palestine were eleven of the disciples called?
12. Out of what province was the twelfth chosen, and what was his name?

him ye shall hearken); and of Whom the prophets spoke (**Isaiah 7:14**; **14** Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel; **Isaiah 53:1-12**; **1** Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? **2** For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him. **3** He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. **4** ¶ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. **5** But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. **6** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. **7** He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. **8** He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. **9** And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. **10** ¶ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. **11** He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. **12** Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. **Jeremiah 23:5**; **5** ¶ Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. **Micah 5:2**; **2** But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting. **Malachi 3:1**; **1** Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts). **It brought a ready response (Luke 24:45**; **45** Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures).

Jesus departed from Nazareth because of the unbelief of the city. The inhabitants argued and reasoned, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" No one has ever reasoned his way through the gates of pearl (**Proverbs 3:5**; **5** ¶ Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding). The honest hearts believed and were accepted, while those whose hearts lacked faith were rejected (**Hebrews 11:6**; **6** But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him).

The prophecy, which was fulfilled, found in the 9th chapter of Isaiah, verses 1 and 2, (**Isaiah 9:1-2**; **1** Nevertheless the dimness *shall not be* such as *was* in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict *her by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. **2** The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.) was written 700 years before Christ, and has a reference to spiritual dimness.

Great responsibility accompanies the hearing of the Gospel, for in the day of judgment those things written in the books shall judge men (**John 12:48**; **48** He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. **Revelation 20:12, 15**; **12** And I saw the dead,

small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. ¹⁵ And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire).

Christ's message, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," clearly pointed the way of salvation. The term "repent," coupled with the Kingdom of Heaven, showed the requirements and qualifications of entering into that Kingdom. One phase of the Kingdom is that which is within; and another phase is the prophetic kingdom eventually to be established on earth. The King being present, certainly the Kingdom was at hand.

In calling Peter and Andrew, Christ spoke in words with meaning that could be comprehended by the hearers. "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." The message of the Gospel is not veiled to the understanding, but "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isaiah 35:8). James and John also heard and were prompted to follow Jesus.

Matthew, or Levi, was a publican, a tax gatherer, a member of a class detestable to the Romans, to the Greeks, and to the Jews. The Jews, who considered those who gathered taxes for the ruling government betrayers of their country, abhorred them in a special manner. But Matthew left all -- completely abandoned his office and everything connected with it to follow Christ. No one has ever lost anything by following such a course (**Matthew 17:24-27**; ²⁴ ¶ And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute *money* came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?

²⁵ He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? ²⁶ Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. ²⁷ Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee; **Mark 10:28-30**; ²⁸ ¶ Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. ²⁹ And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, ³⁰ But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life).

Those called, chosen, and faithful men were the ones to carry on when Jesus departed. All that has been brought down to us is through the disciples who gathered around Christ. Matthew wrote the first Gospel; John, the fourth. Mark and Luke were disciples of a later period. The Epistles also were written by those chosen of the Lord. Paul, the writer of thirteen of these Epistles was called, just as literally as those who were summoned when Jesus was on earth.