

# *Resurrection Life of Jesus Church*

## **BACK TO THE BOOK OF ACTS (BBA)**

RLJ-1114

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DECEMBER 30, 2007

### **PART 10A: THE ORGANIZATION JESUS BUILT**

To understand the Book of Acts, it is important to learn as much as possible how Jesus operated prior to the cross. In this message we are going to look at the organization that Jesus built around Himself during the 3.5 years of His public ministry in Israel. We know from the Gospel accounts that Jesus had four layers of people around him; apostles, the 70 others, the women and the crowds. Let's see how He selected his apostles:

#### **THE APOSTLES OF JESUS**

This group would be the top leaders in the coming church that was birthed on the day of Pentecost. These men would be the pillars in the highest human institution in the entire creation of God, also known as the *body of Christ*. **Ephesians 1:3-23**

God told the prophet Isaiah that the thoughts of man cannot be compared to the thinking and wisdom of God (**Isaiah 55:8-9**), and when Jesus selected the top leadership, He didn't enlist the rich, the famous and the most educated persons available. Instead, He selected what humans would have called a "motley crew," and this is how the Jewish leadership viewed them. **Acts 4:13**

It is obvious that the Holy Spirit empowered Jesus and told Him who to select. **Matthew 4:17-22**

Andrew had been a disciple of John the Baptist. When Jesus was pointed out, he left John the Baptist and followed Jesus; then he went to tell his brother Peter that he had found the Messiah (**John 1:35-42**). Luke gives us more details. **Luke 5:1-11**

Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John were the first to be selected. They were professional fisherman, and as far as the world was concerned, they were uneducated and ignorant men. Why did Jesus select these four men to hold top positions in the most prestigious institution in the kingdom of God? The answer is found in this message from God through the apostle Paul. **1 Corinthians 1:18-31**

It is important to note that when Jesus called these men, there was no hesitation, no second thoughts, or consultations with family members, they simply dropped their nets at once and followed Jesus not knowing what they were to experience. **Hebrews 11:8-16**

#### **THE UNTHINKABLE CHOICE**

Jesus then called a publican by the name of Levi to become one of the twelve (**Luke 5:27-32**). Levi's last name was Matthew, the son of Alpheus. **Matthew 9:9-13**



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Levi Matthew would not only be used as an apostle but he would also write one of the Gospel accounts.

Most Christians living today do not reflect much on Jesus' choice of Levi let alone know what a publican was. In the Roman Empire at the time of Christ, collecting taxes had been privatized. A number of private corporations existed in the city of Rome who placed a bid to collect taxes in the different provinces in the Empire. Once a bid had been submitted and accepted by the State, the corporation was given the official grant to collect taxes in a certain area. This was a "for profit business," so if the corporation paid in one million denarii (Roman currency) to the state treasury, it was allowed to collect as much as it could get away with. After the different layers of employees had been paid, the surplus was a profit for the corporation. As a result, taxes could vary greatly between different provinces depending upon who was in charge of collection.

Owners of tax collecting corporations were among the richest in Rome. The corporation would have a Roman citizen in charge of a province, who in turn would hire local men to man the tax booths and collect the money. The Roman Army gave full protection to the local tax collectors and severely punished, even with death, those who refused to pay what they had been assessed.

In Palestine at the time of Jesus, there were thousands of Jewish men who would collect taxes from their fellow Jews; they were considered traitors, scum of the earth and called publicans.

As far as the people were concerned, the entire tax collecting system was a rip-off since the Roman corporation officer in charge of a province was assigned to bring in a certain sum every year. If he collected more from his underlings, it went into his own pocket. Each publican was charged with bringing in a certain sum, but they were told that if they cheated, lied and extorted, any extra would go into their pocket.

A publican was not only in charge of collecting taxes but he also added a custom tax on goods moved in the province. Now you will understand this scripture.  
**Luke 19:1-9**

## **THE APOSTOLIC ROSTER**

This is found in **Matthew 10:1-4**

- Simon Peter and his brother, Andrew
- James and John, sons of Zebedee
- Philip – **John 1:43-44**
- Nathan Bartholomew (listed in the Gospel of Mathew as only Bartholomew) – **John 1:44-51**
- Thomas Didymus
- Levi Matthew, the publican
- James the son of Alphaeus

- ❑ Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus
- ❑ Simon the Canaanite
- ❑ Judas Iscariot, the treasurer and traitor – **John 12:3-6**

There are some apostles of whom we know little or nothing. Judas Iscariot made the choice to betray Jesus and lose his eternal position; he was eventually replaced by Saul of Tarsus, later known as Paul.

But we can draw the following conclusion from the selection of the twelve apostles: Even though Levi and Judas were both thieves, Jesus still selected them but only one of them had a heart change. Jesus knew the character of each man He selected but left it up to each man to make a final commitment. Judas could have refused to betray Jesus. **John 6:70-71**

***From 11 ordinary young men who were in their 30s when called, the Son of God laid the foundation of the Eternal Church which will last through eternity.***

The Bible tells us that God is not a respecter of persons, and what He did through these men, He will also do today with men and women that are willing to follow Jesus and live a holy life! **Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11; Hebrews 13:8**

**DO YOU HAVE AN EAR TO HEAR WITH?**