**The Gospel of Luke**

**Witness to the Gentiles - #13**

**The Call of the Twelve Apostles**

**Luke 6:12-16**

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***12****Now during those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.* ***13****And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:* ***14****Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew;* ***15****Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot;* ***16****Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor.*

**Notes and Studies**

The call of the 12 seems to be a “U-turn” away from old Israel to the new relationship under the new Covenant. The 12 are representative of the 12 tribes of Israel. But they were not selected one from each tribe. In fact the NT was very careful not to hint on the ethnic origin of each but to give us a general picture that they were Jews. In the Gospel of John, we see Nathaniel was introduced by his brother Philip. Nathaniel’s reaction was not friendly:

*Philip found Nathaniel, and said unto him, “We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”   And Nathaniel said unto him, “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip said unto him, “Come and see.”   Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to him, and said of him, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile”* (Joh 1:45-47), so Nathaniel is the only one whose ethnic origin was mentioned.

**Brief history of the calling from the NT**

1. Jesus went to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God (Luke 6:12). Moses had gone up onto Mount Sinai to receive the Law, so now Jesus goes to a mountain to choose those who will become the teachers of the new message.

2. *“Jesus went to a mountain to pray.”* This was to become the model for the church, that the 12 will organize prayer and that prayer is required before a call.

3. Jesus had a lot of disciples. It was out of this group of disciples that Jesus chose 12 men. They had a special calling. They were to be apostles.

4. The word “disciple” was common in Hebrew and Aramaic - ***talmíd*** (masculine), **תלמידה**, ***tamidá*** (feminine) **תלמידים** and ***talmidím*** (plural). It was used for those who study with a Rabbi, a learner. It is one who sits at the feet of another and who learns. The word is used synonymously in the New Testament with believers: The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:26). Many people had come to learn from Jesus. They came for all sorts of reasons.

a. Some came because of miracles.

b. Others came because they liked the new teaching, which was quite different from the teaching of the Scribes and the Pharisees.

c. Some came because they had an inner longing for God and they were the broken sinners.

d. Some came from among the Zeolites who were frustrated by the military dominion of Rome and were looking for a revolt and were hoping for a political leader – among them was Judas Iscariot.

**What is an apostle?**

In the synagogue, an important official was the ***sheliach*** in Hebrew, ***seliah*** in Aramaic, or ***apostello*** in Greek (***apo***, off; ***stello***, send), meaning "to be sent." These ***sheliach*** in Judaism were chosen to carry the collections taken up in Babylonia and other Jewish colonies of the Roman Empire to Jerusalem for the support of the Temple. Every Jew was obliged to give every year for the expenses incurred by the Temple and its sacrifices. The Temple priests each year sent apostles from Jerusalem to the different synagogues of the world to bring greetings from their brethren in Judea, and to see that the synagogue worship was rightly observed in these distant lands.  ***Apostolos*** (Apostle) has a stronger sense than the word *Messenger*, meaning one who is entrusted with a mission, with the authority of a delegate. In the Greek version of the Old Testament it occurs once, in I Kings, 14:6.

The Greek title was used among the Athenians to designate the admiral of the fleet who would be commissioned and sent out with authority. Twelve of these disciples are about to become more than disciples. They are to be the leaders of the new Israel, and preachers of the kingdom of God to the human race.

**Peter**

The only historical source for the life of the Apostle Peter during the earthly ministry of Christ is Gospels. He was called by a common Jewish name of ***Shimeon***, Simeon, or Simon (cf. Acts 15: 14; 1 Pet1: 1). He likewise had the Aramaic nickname ***Kepha*** (Gk. Kephas), or "Rock," which was translated into its Greek equivalent ***Petros***, "Peter." Christ himself, however, used the name Peter only thrice: John 1:42, Matthew 16:18, and Luke 22:34), elsewhere using either the name Simon (Matthew 17:25; Mark 14:37; Luke 22:31) or, in more solemn moments, Simon son of John (Matthew 16:17; John 1:42, 21: 15-17). In Acts he is invariably called Peter, even when addressed (Acts 10:13, 11: 7).

In the Fourth Gospel he is called Simon, elsewhere usually being named Simon Peter. Where Peter alone is used, the double name either precedes or follows. Paul used the term Cephas (I Cor 1:12, 3:22, 9:5, 15:5; Gal 1:18, 2: 9, 11, 14), but the use of Peter is very rare (Gal 2:7-8). The father of the Apostle Peter was named John (John 1:42, 21:15 ff.) or abbreviated ***bar Jonha*** (Matt 16:17). He was from Bethsaida (John 1: 44), although Mark 1:21, 29 makes him a resident of Capernaum. The apparent difference is easy to understand by the fact that at marriage, he moved his home to the latter town, making his living by fishing, together with his younger brother Andrew, in the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 4:18; Mark 1:16; Luke 5:3).

Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:40), and it was this younger brother who brought Peter to meet Jesus (John 1:42). There he then became a member of the Messiah's circle and was present among the disciples at Cana (John 2:2), at Jerusalem (2:17), in Judea (4:2), and in Samaria (4: 8). It would rather seem that after returning with Jesus to Galilee, Peter there resumed his trade. Peter seems to have become the constant follower of Jesus throughout all Jesus’ ministry (Matthew 10:1; Mark 3:13).

**Peter among the Apostles**

We can notice that the Gospels of Matthew and Luke provide us with a clearer picture of Peter among the apostles than does Mark. Matthew and Luke have included certain passages about Peter, which were not included by Mark, which reveal an extrovert Peter (Matthew 16:28-31, 17:17-19, 27:24-27, 28: 21; Luke 5:3, 12, 41; 22:32, 24:12, 34).

**The unstable and stable Peter**

1. Peter appears as an admirable spokesman. A Galilean, he speaks his mind with remarkable speed, is freedom loving and courageous, yet changeable, capricious and eager for novelty (Matthew 11: 7 and 16). At first it seems strange that Jesus should have given the name of "Rock" to one of such character, yet Jesus saw beneath the surface the real quality and grasped the inherent strength and stability that underlay the changing and inconstant exterior.

2. He was quick to decide with passionate devotion. Yet in the account of his walking on the water (Matthew 15:28-31) his natural instability of character comes clearly to the fore. When at Caesarea Philippi he boldly declared Jesus to be the Christ, not just a Messiah but also the Son of God (Matthew 16:13; Mark 8:27; Luke 9:18; John 6:66) yet his faith was mixed with hopes of the earthly Messiah who will rule with power. He experienced severe rebuke of the Lord by denouncing the necessity of such sufferings (Matthew 16: 23-24; Mark 8: 33), yet on the mount of transfiguration he again wished to make permanent dwelling for the glory for Christ (Matthew 17:3; Mark 9:5; Luke 9:33).

3. He seems not to have entirely understood the teaching of Jesus on forgiveness. He asked how much to extend forgiveness, but not about unconditional forgiveness (Matthew 18: 21-22).

4. Still looking for earthly reward for becoming a disciple and apostle, Peter reminds Christ how both he and the other disciples had left all to follow him (Matt 19: 27).

5. As the time of the passion approached, the instability Peter began to show. In the scene recorded in John 13:6 ff, there is a certain lack of understanding of the love of Jesus, which was to reach its culmination in the passion. Immediately afterward he vowed, despite the warning about his denial, he says that he will remain faithful to Jesus even unto death (Matthew 26:33; Mark 15:29; Luke 22:33-34; John 13:37-38). Peter had misjudged his own strength, for he could not even keep awake in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:40; Luke 22:45).

6. It was fear that made Peter draw his sword when Jesus was arrested (Matthew 26:51; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:50; John 18:10-11), but when he saw that this was useless, he fled with the other disciples (Matt 25:56 and parallels). He must have regretted his action and made his way into the palace of the high priest, where he was put to the real test. There he denied Jesus with words that meant total denial with an oath (Matthew 26:69; Mark 14:66; John 18:15), the real reason seems to be the weakness of Jesus who could not defend his life. But he never really lost his love for Christ. He wept but made his way back to the circle after the resurrection.

7. With the news of the resurrection of Jesus, his old energy reappeared. He went to the tomb. He did not run fast enough for the younger disciple John, who was the first to find that the grave was empty (John 20:3).

8. At the appearance of the risen Christ at the Sea of Tiberius, the old character of Peter once more becomes manifest (John 21:7). Peter there declared his love for the Lord.

**Peter’s ministry**

1. After the resurrection of Jesus, Peter played an important part in the witness in Jerusalem recorded in Acts. Peter and John were threatened by the Sanhedrin not to teach. But Peter carried his work to Samaria and along the Syro-Phoenician coast, especially in Lydda, Joppa, and Caesarea (Acts 8:14; 9:32; 10:48), performing many miracles (Acts 3:4; 5:15, 9:34, 40).

Peter was put in prison under Herod Agrippa after the death of James, the brother of John (Acts 12: 1), but Peter was released by the angel, and he left the city though he seems again to have taken up his residence there after Herod's death. Paul visited him there three years after his conversion (Gal 1: 18).

2. Peter was there at the time of the Council of the Apostles that was convened to look at the acceptance of the Gentiles (Gal 2: 1-9). Jerusalem must have been his base; he visited other churches (Gal 2: 11), accompanied by his wife (I Cor 9:5). Despite the existence of Peter’s party in Corinth (I Cor 1:12; cf. 9: 5), we have no evidence that Peter ever actually ministered there (cf. also I Cor 4:15). A tradition, preserved by Eusebius the church historian, holds that Peter founded the church in the Syrian city of Antioch

3. Peter was at the meeting which chose Matthias to succeed Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:15-26), he was the main preacher, and on the Day of Pentecost he brought a large body of Jewish converts (Acts 2:14)

4. Peter was the first apostle to receive the first Gentile Pagan to the Church the Roman, Cornelius (Acts 10:1ff).

**Was Peter a Leader of the Apostles**?

At the council of the apostles, Peter was not the leader, but is seems that he was even subordinate, in a sense, to James (Acts 15: 6).

**The Main Teaching of Peter according to Acts**

1. A special stress was laid on the sufferings of Christ for his death was an undeserved and unrighteous act of murder on the part of the Jews through pagan hands (Acts 2:23, 3:13; cf. 4:10-11, 5:30, 10:39). Christ was a true prophet (Acts 3: 22), anointed by the Holy Spirit (10:38), and was proved by miracles, wonders, and signs (2: 22); and his death was due not to chance, but to the divine plan (Acts 2:23) as foretold by the prophets (3:18), the purpose of Jesus’ death was to bring the kingdom, including the forgiveness of sins (cf. 3: 18-19). The proof of the Messianic kingship of Jesus had been the resurrection by God from the dead on the third day (Acts 2:32, 3:15, 26, 4: 10,10:40), had been manifested to chosen witnesses (10:40-41), and had been exalted to the right hand of God (2:31). This resurrection with the apostles being main witnesses (Acts 1: 22, 2: 32, 3: 13; 5: 30; 10: 40-41) had made Jesus the Messianic king and proved his divinity and the Lord of all (3:36).
2. Jesus is the one who gives the gift of the Holy Spirit (2:38, 11:17)

**Peter and the Gentile Christians**

1. Peter realized that God would extend the blessings in Christ to the entire world and would call all the gentiles (Acts 2:39, 3: 25-26), but the blessing was primarily for the children of the old covenant (3:25). He hoped that, despite the unbelief and rejection of Jesus, the Jews still have a chance to come to Christ (2:39).
2. He was certain that he and the other apostles were ordained to preach solely to the Jews (Acts 10: 42). His commitment was so strong that God had to induce Peter by a special divine revelation to help him enter the house of the Roman centurion Cornelius in Caesarea and preach the Gospel to him and his family and even to baptize them (Acts 10).
3. The growth of the Church in non-Jewish territory led Peter and other Judeo-Christians to change their views to Gentiles. At the Council convened at Jerusalem to decide what is required of the Gentiles who convert to Christianity, it was Peter who deplored excessive ritual, agreeing with James that the Gentile Christians should refrain from all things forbidden by the Law:

***Acts 15-7*** *Peter stood up and said to them, “Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe.****8*** *And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us;*

***9*** *and He made no distinction between them, and us cleansing their hearts by faith.* ***10*** *Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?* ***11****But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.”*

The final conclusion was that James, Peter, and John should preach to the Jews, and Paul and Barnabas to the gentiles.

1. There can be little doubt that Peter changed his attitude at Antioch. Paul accused Peter with hypocrisy:

***Galatians 2:11****But when Cephas [Peter] came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.* ***12*** *For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.* ***13*** *The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.*

***14*** *But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, “If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?”*

**Peter and the Church of Rome**

The NT gives no information regarding the death of Peter. A wide-spread legend says Peter went to Rome toward the close of his life and there suffered martyrdom under Nero. The first letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, written in 95-97AD records: "Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labors; and, when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him" (ANF 1: 6).

Papias of Hierapolis knew of Peter's residence at Rome (according to Eusebius, Hist. eccl., 3:39- 15). There are, however, a number of direct statements that Peter lived at Rome. Dionysius of Corinth (about 170AD) states that Peter and Paul founded the church at Corinth and then taught in Italy, both suffering martyrdom at Rome (Eusebius, Hist. eccl., 2:25 – 8; so also Irenaeus in Haer., 3:1, and Tertullian in *De praescriptione*, 36.; *Scorpiace*, 15; *Adv. Marcionem*, 4: 5), Clement of Alexandria (Eusebius, Hist. eccl., 6: 14, 2:15,), and the Roman presbyter Caius (Eusebius, Hist. eel., 2:25- 7). A similar story is told both by the late second-century Acts of Peter (perhaps Gnostic in origin).

*Fourth century glass mosaic of St. Peter,*

*located at the Catacombs of* [*Saint Thecla*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Thecla)

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**Canonical Writings**

Here is a brief background of Peter’s First and Second NT Letters.

1. The first is addressed to readers in Pontus, Galatia (doubtless including, as in official Roman parlance, Pamphylia, Pisidia, and part of Lycaonia), Cappadocia, Asia (Caria, Lydia, Mysia, and probably Phrygia), and Bithynia.

2. The second is different. The occasion of its writing was the rise of false teachers, some of them libertines like those described by Jude, and others mockers who deny the second Coming of Christ.

**Apocryphal Writings**

*- The Gospel, the Apocalypse, the Preaching, and the Acts of Peter*

*The Gospel of Peter*

This existed since the end of the second century. The most explicit account of it is found in several passages in Eusebius (Hist. eccl., 6:11 the longest reference, 3:3,25), and it was also mentioned by Origen ("*Commentary on Matthew*," 10: 17). Eusebius mentioned it in a letter by Serapion bishop of Antioch (approx.. 190AD), to the church at Rhossos in Cilicia on the Mediterranean coast on the bay of Issus in Asia Minor. This church had been using the Gospel of Peter in its services, and when Serapion visited them he had granted permission to continue reading it, though he did not himself examine the document closely. But he later read the book and found it tinged with Docetic heresy (denies the humanity of our Lord) though "most of it belonged to the right teaching of the Savior, but some things were additions." The clear implication is that Serapion wished the reading suspended till a second visit, when he would probably give directions to cease using it. The other references to the gospel add little information beyond the fact that these documents attributed to Peter were not accepted or generally used as testimony by ecclesiastical authorities. There is more material on the Internet.

*The Apocalypse of Peter*

This work was mentioned by the Muratorian Canon as a book, which "some of our number will not have read in the churches." Clement of Alexandria commented on it (Eusebius, Hist. eccl., 6:14-1), and three passages from it are quoted in fragments of his book "*Miscellanies*"

*The Preaching of Peter*

This book is cited by Eusebius (Hist. eccl., 3:3) as one of the four spurious (fake) works attributed to Peter; Clement of Alexandria (Strom. 1: 29, 2: 15, 6: 5-7, 15)

*The Acts of Peter*

Written probably not later than 200AD in Greek, the author has read the Acts of John (apocryphal document) very carefully, and modeled his language upon them.

***Pope’s Notes***

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