

*Series: Rediscovering Jesus in the Jewish Gospels Lesson 22*

## **Many are Called but 12 are Chosen**

Matthew 10

Before Jesus appointed his 12 apostles, he extended the call to all his close followers. "Then saith he unto his disciples, "The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Mathew 9:37,38).

"Multitudes" or "great multitudes" is mentioned seven times before chapter ten. Jesus was at the peak of his popularity.

With no chapter break between the last statement of chapter 9 and verse one of chapter 10, Jesus executes his selection and commissioning of the twelve. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" and "when He had called into Him His twelve disciples."

1. There was the challenge of compassion.
2. Then there was the prayer for a plenteous harvest.
3. This was followed by the call of the commission...but not yet the Great Commission to every creature.

David H. Stern editor of *The Complete Jewish Study Bible* gives the flavor of their Hebrew name pronunciation, Simon - "Shim'on called Kefa (Cephus), Andrew, James - Ya'akov, son of Zebedee - Ben-Zavdai, John - Yochanan his brother, Philip and Bartholomew - Ber-Talmi, Thomas - Toma and Matthew - Mattityahu, James Ya'akkov, son of Alpheus, Bar Halfai and Lebbeus Thaddeus - Taddai, Simon - Shim'on, Judas - Y'hudah from K'riot, who betrayed him"<sup>i</sup>

Without Jewish Awareness we call them by the English translation of their Greek name. Jewish men had a Hebrew name assigned at their circumcision. But in a Hellenized, Greko Roman culture they had a Greek name. For instance Saul or Shual of Tarsus was a Hebrew name, Paul is a Greek pseudonym of Saul. Saul's name was not changed to Paul at conversion as is popularly explained. He always had two names, Hebrew and Greek. The proof is found in Acts 13:2 when the Holy Spirit said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work." The Holy Spirit still recognized Saul's Hebrew birth name.

In Stern's list, it is evident that both James had the Hebrew name Ya'kov which consistently translates as Jacob throughout scripture. The complicated path through which Jacob became James when translated from Hebrew – Greek – Latin – English is too involved to cover in this lesson but is explained in the attached article published by the *Biblical Archaeological Society*.

Other names need clarification as well. Bartholomew is considered identical to Nathaniel in John 1:45-51. Also, Luke 6:16 differentiates Thaddeus as Judas as opposed to Judas the "traitor." Simon or Shim'on the Canaanite is like *Cananaean* or from Cana. Judas - Y'hudah is either from K'rioth a town in south Judah (Amos 2:2), or as fewer scholars propose, he was from the Tribe of Issachar /Iscariot. K'roth is from "Kiryat which is a Hebrew word that refers to a type of settlement in Israel. It commonly denotes planned urban communities or towns that were established by the Israeli government or organizations in order to provide housing and infrastructure for a growing population.<sup>1</sup> The word comes from the noun קריה (qiryah), which means city, from the root קרר (qarar), to compact." Examples of modern Israeli towns are: Kiryat Arba, Kiryat Ata, Kiryat Bialik, Kiryat Gat, Kiryat Malakhi, Kiryat Motzkin, Kiryat Ono, Kiryat Shmona, Kiryat Tivon, Kiryat Yam.

## The Call

The call of the commission was limited to scope with a literal Messianic Kingdom. They were still preaching the “gospel of the Kingdom” to Israel because there was no gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection yet. In verses 5 and 6 Jesus gave the limits of their immediate mission.

- A. Not to the way of the Gentiles. They were to keep west of the Jordan river. “Way of the Gentiles,” literally referred to the road east of the Jordan River and not enter the Decapolis cities. (Where the healed demoniacs of the Gadarenes’ lived.) Note: Jesus had also already been rejected there.
- B. Not to the cities of the Samaritans. They were to keep generally north of the Valley of Jezreel bordering Samaria.
- C. “Rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” even within “Galilee of the Gentiles.”

### “Go not into the way of the Gentiles.

The emphatic limitation seems at first sight at variance with the language which had spoken of those who should come from east and west to sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and with the fact that our Lord had already taken his disciples into a city of Samaria, and told them that the fields white for the harvest (John 4:35). We must remember, however, (1) that the limitation was confined to the mission on which they were now sent; (2) that it did but recognize a divine order, the priority of Israel in God’s dealing with mankind, “to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile;” and (3) that the disciples themselves were as yet unfitted to enter on a mission which required wider thoughts and hopes than they had yet attained. It was necessary that they should learn to share their Master’s pity for the lost sheep of the house of Israel before they could enter into his yearnings after the sheep that were “not of this fold” (John 10:16).”<sup>i</sup>

The title Apostle from the Greek *Apostoloi*, has the literal meaning of “sent ones.” They were deputized to go in His name with His message, but were far more than front men, or publicists but were endowed with the supernatural powers to heal disease and raise the dead that Jesus had already exhibited. Their gifts not only had real time benefits to the sick but were a huge sign identifying them with Jesus’ message and might. They were gifted power without restriction to “freely give” (vs 8).

- heal the sick
- cleanse the lepers
- raise the dead
- cast out devils

### They were sent without taking resources. (vs 9,10)

No gold, silver, or bronze – the material of coinage. “Scrip” was a small bag or pouch on a shepherd’s bag.

“And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd’s bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling *was* in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.” (1 Samuel 17:40)

They were not to take extra changes of shoes or clothes. (vs. 10).

They were to live by faith. “the workman is worthy of his meat.” This principle was reiterated in 1 Timothy 5:18 “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.”

They were to be totally dependent on friendly hosts (vs. 9-11) who would be blessed by God. Adversely any opposition would bring the condemnation of God ( vs 13-15). They were to be gracious in requesting hospitality and not to offend by switching residences if a better one came along thus showing preference to the rich. (vs 11,12) Only if the host rejected their message or the townspeople rejected the message and pressured the host, were they to leave, “shake off the dust of your feet.” They were told to pronounce the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah as a warning. Jesus gave an ominous analogy “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.”

Jesus taught wise steps and gracious responses. “be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” Growling like wolves and baring our fangs is not befitting doves and sheep. They were told to expect litigation, persecution, and scourging’s in their synagogues.

The cases brought against them would bring them before governors and Kings. We see this documented in the Book of Acts with Peter (Acts 4:1-15), Stephen (Acts 6:1-15; 7:54-58), by Saul (Acts 8:1-3; 9:1,2). Jesus later told Paul the same message in Matthew 10. This prophecy was fulfilled many times as recorded in the following scriptures: Acts 9:15,16, Paul escaping Acts 9:23-25, James/Jacob killed and Peter imprisoned Acts 12:1-5, Paul stoned Acts 14:19,20, Paul before Roman authorities, Felix, Festus, Agrippa, and Caesar Acts 24 – 26.

This persecution and litigation were for the purpose of being a “testimony against them” – Jews “and the Gentiles.” (vs 18) “*When* they deliver you up” not if. He promised his Spirit to guide their words when undergoing a literal trial. They were urged not to fear, reminiscent of God’s word to Joshua. They were not to be ashamed and deny him lest he deny them before the Heavenly Father. (vs 19) They would have to take flight when opposition arose. They would face Satanic opposition just as their Lord did.

Jesus warned that his message would cause division even within families, with some supporting him and others opposing him. In verses 34-39, he explained that this division could lead to disinheritance and even the possibility of crucifixion. “Take up your cross and follow me” was clearly being willing to be crucified just like Jesus would be, which at that moment they could not even imagine. A division by sword within families was not literally commanded but rather an analogy of strife and division over Jesus.

As disciples, they were reminded not to think themselves superior to their master. They should expect to be accused of using demonic power when performing healing miracles (verse 25). They were also instructed not to fear those who could only kill the body (verse 28), but to fear God who has the power to condemn to eternal death those who make martyrs out of them. They were commanded not to fear such people (verses 26-28), as the truth and lies will eventually be revealed.

Furthermore, they were reminded once again not to fear, because they are highly valued by their Heavenly Father. If God cares for and knows even the smallest details of the lives of sparrows, then they can be confident that they are even more valuable to him than sparrows (verses 29-33). The important thing is that they do not deny him before men but boldly confess him before men (vs. 32,33).

Loving one's parents more than Jesus would be the ultimate test of faith. Would they choose to follow him or deny him for their family? Much opposition has been hurled at the words of Christ regarding family over this quote also repeated in Luke 14:26 “If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” The context is that when a family disowns a son or daughter who is a disciple of Jesus over his or her faith in Jesus, then their decision is forced. “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (vs. 37). It is at this point that a believer from a non-believing family will find a new family of faith to receive them. Jesus promised to reward us for our hospitality and even a cup of cold water to those disenfranchised for their faith (vs 41,42).

## Appendix

### James or Jacob in the Bible? Giving Jacob his due [Mark Wilson](#)

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The problem of names surfaced at a Bible study at the St. Paul Union Church in Antalya, Turkey. Pastor Dennis Massaro was discussing the three men named “James” in the New Testament: Two were apostles, and the third was the leader of the Jerusalem church and author of the eponymous letter—the Book of James. Participants in the study came from a range of countries, including the Netherlands, Iran, Mexico, Moldova and Cameroon. When I asked what the name of these men was in their languages, they all said “Jacob.”

When I was teaching a course on the New Testament General Letters (Hebrews through Jude), I began by introducing the Book of Jacob, also known as the Book of James. Students were perplexed until they learned that Jacob is the proper translation of the Greek name *lakōbos*. One student wrote later that knowing this “turned my understanding of the writing upside down.” Another observed that “with the name change, the loss of the Jewish lineage occurs.”

So how did the Jewish name Ya’akov become so Gentilized as James? Since the 13th century, the form of the Latin name *iacomus* began its use in English. In the 14th century, [John Wycliffe made the first Bible translation into](#)

[English](#) and translated *lakobus* as James. (However, in both the Old and New Testaments he arbitrarily used the name Jacob [for the patriarch](#)). In all future English translations the name stuck, especially after 1611, when King James I sponsored the translation then called the Authorized Version. Since 1797 it has been called the King James Bible.

So what is lost by using James instead of Jacob? First, it has created an awkwardness in academic writing. Scholars providing a transliteration of James indicate *lakōbos*, which even lay readers know is not the same. Hershel Shanks has noted that the reason Israeli scholars failed to understand the significance of [the eponymous ossuary](#) is that they didn’t connect James with Ya’akov.<sup>1</sup> Second, James’s ancestral lineage is lost, as the student noted above. In Matthew’s genealogy, we learn that [Joseph’s](#) father was named Jacob (Matthew 1:16) and that his family tree included the patriarch Jacob (Matthew 1:2). James was thus named after his grandfather. As Ben Witherington writes, “It is clear that the family of ‘James’ was proud of its patriarchal heritage.”<sup>2</sup> So Jacob was the third Jacob in the family. **Top of Form**

#### Bottom of Form

Third, James’s Jewish cultural background is minimized. Tal Ilan identifies Jacob as the 15th most popular name in Palestine in antiquity, with 18 known persons carrying it.<sup>3</sup> Including both the Eastern and Western Diasporas, Jacob was the third most popular Jewish name, with 74 occurrences.

Fourth, the Jewish literary heritage is muddled. The Book of Jacob (i.e., the Book of James) is addressed to “the twelve tribes in the diaspora” (James 1:1) and full of references and allusions to the Torah and Wisdom Literature of the Jewish Bible (Christians’ Old Testament). Scholars consider James the most “Jewish” book in the New Testament. Its genre is considered to be a diaspora letter like Jeremiah 29:1–23 and the apocryphal works *The Epistle of Jeremiah*, 2 Maccabees 1:1–2:18, and 2 Apocalypse of Baruch 78–86. For these reasons, changing English translations of James to Jacob makes a lot of sense. In my lifetime we have adapted to a number of name changes: Bombay to Mumbai, Peking to Beijing, Burma to Myanmar, and Rhodesia to Zimbabwe. These changes were soon incorporated by the media as well as in subsequent editions of geographical and historical books. Making such an onomastic adjustment need not be too difficult in religious circles, either.

But can such a switch be made practically? Biblical scholars and publishers would need to agree that continued use of “James” is linguistically indefensible and culturally misleading. Most difficult to change would be Bible translations, which are very conservative. To start, a footnote could denote that James is really Jacob. And while we’re at it, let’s rehabilitate Jacob as the name of two of [Jesus’](#) disciples/apostles. These connections, now lost only for English readers, were caught by Greek-speaking audiences as well as modern readers of translations in most other languages. Let’s give Jacob his due.