

# ***Contemporary Mystic Christianity*** **Bible Self-Study Supplement**

## **Christian Initiatory Teachings**

### **The Calling of the Twelve**

Before every important step that He took, the Christ went for a time into the silence of the desert. He knew that His work was to be accomplished within the short space of three years. He therefore chose the twelve most advanced of His followers to carry on the work of disseminating the new religion when He had gone. Immediately after choosing the Twelve, He delivered the Sermon on the Mount, His most sublime public utterance.

After conflict, trial, and temptation such as no other has ever known before or since, He returned from the wilderness to share with men the divine realization which was His. The physical body of Jesus was as a tool in His hand. Every feeling and emotion was subservient to His dual powers of spiritualized will and dynamic love. He returned to the world to bring to it the new message of redemptive Christianity. Through perfect self-control and an absolute dominion over Himself, Jesus the Christ performed works the world calls miracles. The fundamental tenet of His teaching is contained in His words, "The kingdom of God is within you." When we discover this kingdom within

ourselves, we shall find it also in others, and in all things about us. The Path of seeking must be the way of love.

From the multitudes who surrounded Him, He chose the Twelve Disciples who made up His inner circle, among whom were several who had received esoteric instruction from John the Baptist in preparation for the call from the Messiah. These chosen Disciples were not ignorant fishermen as many have supposed. They were men whose esoteric training and attainments proved them to be ready for receiving and teaching the deeper truths of the Christian religion.

It was customary in the time of Christ for every rabbi to earn his livelihood at some gainful employment, even manual labor, in order that he might teach spiritual things free of charge. Thus Jesus was taught carpentry and building. He was a practical as well as a spiritual Mason. Paul was a tent maker. In Hebrew eyes there was no indignity connected with common labor. It was the over-intellectual Greeks who despised all manual employment. While revering the beautiful works of the sculptors, painters, and builders they despised the workers who produced them! Incredible as it seems, the divine Phidias was looked down upon by Athenian aristocracy. Unfortunately, this blemish upon the otherwise lofty Grecian temperament has been reflected in Greek translations of

the Gospels, giving us the impression that Jesus and the Twelve were ignorant laborers. While it well may be that not all were brilliant philosophers in the formal Greek sense, it does not follow that they were not highly cultured in the Hebrew wisdom with its marvelous Kabbala and astronomical theosophy inherited from ancient Chaldea whence came Abraham.

In America today we may observe a similar misapprehension. The brilliantly educated European scholar comes to our shores with but a limited English vocabulary and is oftentimes greeted as an "ignorant foreigner." The Hebrew Disciples of Jesus must have so appeared to Grecian eyes.

Andrew was the first chosen of the Twelve. He never became one of the innermost circle, but won special recognition through bringing his brother Peter to Christ. It is a wonderful privilege to carry the message of the Spirit to others. Both James and John were quiet and reserved, but possessed an intensity which caused the Teacher Himself to call them sons of thunder. This intensity accounted in part for the martyrdom of James who was the first Disciple to follow his Master to the Cross. A similar intensity, but softened by divine love, placed John at the head of the Disciples in spiritual attainment.

Philip, being materially minded and spiritually undiscerning, was slow to accept the divinity of our Lord. His inseparable companion, Nathanael, was a mystic and a dreamer. Christ Jesus, at His first meeting with Nathanael, promised that he should see the wonders of heaven; He made it clear, in fact, that Nathanael was to attain through Initiation, an experience that was gloriously fulfilled in his later life. Matthew was the fifth and the last of the Disciples to be chosen separately. The remaining seven were called out just prior to the Sermon on the Mount.

*Mark 3:14-19*

*And he ordained twelve that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.*

*And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: And Simon he surnamed Peter.*

*And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:*

*And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas,*

*And James the son of Alphaeus and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite,*

*And Judas Iscariot who also betrayed him; and they went into an house.*

The name Peter in the Egyptian language meant "the opened eye." In Greek, Peter (petra) means rock. One of the utterances of the Master was, "upon this rock I will build my church." A stone is universally used as a symbol of the Initiate. Initiation is the foundation of religion and is in that sense the rock upon which the Church is established — a fact to be generally recognized in the coming age.

Jerome states that the Jude of Luke, Lebbeus of Matthew, and Thaddeus of Mark, all refer to the same Disciple. This Disciple did not become prominent until after the Ascension.

Simon, Zelotes, belonged to the nationalist, patriotic sect of the Zealots whose aim was to throw off the Roman yoke, restore the freedom of the Jewish State and then conquer the world under the banner of the Messiah, with fire and sword. Simon "the Zealot" was to learn, however, that the most effective weapon of all is the power of the Christ love and that it is the only weapon with which to achieve world conquest.

Information relative to Thomas is found chiefly in the Gospel of John and in certain apocryphal documents. Thomas was slow to believe. He was pessimistic and despondent. Yet so intense was his devotion to the Master that he was willing to die for Him. He was a skeptic yet he was filled with earnestness and aspiration, and later

became one of the most glorious of the Disciples. He was particularly revered by the philosophically trained Gnostics.

Judas Iscariot was the man of mystery, the betrayer of the Christ. He came from Kerioth, which belonged to the tribe of Judah. This tribe is governed by Leo, the heart sign, and symbolizes one in whom the love nature is linked with the sense life. Judas portrays the state of the average man who daily betrays the Christ, the Higher Self, within. Each of the twelve Disciples represents a specific faculty or attribute of man himself: Judas, therefore, will play his role in human evolution until such time as the lower nature of the race shall be redeemed. He destroyed himself, as all evil ultimately destroys itself, and was replaced by Matthias, the symbol of the redeemed man of the New Age and the new race.

— ***Corinne Heline***