

- I. **Note: we read Isa 55:6-11 again this week. Why? What's the connection with choosing of the apostles...?**
- A. **Because Isa 55:6-11 is about the power of *God's Word*, which points directly to Jesus Christ...**
1. The Living Word Jn.1:1-5
 2. Whose *words* are *God's own* words. Jn.12:49-50.
 3. *Without the words of Jesus, the deeds are amazing, but not revelatory.*
- II. **The Lord's plan was to let his words (the Father's words) flow through his apostles. Lk.6:12-16**
- A. He prayed all night, made a trinitarian selection, anointed and trained them...12-13
1. They did and said the same things he did and said. Lk.9:1-6
- B. Who were they? 14-16. Just normal guys...
1. Simon Peter. Fisherman from Galilee (Lk.5:1-11)
 - a) He named Cephas = Peter Jn.1:42; Matt.16:13-20.
 - b) He is the first one in all the lists and spoke for the whole group at times.
 - c) Crucified in Rome around 64 AD
 2. Andrew, Peter's brother. Fisherman from Galilee.
 - a) Introduced Peter to the Jesus. Jn.1:40-42
 - b) But is quiet, behind the scenes.
 - c) Crucified in Patras Greece on X-shaped cross (tradition)
 3. James and John, sons of Zebedee. From Galilee (Capernaum?) Matt 4:20-21
 - a) Fishermen in partnership with Peter and Andrew.
 - b) Sons of thunder. Lk 9:51-56
 - c) James was first apostle martyred (Acts 12:2)
 - d) John was the last to die and the only one not killed (tradition)
 4. Philip. Jn.1:43. From Bethsaida in Galilee.
 - a) Jn. 6:5,7. Couldn't see how Jesus was going to feed 5,000
 - b) Jn 14:8. Wanted to see the Father.
 - c) Crucified in Hierapolis (Phrygia/Turkey) (Tradition)
 5. Nathaniel/Bartholomew. Jn.1:43-51
 - a) Nathaniel was his first name and Bartholomew (son of Tolmai) was probably his last name. John uses his first name, but the Synoptics use Bartholomew
 - b) Jesus saw him under a fig tree...A man with no deceit. Jn 1:47
 - c) But a bit cynical? Can any good thing come from Nazareth?
 - d) Flayed alive and crucified in Armenia (tradition)
 6. Matthew/Levi. Lk.5:27-31 (Matt.9 and Mk.2)
 - a) Jewish subcontractor to Roman government, tax collector.
 - b) Killed by sword in Ethiopia (traditions vary on this)
 7. Thomas (Didymus, the Twin) (Doubting Thomas)
 - a) A "glass-half-empty" sort of guy. Jn. 11:16
 - b) Skeptical of the resurrection until he saw the Lord himself. Jn. 20:24-29
 - c) Speared to death in India c.72 AD (tradition)
 8. James the Son of Alphaeus
 - a) Same as "James the less" (either small in stature of younger in years)
 - b) His mother was at the cross, too.
 - c) Stoned and/or beaten to death in Jerusalem (late tradition)
 9. Simon the Zealot.
 - a) Zealots were a radical political party against the Romans.
 - b) Crucified or sawn in two (traditions vary)
 10. Judas/Thaddaeus the Son of James.
 - a) Jn. 14:22. He couldn't understand why Jesus was keeping his identity a secret from the world.
 - b) Crucified in Persia or killed with arrows in Beirut (traditions vary)
 11. Judas Iscariot, who became the traitor. (suicide)
 - a) All part of God's plan to use human sin to bring about the death of sin (Acts 2:23)
 - b) Treasurer and embezzler. Jn. 12:6
 - c) Jesus knew about Judas but didn't say anything. Jn. 6:70-71
 - d) *Note: Judas Iscariot was not only a fake apostle, but a fake disciple. He insisted on thinking for himself, which means he evaluated Jesus's thinking rather than letting Jesus evaluate his...Judas would have fit nicely with the enlightenment...Peter said that Jesus has the words of eternal life. Judas heard Peter say this, but Judas silently did not agree...*

12. Mathias (replacement for Judas Iscariot, (Acts 1)
 - a) Added after the resurrection and before Pentecost.
 - b) Not much is known about his mission.
 - c) Stoned and beheaded (tradition)

C. The Lord added three more after Pentecost.

1. James the Lord's brother was clearly considered apostolic. (Acts 15;13-21; 1 Cor.15:7)
 - a) Author of the book of James and leader in the Jerusalem church.
 - b) Killed in Jerusalem in AD 62, probably by stoning.
2. Paul. The Lord added Paul 1-3 years after Pentecost. 1 Cor.15:8-11
 - a) Saul of Tarsus. Not a fisherman, not from Galilee. A Pharisee theologian inquisitor!
 - b) The risen Christ drafted and trained him personally to send him to the Gentiles. Acts 26:12-18, Gal. 1-2. He ministered in the Mediterranean area for some 30 years.
 - c) He says that the Lord appeared to him "last of all" which means the official number is limited.
 - d) Beheaded in Rome c.64 AD (very strong tradition)
3. Barnabas. Acts 14:14 was considered an apostle, or at least a member of the apostolic circle.

III. So that now the Spirit can take Jesus's words of eternal life, *through his apostles*, and penetrate our hearts...

A. They give us the written voice of Jesus. Acts 2:42; Jn.17:20

1. Jn.14:24-26. The Spirit will bring to your remembrance everything I've said
2. Jn.16:12-15. The Spirit will guide you into all truth and it will all be about me...
3. Jn.17:20...not for these only but for those who will believe in Me *through their word. (us)*
4. Acts 1:8. These would receive the supernatural ability to *bear witness* of Jesus as Messiah.
 - a) Bear witness = verbally and accurately convey the gospel.
5. *They will carry the verbal authority of God the Son!*

B. Which means they gave us the New Testament.

1. The criteria for NT canon were primarily apostolic.
 - a) Did an apostle write or endorse the writing and does the writing comport with what the apostles said and wrote.
 - b) Was the writing accepted as apostolic among those who knew the apostles and their friends.
2. This is why they are seen as the foundation of the Church and the new creation. Acts 2:42; Eph.2:19-20; Rev.21:14

C. Which means they show us the way to understand the Old Testament. Lk.24:44-48

1. The entire Bible is the word of Christ through the prophets, interpreted through the gospel, conveyed and explained through the words of His apostles.
2. *The gospel is the hermeneutical key to the entire OT.*

The apostles, then, have authority to write words that are God's own words, equal in truth status and authority to the words of the Old Testament Scriptures. They do this to record, interpret, and apply to the lives of believers the great truths about the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 2nd Edition (Zondervan, 2020) p.48-49)

The whole Bible is the word of Jesus and contributes together to the full and trustworthy testimony to the complete revelation of the Father in Jesus Christ. If we are going to print any of it in red, we should print it all! (Christopher Ash, *Hearing the Spirit*, (Proclamation Trust, 2011) p.75)

IV. Final thought...God's Word is the expression of His creative Mind. It is Him, in a real sense.

- A. When His Word enters our dead and fallen minds we are born from above, forgiven and made alive (Jn.3)
 1. Jesus Christ is this divine Word and when he touches your mind, you come to life.
- B. The same Word that brings us to life (the gospel) nourishes us for the rest of our lives.
 1. Which is why we spend time reading, meditating, discussing, praying it. Josh.1:8-9

V. A bit of pastoral advice...

- A. If you are not yet a Christian, read the gospel of John and pray...
- B. And if you are a Christian, trust the Lord to open your mind to His voice every time you encounter the Scriptures—the voice of Christ.