

WEEK 12: THE TWELVE & THOSE SENT BY JOHN

HIGH SCHOOL

GOALS

Who are the twelve apostles?
Why did St. John the Baptist send two of his disciples to Jesus?

LESSON

Materials Needed: Bible, Icon, Map of Holy Land

Extended Learning Opportunity for Teachers:

The Gospel of Matthew: Torah for the Church by Fr. Lawrence Farley, pgs 138-161

The Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to Matthew by Blessed Theophylact, pgs 83-99

YouTube: Drone footage of where St. John the Baptist was imprisoned and beheaded at

Machaerus Fortress - <https://youtu.be/ZsmxG-OZgGY>

THE TWELVE

Read Matthew 10:1-15

What is the difference between a disciple and an apostle?

A disciple is a student of someone. When we refer to the 12 Disciples, we are referring to specific people who were disciples of Jesus: Peter and Andrew; James (son of Zebedee) and John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew; James (son of Alphaeus) and Thaddaeus; Simon and Judas Iscariot. *Matthew 10:2-3*

An apostle is someone who is sent out to teach others about Jesus. We read about the twelve apostles in this chapter of Matthew. We remember the twelve apostles on June 30th. There are also many, many more apostles who were also sent out to preach the gospel. There are a group of Seventy Apostles, whom we remember on January 4th. There are also apostles who are given an epithet (a word describing an attributed quality of a person) such as, "Apostle to the North" or "Equal-to-the-Apostles".

Matthew groups the Twelve Apostles in pairs. Fr. Lawrence Farley explains that the Twelve Apostles were probably sent out by twos.

Jesus gives the apostles instructions to seek out “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” - these are the Jews - and to not go to the Gentiles (yet). St. Theophylact explains that Jesus first sends the apostles to the Jews, “...that they might not be able to say, ‘The apostles were sent to the Gentiles and because of this we Jews did not believe.’ Thus He deprives the Jews of any excuse.” The Jews thought they were better than the Gentiles. Jesus knew this and provided them the opportunity to accept Him as the Messiah before the gospel was actively preached to the Gentiles as well.

Additionally, Jesus equips the apostles with the ability to work miracles in order to help them grab the Jews’ attention. Once the apostles had their attention, the Jews would be more receptive to listening to the apostles. Do you have any friends, who when they find out you are an Orthodox Christian, ask, “What’s that?” If they have never been to an Orthodox Church before there are many aspects of our liturgy and our church that they would not understand until they saw it for themselves. If we brought them to a liturgy with us, then it would be easier for them to start to understand what it means to be an Orthodox Christian. The same is true here too. It was easier for the Jews to understand that Jesus is the Messiah when they saw the wondrous healings occurring - their family and friends who were blind, paralyzed, sick, dead, or demon possessed were all instantly and miraculously healed! They knew only God was capable of doing such things!

Then Jesus tells the apostles that they are not to bring lots of items or money with them on their journey. They will receive everything they need - food and a place to sleep from the people they teach - and they don’t need anything beyond this.

THOSE SENT BY JOHN

Read Matthew 11:1-11

Jesus continues to preach after he sent out His apostles, but St. Theophylact explains that Jesus was only teaching while the apostles were healing and preaching. If Jesus had continued to heal people, He would have drawn attention away from the apostles. In this way, between Jesus preaching and the apostles working away from Him, a greater number of people could learn that Jesus was the Messiah they had all been awaiting.

During this time, John the Baptist was held prisoner by Herod Antipas, the son of King Herod the Great, because he had confronted the king about his inappropriate behavior. While in prison, John sent two of his disciples (students / followers) to Jesus. St. John did this because his disciples were struggling with the idea that so many people admired Jesus when they knew that their teacher, John the Baptist, was a great man.

St. John knew Jesus was the Son of God. Remember that John leapt in his mother's womb when the Theotokos, who was pregnant with Jesus, came near St. Elizabeth? We also read about John baptizing Jesus. John initially told Jesus that he was not worthy to baptize Him and that Jesus should baptize him instead. Jesus tells John, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." In the Gospel of John, we also read, "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"

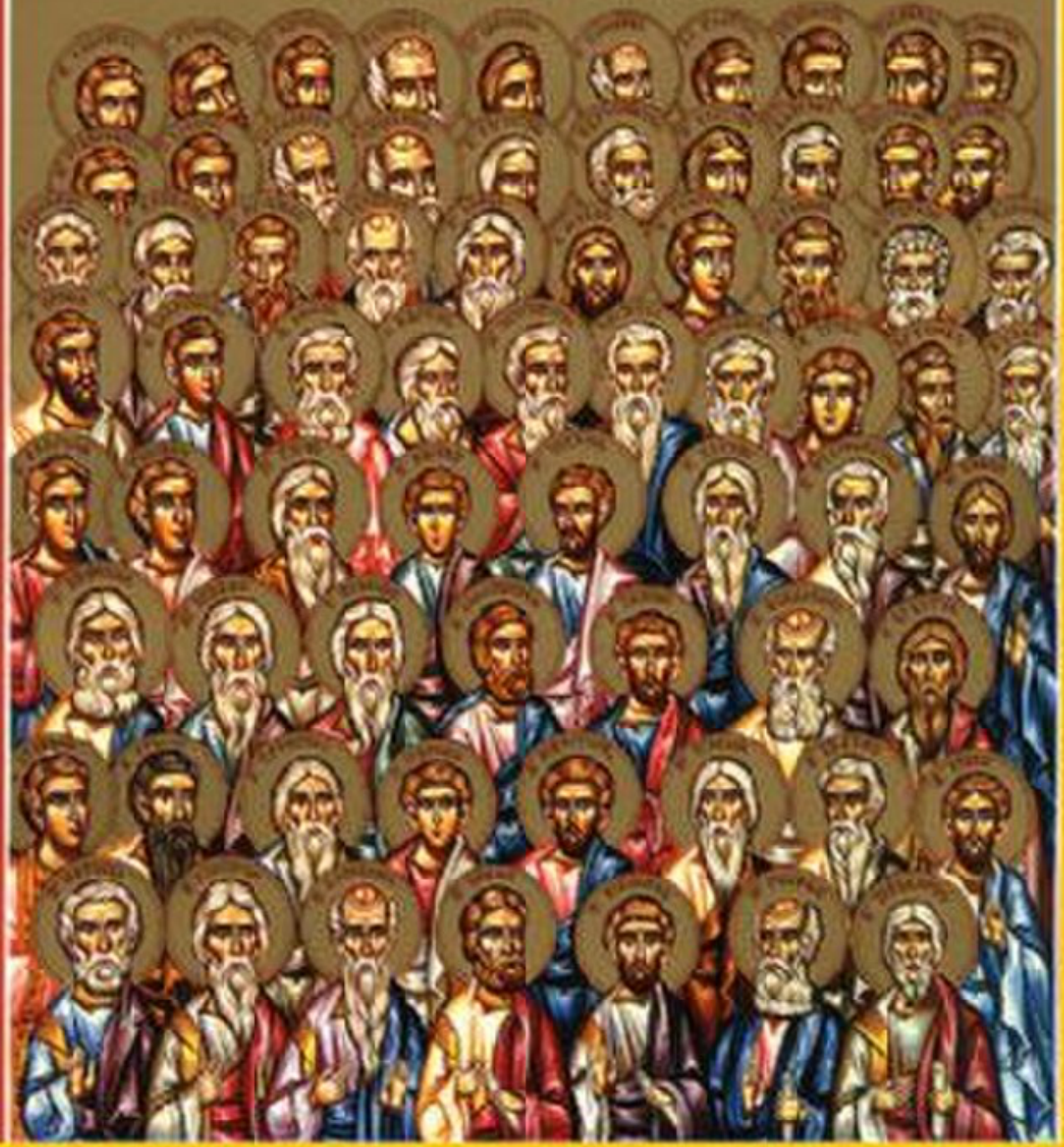
St. John the Baptist already knew Jesus was the Messiah, but John the Baptist knew his disciples would understand better if they first saw the miracles of Jesus themselves. This is why John prompted them to ask Jesus, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" Jesus responded by sending them back to John for further instruction after they saw for themselves the miracles all around them.

After John the Baptist's disciples left, Jesus recognizes that some of the crowd might be wondering why John would question whether Jesus was the Messiah or not. They would not understand what John was trying to teach his disciples. This is why Jesus goes on to instruct the crowd about John the Baptist: John is not someone who would be easily swayed. He is a great prophet, in fact, the greatest of all the prophets. But...as great as John is, Jesus is greater than him.





Η ΣΥΝΑΞΙΣ
ἙΒΔΟΜΗΚΟΝΤΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΩΝ



WEEK 12: THE TWELVE & THOSE SENT BY JOHN

MIDDLE SCHOOL

GOALS

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LESSON

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THOSE SENT BY JOHN

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ΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ

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3RD & 4TH GRADE

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1ST & 2ND GRADE

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CLASS ROUTINE

Continue routine - move photo, light candle, venerate icon, prayer, collect money

JESUS SENDS OUT THE TWELVE APOSTLES

Matthew 10

Jesus had chosen 12 men to learn from Him. They went everywhere He went, saw all the miracles He did and listened to all of His lessons. Now, Jesus told them it was time for them to share with everyone else what they had learned and saw while they were with Him. Jesus also told them that they would be able to heal anyone who was sick!

Read from 101 Orthodox Saints:

- Andrew the First-Called - page 19
 - John the Beloved (Theologian) - page 60
 - Peter and Paul - page 90
 - Thomas the Apostle - page 109
-

THOSE SENT BY JOHN

Matthew 11

St. John the Baptist was put in prison because he had told the king he was acting inappropriately. While St. John was in prison, he sent two of his followers to talk to Jesus and learn about all the miracles Jesus had done.

Read from 101 Orthodox Saints:

- John the Baptist - page 59

LORD, HAVE MERCY

Continue practice singing, "Lord, have mercy" in multiple languages

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PRE-K & KINDERGARTEN

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