



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Jesus Calls Matthew

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In the Gospel According to Luke (AD 60-61), Luke, a gentile, is writing to Theophilus so that he would know the exact truth and record regarding the things he had been taught about Jesus the Messiah. Luke provided numerous testimonies of Jesus' identity as the Savior and Messiah. After Jesus had spent forty days and nights in the wilderness and not having food during that time and under unsuccessful continual temptations or testing by the devil, Jesus returned to His hometown, Nazareth in Galilee, to begin His earthly ministry. Jesus shared that no prophet is welcome in his hometown and likewise His hometown rejected Jesus and attempted to kill Him. Jesus escaped and traveled 20 miles northwest to Capernaum, on the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum became Jesus' unofficial ministry headquarters. As was His custom, Jesus was in the synagogue on the Sabbath, reading scripture and teaching. Jesus, during His ministry, traveled to many cities and physically healed people of demons, disease and death. Jesus began to call His apostles.

“After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, “Follow Me.” And he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him. And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people who were reclining at the table with them. The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?” And Jesus answered and said to them, “It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” (Luke 5:27-32 NASB)

Jesus Calls Levi. Levi, son of Alphaeus (Mk. 2:13), was a tax collector and was more commonly known as Matthew. As a tax collector or publican Levi was despised by the Jewish population because of tax collector's greed. Tax collectors bid for tax franchises from the Roman government and all that they collected above the amount required of them by Rome was theirs to keep. They became very wealthy at the expense of the Jewish people. Luke records that Jesus noticed Levi, the tax collector, and said to him, “Follow Me.” This call, as others directed by Jesus, was specific and immediate. Levi responded immediately and rose left all behind and became an apostle of Jesus. By immediately following Jesus, Levi burnt his business and political bridges and surrendered his lucrative tax collection business for a faith journey with Jesus.

Levi had repented, turned away, from his old life and turned toward his new life in Christ. Levi was so excited about his new relationship with Jesus that he wanted his friend to know Jesus as well. Levi produced a big reception for Jesus at his home. Similar accounts of this are also found in the gospels accounts of Matthew (9:9-13) and Mark (2:13-17).

Levi's big reception feast. Levi invites his tax collector associates and others to the reception to meet Jesus. Levi was excited about his new life in Christ and he wanted all to know the joy that they could have it well. In the gospel of Matthew, he describes the others as sinners. Jesus' disciples and Pharisees and their scribes also were present at the dinner. The Pharisee and scribes became upset with Jesus because He ate and drank with tax collectors and sinners, something they believed a religious man should not do.

Pharisee's and scribes grumble. Rather than confront Jesus directly, the Pharisee and their scribes complained to Jesus' disciples about His affiliation, association and relationship with those lowly tax collectors and other sinners. Jesus defends His disciples and answers the challenge brought by the Pharisees and scribes.

The sick need a doctor. Jesus responds to the challenge question with another question. Jesus asked them, who needs a doctor more, a sick person or a well person? Jesus continues with a statement of His purpose. Jesus said that He did not come to call the perceived righteous, those that do not understand their sin, but rather, Jesus came to call sinners, those that understand that they are sinners, to repentance and turning from sin to Jesus.

For Your Consideration:

- When Levi was called by Jesus, his life changed and he wanted his friends to find the joy and peace that he found by following Jesus. If you have been called, through the Holy Spirit, and chosen to follow Jesus, are you excited to tell your friends about Him?
- Are your interactions only with other Christians or do you seek to expose yourself to others who do not know Jesus?
- Are you one of the sick who need a doctor?

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS: SESSION OR HEARING WEDNESDAYS AT 7:30AM, STATEHOUSE RM. 44

STAFF, LOBBYISTS AND CAPITOL SQUARE COMMUNITY: WEDNESDAYS AT NOON, STATEHOUSE RM.44