

sire for first place in the church or an organization have been the ones responsible for many church splits and new unattached organizations in the church. Somebody was rejected or demoted or another was given the office, so to show who I am I go and form another organization or church. Sons of thunder are dangerous persons without the restraining teaching of Jesus.

We Forbid You

Here is another aspect of the character of the Sons of Thunder. Luke 9:49-50 gives an incident that is worth examining. Here John sees a man casting out devils but because he was not one of them, he forbade him. He is doing what we are doing but he is not one of us. Here we see an intolerant characteristic harmful and needing to be corrected. What should be our attitude toward others who are doing Christian work but do not belong to our church, shall we forbid? Is there any one way, an all exclusive way, of doing Christian service? How much of bigotry can be useful in Christian service?

Under the leadership of Jesus, these sons of thunder were able to

take themselves in hand and became foremost Apostles. Read their books. John wrote more than James—James only wrote one short book which you may read with profit, while John wrote the Gospel of John, I, II, III John and Revelation. The charcoal sons of thunder became glittering diamonds in Kingdom building.

Completion Project

1. James and John were called sons of thunder because _____
2. They wanted to call fire down on a city because _____
3. They asked Jesus for the following positions _____
4. John became known as the disciple that Jesus _____
5. John wrote the following books _____

Debate: Resolve that James did more for the New Testament Church than John.

Study VI

May 11, 1952

Matthew and Nathaniel

(Levi and Bartholomew)

Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; John 1:47-49;

Matt. 9:9; Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27-32

Levi the Tax Collector
(Matthew the Receiver of
Customs)

Before you begin this study, read

the Specific Aim No. 2 of this Unit.

As you look at Levi or Matthew before he was called to be one of the twelve, you will look at a sorry sight

who to all Jews was the lowest of despicable characters. Publicans, harlots, tax collectors and hog feeders were classified in the same category by first-class Jews. When Jesus stooped to invite such a soiled character as this into His fellowship, they threw up holy hands of horror and concluded that He was unworthy of their attention.

Matthew-Levi had long been the object of scorn. He was looked upon as a "publican and a sinner" and both were bad brands. He was from a good family, being the son of Alphaeus and the brother of James and Jude. How honest or dishonest he was, no one seems to know. I conjecture that he was an honest man in a low position. There are plenty good people who live in slum districts, not because they will to, but circumstances force them to. All people who work in bars and caberets are not bad. They must work and that is all the work they can find. Do you agree with this theory?

Money does not blind all men. All politicians are not corrupted. All prisoners are not criminals. Matthew was simply doing a job and, I venture to say, he was doing an honest job though the opportunity to be dishonest was ever-present.

The fact that he rose up and left his office when Jesus called him, seems to indicate some deep dissatisfactions with the job and a desire to get away from it all. Perhaps at some previous time, he and Jesus had crossed each other's path. His rising up and accepting Jesus so readily may indicate the call was all that he needed to motivate him. This was simply the explosion point.

Nobody in Capernaum saw any value in Matthew or Levi. Long since had he been condemned and looked upon as worthless. The eyes of Jesus

looked deeper than the office he held. Jesus never looks at a man as he is but as he is capable of becoming. Long ago Matthew-Levi wanted to do something more worthwhile. He knew he was wasting his ability. When Jesus said "Follow me" Matthew-Levi readily severed ties with a job and joined up with a person. Personal relationship is an important item in living. He was the key man in the city. Levi made him a great feast and invited in sinners and publican—the crowd that did not attend the fashionable synagogue and who were never invited to the homes of the upper uppers. The least, the last and the lost came. He is no more Levi, the despised publican, but Matthew, the gospel writer. He became the man who had a fine appeal to the irreligious. Read the great book, The Gospel According to Matthew and you will see the wisdom of Jesus in selecting him to be one of the twelve.

The Character of Nathaniel or Bartholomew

This is the only one of the twelve whose good life was commended by Jesus. The first time Jesus looked at him, He said here is a man in whom is no guile. He is a square shooter, a man of integrity, nobility of purpose, moral stamina and an extra quality of soul. No other has ever been so commended, not even "the disciple whom Jesus loved. Nathaniel or Bartholomew was a diamond of the first water, solid gold thoroughly refined. He had a deep-seated prejudice against Nazareth but when Philip told him to come and see if Jesus was worthy of his consideration he came. Deep in his heart he was a silver drop sparkling with true beauty. There is no pretense, no subterfuge; he was a frank, free and candid spirit living in an atmosphere of sincerity where the