Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

RLJ-2091 JOHN S. TORELL NOVEMBER 1, 2026

PART 22: PREPARING THE FUTURE CHURCH LEADERSHIP

CALLING THE FIRST DISCIPLES

Jesus began public ministry by calling men to follow Him. As He walked along the shoreline of Galilee, He saw two sets of brothers and asked them to follow Him.

> *From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*
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> *And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.*
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> *And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him. (Matthew 4:17-22)*

GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE

None of the New Testament books existed at this point. All that was available to quote was the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit told the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel that an angel named Lucifer rebelled against God long before the creation of Adam and Eve. **Isaiah 14:10-21; Ezekiel 28:11-19**

With the exception of revealing that Satan had fallen from heaven like lightning, Jesus never discussed what took prior to Adam and Eve.

> *"And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." (Luke 10:18)*

It was the apostle Paul who was given insight from the Holy Spirit about the pre-destination of human beings. Everything Paul wrote took place before his death in AD 64/65. He never saw the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70 and he did not witness the Book of Revelation written in AD 90.

The understanding we receive from Paul's writing is that the souls of humans were designed before the creation. The Godhead saw in advance how each person would develop once their soul was merged with a human embryo. Thus, the Godhead is never surprised; they know exactly what each soul will do on earth.

When Jesus selected the twelve apostles, these men were preselected before the foundation of the world by the Godhead. Jesus did not walked randomly about looking for men; He knew exactly who they were and how to find them.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Romans 8:28-30)

Jesus confirmed that He knew who believed in Him and that He had personally chosen the twelve apostles, knowing full well, that Judas Iscariot would betray Him.

"But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve." (John 6:64-71)

Having this background, we can safely conclude the twelve apostles were chosen before the foundation of the world. Each man was meticulously conceived for the role they would have in the future church. This included Judas Iscariot, even though he would reject the teachings of Jesus and betray Him to the ungodly Jewish leadership.

JESUS AND THE REDEMPTION PLAN

Jesus being incarnated had nothing to do with His divinity. The Son of God only displayed supernatural power when performing miracles, healing, casting out demons, or stilling the waters on the Sea of Galilee. **Matthew 8:23-27**

During three years of ministry, it is recorded that Jesus always prayed to God the Father; sometimes it was public and other times He got up early in the morning and separated Himself from the disciples in order to have a private communication with the Father.

Jesus retained all memory of who He was and what He had done in eternity past. He knew that the Godhead had initiated a time-run of the universe He was going to create. **John 1:1-3, 14; Colossians 1:12-17; Hebrews 1:1-3**

He remembered the failed rebellion Lucifer instigated and the subsequent war which raged throughout the universe. **Revelation 12:7-9**

Jesus knew about the trial of Lucifer and the other fallen angels and their sentence to the Lake of Fire. **Matthew 26:41**

Lucifer accused God of being unrighteous and this is what motivated the Godhead to prove their righteousness. **Romans 3:21-26**

Jesus remembered the discussion with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit in eternity past which saw Him refurbish the earth and create the human race. **Genesis 1:1-31; 2:1-25**

The Godhead knew from the time-run that Adam and Eve would sin. **Genesis 3:1-7**

Jesus remembered the past discussion redeeming the human race. God the Son would be incarnated to pay the sin debt demanded by God the Father. Hence, Jesus was slain before the foundation of the world.

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:8)

TRAINING AND COMMISSIONING

Jesus spent time with the twelve apostles and they saw Him performing one miracle after another as the blind saw, the lepers were healed, the lame walked again, and evil spirits were cast out. Jesus knew that He had a short time to train these men and they were surprised when He sent them out by twos to proclaim the news about the Kingdom of God and perform miracles. As the Son of God, He had authority to transfer power to challenge the Kingdom of Satan.

"And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of

Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give." (Matthew 10:1-8)

Jesus raised the number of followers by selecting seventy other men to be part of the movement. They were not apostles and did not possess any titles, but were sent out by twos just like the apostles.

"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." (Luke 10:1-9)

Thanks to Luke, we have feedback about what the seventy experienced. They were amazed that when they cast out demons from people, the demons obeyed and left their victims. When Jesus heard their joyous testimony, He told them that they would receive even more power over the enemy.

"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:17-20)

DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Life was upbeat for the followers of Jesus for almost three years, which included thirty-eight women, who did the cooking and washing for Jesus and the disciples. This entourage moved throughout Galilee and it must have felt like heaven with daily miracles and teachings from the Messiah.

Meanwhile, Jesus was constantly aware of His mission. The first objective had been accomplished by setting up the leadership for the future church, but the final part involved traveling to Jerusalem and being crucified. When Peter heard Jesus was preparing to die, he misguidedly rebuked the Son of God. Jesus saw in the spirit realm that Lucifer had gotten hold of Peter and issued a strong rebuke.

"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:21-26)

FROM UNCERTAINTY TO PENTECOST

During the ministry leading to the cross, Jesus selected a core group of 120 persons that were to serve as a nucleus for the future body of Christ. They were not given any instruction on how to set up an organized church body nor were they trained on how to be functioning members in the body of Christ. That would take place after the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit began separating disciples for specific positions.

They had been simply informed the Messiah would be arrested, condemned to death on the cross and resurrected on the third day after the crucifixion.

The 120 followers were ignorant of what was going to happen afterwards. We get a glimpse of their thinking with the two disciples who decided to travel to the village of

Emmaus on the day of Jesus' resurrection. When they met the resurrected Messiah, they did not immediately recognize Him and shared how they felt about the crucifixion.

> *"And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened.*
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> *And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?*
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> *And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?*
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> *And he said unto them, What things?*
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> *And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.*
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> *Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not." (Luke 24:13-24)*

It was not until the Day of Pentecost that all doubt was removed and the Holy Ghost fell upon the 120 in fire. This single event was so life changing that they were ready to lay down their lives to proclaim that Jesus is the Messiah and the Savior for all people.