

THE MISSION OF THE DISCIPLES

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Abstract. The commissioning is due to the Father who tried to reconcile the world with himself by sending his Son to the mankind which became alienated from him. Jesus' calling is not an invitation to a hermetically isolated community for a few elected Hebrew, who will later enjoy the blessings of their master's proximity and the advantages of the security of his presence. Jesus' calling viewed the commission. Analyzing the mode of the disciples' commissioning we can discover some similarities with the commissioning of the prophets by God in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament we can see that the majority of the prophets did not desire the election for the commission. Humans received commission to continue Jesus' ministry. This happened because of the shortness of time, the importance of the task and the largeness of the crowd that was ready for harvest. The obedience to the call for commissioning emphasized service and was strongly connected to the question of personal salvation. Jesus primarily sent out the Twelve to continue the work he started. When he sent them out he set before them his own example of preaching, healing and teaching. The number of the apostles refers to the fact that Jesus proclaimed the promise of God's kingdom to the whole nation, and he is the one who will restore all the twelve tribes of Israel. Before he sent them out he prepared them. Besides his personal example, he also provided private instruction. Only the apostles or some of them could attend to these exclusive occasions (Mark 4,34b; 7,17; 9,28; 10,10; 13,3). In many instances the disciples enjoyed Jesus' support and his special treatment. All these happened in order to form and prepare the disciples for the service.

Keywords: disciple, disciples, discipleship, the Twelve, mission, sending, commissioning

Jesus did not call his disciples because he felt lonely or because he was a rabbi or philosopher who thought highly of himself and had a lot of disciples around them. The calling was a part of his mission. Christian calling does not exist without mission. The disciples were not supposed to remain mesmerized of what they experienced on the mountain. They were not supposed to remain in the safety and beneficial proximity of Jesus.

God entrusted Jesus with a certain mission, which he passed to his disciples at the right time.¹ At the beginning he promised that he would make them fishers of men, and later he kept his promise. All three synoptic gospels include at least one commissioning story. According to the majority of the New Testament scholars,

¹ A. STOCK, *Call to Discipleship: A Literary Study of Mark's Gospel*, Good News Studies 1, Dublin: Veritas Publications, 1982, 150–151.