

## Rejection / Selection

Read Luke 4:14-32, Matthew 4:13-16, Luke 6:12-16. Mark 3:13-19.

Following His debut in Jerusalem at the Temple, people wanted to know more about the carpenter's son from Nazareth—particularly His family and friends. Returning to His home synagogue, adoring fans came to hear from the man Himself. In just a few minutes, fans became foes. What He said was unexpected and unwanted.

Rejection in Nazareth opened doors of acceptance in Capernaum, at least for a while. There, Jesus selected the members of His inner circle, those who would be with him to the end.

### Talking Points

- Aware of His growing renown, the people of Nazareth invited Jesus to speak at a Shabbat service in their synagogue.
- Using Isaiah 61:1-2a as His text, Jesus declared Himself the Messiah, fulfilling their Messianic hopes.
- He added that His family and friends would reject Him while many among the Gentiles would embrace Him.
- Infuriated, the people of Nazareth decided to kill Jesus before He could further damage their communal reputation.
- Jesus escaped to Capernaum, the new headquarters of His Galilean ministry.
- Jesus' Father identified twelve men to be with Him 24/7/365 for more intensive training.
- Jesus' selection of the Twelve placed them in the spotlight, wearing the target on His back. Being with Jesus required a daily decision to stay the course.

### Background

Jesus had just returned from Jerusalem, celebrating the first Passover of His public ministry. At the grandest temple in all the world, Jesus was on the world stage when He confronted the money changers and the corrupted priesthood. Many Nazarenes would have witnessed Jesus in action. They wanted to know more.

### Rejection

Jesus was invited to share the weekly Shabbat reading in Nazareth's synagogue. Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2a, sat down, and declared Himself to be the fulfillment of Israel's Messianic expectations.

Say whaaat? Who wouldn't be ecstatic about Nazareth's favorite son being the Jewish Messiah, the prophetically revealed deliverer of Israel? No more looking down on

Nazareth! Instead of being shamed, Nazareth would be honored throughout the Jewish world.

Then, Jesus said something that sucked the oxygen out of the synagogue. The favorite son told the community His deliverance message was for the whole world, even for their Gentile oppressors. The shock was too much for Nazareth. The community decided to rid themselves of Mary's questionable son. Jesus had to be destroyed before He disgraced them all. The Nazarenes decided to throw Him off a high cliff and kill Him.

*But passing through their midst, He went His way. And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee (Luke 4:30-31a).*

## **Selection**

Jesus had many disciples, more than the twelve men usually identified as such. After moving from Nazareth to Capernaum, about one year into His public ministry, Jesus went to a mountain to pray through the night. The Father revealed which of the disciples were to be called as His inner circle. They were invited to be with Him 24/7/265 from that point onward.

Imagine yourself as one of the twelve selected that morning. Someone in the crowd hears your name called out by Jesus and shouts, "He wants you!" Maybe you strut to the front of the crowd like a rooster in a chicken coop. "Yeah, baby. Jesus is the Messiah and He wants me for an important role in His Kingdom!"

It didn't take long for the twelve to realize that things had changed. Suddenly, Jesus explained what was expected of them.

- Listen to Me speak and memorize what I say.
- Adopt My ministry model and strategy.
- Live sacrificially. Obey My commands,
- Teach new disciples what I am teaching you.
- Remember, you represent me everywhere to everyone at all times.

## **Bible Conversations**

- In eternity past, God ordained that Jesus would grow up in Nazareth, a community of fewer than 500 people. What are some positives and negatives of growing up in a small town?
- Jesus grew up within a specific community. He was known and "favored" by others. Why did others like Him?
- In your own words, explain why the people of Nazareth so quickly decided to destroy Him.
- What does the term "experiential learning" mean to you?
- How did the Twelve know that Jesus was qualified to train them?
- How would you differentiate Jesus' training from discipleship training in the 21st Century?
- Name three people you will tell this story to in the next seven days.