

**HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 6/14/2024**  
**The JESUS of Nazareth School for Rabbis**

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

Let's talk a bit about the "JESUS of Nazareth School for Rabbis." JESUS was a rabbi as the scriptures record many calling HIM "Rabbi" or "Teacher," the translation of "rabbi." Rabbis who wished to have a rabbinic school chose their students, usually two-to-four, by interview after they had memorized all the scriptures, what we today call the Old Testament. This is what was happening with JESUS when HE stayed behind in Jerusalem at age twelve and it took HIS parents three days to find HIM. HE was in the Temple talking with rabbis—being interviewed. Then we know nothing about HIM for eighteen years, the time necessary to become a rabbi. Then HE appears at the Jordan River for baptism and HE is recognized as a rabbi.

The students in a rabbinic school were called disciples. Again, most rabbis had two-to-four disciples. JESUS is understood to have had twelve. JESUS actually had many more. Formally, there were the twelve men including James, John, Peter, Andrew, Matthew, Judas Iscariot, and others who the Bible calls "The Twelve."

The Bible, though, refers more passively to others who followed JESUS and listened to HIS teachings. We're told in Luke 8 that with The Twelve there were women including Mary (called Magdalene), Joanna the wife of Chuza, Susanna, and many others. It also says that these women were helping to support JESUS and The Twelve out of their own pockets. Nicodemus had listened to JESUS and came to discuss things with HIM, though he did so in secret. Joseph of Arimathea was also a follower and put JESUS body in a tomb of his own after JESUS was crucified.

Large crowds followed JESUS and HE taught them all. Not everyone understood what JESUS said, but HE taught them all. HIS school was for everyone who would listen. And it had no limit. After about eighteen years, most rabbinic students had achieved the status of rabbi and would leave their teacher to teach and/or to start their own rabbinic school. But the "JESUS of Nazareth School for Rabbis" has no end, no graduation. Learning from JESUS is a lifetime commitment.

We, too, are disciples of JESUS. As such, we are students in HIS rabbinic school. To better follow HIM, we continue to study HIS word. We hear HIS teachings. We observe HIS actions. We seek to understand what HE wants us to do. Following JESUS is not just a partial commitment that ends at confirmation or some other point in our faith journey. It is for our lifetime. JESUS has so much to teach us and the opportunities to learn are multitude. We have received the invitation to follow JESUS and to learn from HIM. We should acknowledge that such a commitment will take the rest of our lives.

In CHRIST's love,  
Pastor Jeffrey