

29 “The Calling of Saint Matthew”

The reason why Jesus stance is not advancing but to his left.

2020

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“ The Calling of Saint Matthew” oil on canvas 322x340

Church of San Luigi dei Francesi, Rome 1600

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Many people probably think the story is like this.

The story would start from Jesus’ s calling pose.

Jesus has just finished his calling of Matthew. Then, he stepped to his left to back to the entrance door with his left hand lifted to say good-bye.

In this case, the bearded man might be skeptical with Jesus’ s unclear calling pose and might be confused as to who was Jesus is calling for.

So, the bearded man would ask Jesus “Who you are looking for?”

Maybe, many people would see “The Calling of Saint Matthew” may have doubted that Jesus did not walk directly to the party’ s table because of his foot position is to his left .

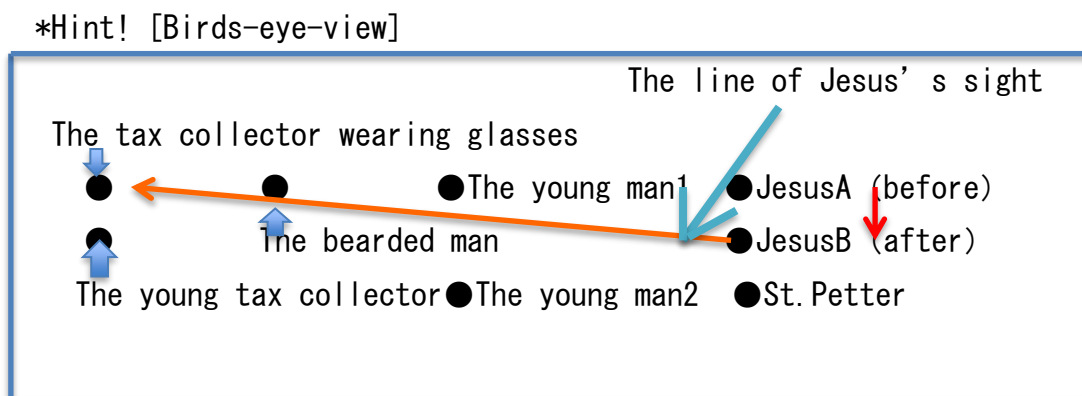
Jesus' s physical expression is very strange, isn' t ?  
 Jesus is just calling Matthew from the party in the table.  
 So, Jesus needs to walk closer to Matthew.  
 But, did Jesus really stepped his left? If so, Why?

As result, the upper story is continuing, but the story suddenly ends at the questioning scene of the bearded man. "Are you looking for him (or me)?"

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 In short, nobody in the painting and nobody who is seeing the painting could certainly know who was called by Jesus. The painting is an incomplete calling scene.

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 Can you immediately answer to the riddle above?  
 But, I can immediately solve to it by showing the bird' s eye view of the scene.

Please see the next drawing.



\*Jesus can clearly look at the man with glasses from the new standing position B.

The solving of the riddle is very simple.  
 Jesus who was standing at A can' t see the tax collector with glasses (=he is Matthew).  
The eyesight of Jesus from his stand point A was prohibited by the existence of the head of the bearded man.

So, Jesus changed his standing position A to B to look at t

he object' s face.

It' s clear that the story not be concluded at all.

In other words, the story that the story starts from Jesus unclear his right hand' s movement is a completely false interpretation.

The clear evidence of it is the bearded man' s left hand.

The bearded man' s left hand doesn' t express "Are you looking for him?" , but expresses " Are you looking for me or looking for him? "

Please look again attentively at that part of the painting.

The bearded man' s left thumb with standing involve is as just he has pointed "himself" .

Now, try to build the true story.

In the painting, the first action doesn' t start from the pointing pose of Jesus, but the bearded man' s question.

The bearded man noticed Jesus looking at him.

He immediately asked Jesus by physical expression. (fig.1, in the green circle)

"Are you looking for me or looking for him?"

Jesus answered by his next three step physical expression.

First, Jesus moved his left arm for sign to receive the question to him.

Second, Jesus stepped to his left to look at the face of the tax-collector with glasses (=Saint Matthew).

Because, the tax-collector with glasses was behind the bearded man, Jesus could not properly see the face of the tax-collector.

Lastly, Jesus turned his right arm like throwing a ball while looking at the face of the tax-collector with glasses.

Because of his right hand' s pose, the expression meant the man over there!

In this case, the man over there was just the person, the tax-collector with glasses.

As a result, Saint Matthew who was called by Jesus was the tax-collector with glasses.

But, a member of Catholic wouldn't agree that tax-collector with glasses is Saint Matthew. Because, he looks like in standing position.

Please see again the expression in the painting.

Saint Matthew is not standing. He is just leaning on the table.

(If you turn your back on 45 degrees like the tax-collector with glasses, and keep same posture for a long time, you must put your hand on the table. Please do experiment.)

In other words, he is not standing!

He would get up when Jesus order him to "Follow me" .

The content of the painting of Caravaggio didn't contradict to the New Testament.

New Testament describes that "Matthew got up and followed him" .

We can use the word "get up" at the leaning position like in this case.

Many of us had believed Saint Matthew must be the man sitting at the tax-room.

Because, he had been sitting when Jesus saw Matthew from the window of the tax-room.

The forever sitting man is no one. A man would move depending on the situation.

The tax-collecting work was continuing, so Matthew changed his position from sitting to leaning based on the process of tax-collecting work.

Caravaggio images starts from when Jesus first see Matthew from tax-collecting room' s window, to the few minutes later scene that Matthew changed his pose to lean on the table to supervise the tax-collecting work.

Our prejudices often prevent us to correct decision.

It was necessary to Jesus to see the tax-collector with glasses to call, so he stepped to his left to have a better view.

This is the reason why Jesus stepped not forward but to his left.

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- This study is a revised and modified version of " The Saint Matthew with glasses" 2013 counterpart.

