

Matthew Chapter 10

Verses 1-4: The “twelve disciples had been formed as a group some time previously, and now after a period of instruction and training, they were sent on their first mission. They were also given “power”, or “authority,” over demons and disease. Their miracle-working ministry was to attest the legitimate claim of Jesus to be the Messiah.

“Apostles (Greek apostoloi) is the technical term that later came to be applied to the 12 disciples. The literal meaning of the term is “Sent Ones”. In this passage their 12 names are arranged in six pairs, which probably corresponded to the arrangement in which they were sent out on this mission.

“Simon” is Peter, who head all four lists of the disciples (Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13). Since he appears to be the most prominent disciple in the early stages of Jesus’ ministry, as well as in the early period of the church, he probably exercised a natural leadership over the others. It does not follow from this however, that his leadership was passed on to successors.

“Bartholomew” was generally considered to be identical with the Nathanael of (John 1:45-51). “Lebbeus, who surname was Thaddeus” (some texts read simply “Thaddeus”): Luke gives his name as Judas (Luke 6:16).

“Simon the Canaanite” actually means the Cananaean. Since he had been a member of the nationalist party known as the Zealots, who resisted Herod the Great by force, he is also at times referred to as Simon the Zealot.

“Judas Iscariot” has been variously interpreted as meaning he was a member of the tribe of Issachar, or an inhabitant of Kerioth, or the one who carried the purse (Aramaic, secariota), or the one who was strangled (Hebrew iscara). He is generally recognized as the only disciple who was not a Galilean.

“Disciples”: Disciple means “student”, one who is being taught by another. “Apostle” refers to a qualified representative who is sent on a mission. The two terms emphasize different aspects of their calling.

Matthew 10:1 "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."

“Gave them power”: Jesus delegated His power and authority to the apostles to show clearly that He and His kingdom were sovereign over the physical and spiritual realms, the effects of sin, and the efforts of Satan.

This was an unheard of display of power, never before seen in all redemptive history, to announce Messiah’s arrival and authenticate Him plus His apostles who preached His gospel.

This power was a preview of the power Christ will exhibit in His early kingdom, when Satan will be bound (Rev. chapter 20), and the curse on physical life curtailed (Isa. 65:20-25).

Here, we see the power to cast out demons and to heal all manner of disease comes through the name of Jesus. All healing and deliverance must be done in Jesus' name. Jesus healed in His own right. We heal in Jesus' name.

Matthew 10:2 "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;"

“Names of the twelve apostles”: The 12 are always listed in a similar order (Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:13; Acts 1:13). Peter is always named first. The list contains 3 groups of four.

The three subgroups are always listed in the same order and the first name in each subgroup is always the same, though there is some variation in the order with-in the subgroups, but Judas Iscariot is always named last.

Peter ... Andrew ... James ... John”: The first subgroup of 4 are the most familiar to us. These two sets of brothers, all fishermen, represent an inner circle of disciples often seen closest to Jesus.

Matthew 10:3 "Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James [the son] of Alphaeus, and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus;"

“James the son of Alphaeus”: There are 4 men in the New Testament named James.

1. The Apostle James, brother of John;
2. The disciple mentioned here, also called “James the Less” (Mark 15:40);
3. James, father of Judas (not Iscariot, Luke 6:16)
4. James, the Lord’s half-brother (Gal. 1:19).

“Thaddaeus”: Elsewhere he is called Judas, son of James (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13).

Matthew 10:4 "Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him."

“Simon” the Zealot. The better manuscripts read “Cananaean”, a term for the party of the Zealots, a group determined to overthrow Roman domination in Palestine. Simon was probably a member of the Zealot party before coming to Christ.

Let us stop here a moment and look at these disciples. Peter (rock), and Andrew (manly), his brother, were fishermen before Jesus called them, and their partners were James and John (sons of Zebedee; sons of thunder).

"John" means Jehovah is gracious. John was called the beloved of Jesus. This John truly loved Jesus. He was the only one present at the crucifixion. Jesus entrusted His mother to John.

The name "Philip" means lover of horses. Bartholomew, some believe that he was the same as Nathaniel. Thomas was best known as "doubter". The name "Thomas" means twin, but it was not evident in the Bible who the twin was.

We just studied about Matthew, the tax collector. His name means "a gift of Jehovah". James (not son of Zebedee), was believed to be the nephew of Mary (mother of Jesus). He was called James the less. No one knows whether this had to do with stature, or importance.

This "Lebbeus", or "Thaddaeus" means courage. Thaddaeus was probably the name he used in his ministry. Simon the Canaanite, belonged to the faction of the Zealots who were dogmatic about the Mosaic Law. Judas Iscariot was the betrayer of Jesus. He also carried the purse.

Verses 5-10: "The way of the Gentiles:" Several Greek cities in Galilee existed separately from the Jewish Life-style. The apostles were instructed to avoid these towns and to confine themselves to the Jewish cities only. The word Gentiles is an objective genitive, indicating that they were not to enter a road even leading to the Gentiles, nor were they to enter a city of the Samaritans.

The apostles were to "provide" better, ("get"), nothing in the way of money in their "purses" (literally, "belts"). The fold of the robe or the girdle served the same function as our pockets. A "scrip" was a small bag for holding various articles.

"Coats" were the outer robes or tunics that corresponded to the Roman toga. The Greek for "staves" is actually singular, meaning "staff," agreeing with (Luke 9:3). "The workman is worthy of his meat." They were to rely on the gifts and hospitality of those to whom they preached.

Verses 10:5 - 11:1: This is the second of 5 major discourses recorded in Matthew.

Matthew 10:5 "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:"

"Go not into the way of the Gentiles": Christ did not forbid the disciples to preach to Gentiles or Samaritans if they encountered them on the way, but they were to take the message first to the covenant people, in the regions nearby (Rom. 1:16).

Matthew 10:6 "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

"Lost sheep of the house of Israel" (see 15:24; Jer. 50:6). Jesus narrowed this priority even more when He said the gospel was only for those who knew they were spiritually sick (9:13), and needed a physician (Luke 5:31-32).

You see from this, that Jesus tried to bring the message to physical Israel first. Even these disciples were instructed to minister to the house of Israel. Physical Israel had to reject this message, before it would be offered to spiritual Israel (Gentile believers).

Matthew 10:7 "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

This is an expression unique to Matthew's gospel. Matthew uses the word "heaven" as a euphemism for God's name, to accommodate his Jewish readers' sensitivities (23:22). Throughout the rest of Scripture, the kingdom is called "the kingdom of God." Both expressions refer to the sphere of God's dominion over those who belong to Him.

The kingdom is now manifest in heaven's spiritual rule over the hearts of believers (Luke 17:21), and one day it will be established in a literal earthly kingdom (Rev. 20:4-6). "Is at hand" is in one sense the kingdom is a present reality, but in its fullest sense it awaits a yet future fulfillment.

Matthew 10:8 "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give."

"Freely ye have received, freely give": Jesus was giving them great power, to heal the sick and raise the dead. If they sold these gifts for money, they could have made quite a fortune. But that would have obscured the message of grace Christ sent them to preach. So, he forbade them to charge money for their ministry. Yet they were permitted to accept support to meet their basic needs, for a workman is worthy of such support (verse 10).

Jesus told them the message to preach. Since that was the first on the list of the things to do, we can understand from that, that salvation is the most important message. He did not tell the disciples, if you are able to; heal, cleanse, raise the dead, and cast out devils. He just said do it.

Probably one of the problems in our churches today, is that we are preaching and leaving all these other things undone.

Matthew 10:9-10 "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses," "Nor scrip for [your] journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat."

The restrictions on what they were to carry were unique for this mission. See (Luke 22:36), where on a later mission, Christ gave completely different instructions. The point here was to teach them to trust the lord to supply their needs through the generosity of the people to whom they ministered, and to teach those who received the blessing of their ministry to support the servants of Christ (Tim. 5:18).

You have to realize that this was the disciples' call to go to the mission field. They have no idea how to prepare. Jesus was saying that the people they ministered to should pay the disciples' expenses. It would have to be that way, because they would not have time to work on the side.

Verses 11-16: "Inquire" means "to search out." Hospitality was a normal part of Oriental life and the disciples probably received many offers of accommodation; however, they were restricted to accepting hospitality only from those who received their message. "Shake off the dust of your feet" is a symbolic act of rejection and condemnation, the idea being that not even the dust of a wicked city was worthy of them.

"Verily" (Greek amen), is a transliteration from the Hebrew meaning "truly" or one of its synonyms, which gives emphasis to the statement that follows. "Wise as serpents" (Gen. 3:1): In the ancient Near East, the serpent was commonly regarded as the wisest of beasts. A cautious wisdom was necessary in order to deal with the fierce opposition that the disciples would face.

Matthew 10:11 "And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence."

He said to find a good believing family, and stay with them while you were ministering in a town.

Matthew 10:12-13 "And when ye come into a house, salute it." "And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you."

"Peace": This is equivalent to the Hebrew "shalom" and refers to prosperity, well-being, or blessing.

A minister visiting with a family should speak a blessing on the house and family who lodged them. Jesus said, if you discover these people were not Christians, just take your blessing with you when you leave.

Matthew 10:14 "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet."

"Hear your words": The priority was to preach that the King had come and His kingdom was near. The message was the main thing. The signs and wonders were to authenticate it.

"Shake off the dust of your feet": It was common for Jews to shake the dust off their feet, as an expression of disdain, when returning from Gentile regions. Paul and Barnabas also did this when expelled from Antioch (Acts 13:51). This was a visible protest, signifying that they regarded the place as no better than a pagan land.

Matthew 10:15 "Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city."

"Sodom and Gomorrha": Those cities and the entire surrounding region were judged without warning, and with the utmost severity.

There are 2 things we should note here.

1. Sodom and Gomorrah did not reject the salvation message of Jesus.
2. They have already been severely punished for their sins. People who reject Jesus have a terrible fate awaiting them.

Matthew 10:16 "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."

“Wolves”: Used to describe false prophets who persecute the true ones and seek to destroy the Church (7:15; Luke 10:3; Acts 20:29).

Jesus told them that even though they meant no harm to anyone, they would meet with great opposition. Some of the people would try to eat them alive. He said be careful, don't do them any harm; but just minister to them.

Verses 17-22: “Take no thought” means “Do not be anxious.” (See Mark 13:9-13; Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-19).

“It shall be given you” promises that the inner prompting of the Holy Spirit would tell them what to say in each situation they would face. “For my name’s sake:” They would endure great persecution because of their identification with Jesus Christ.

“But he that endureth to the end shall be saved” is a promise of perseverance, not a teaching that salvation may be lost. Rather, it indicates that those who are truly saved will indeed endure to the end.

Matthew 10:17 "But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;"

“Deliver you up”: This is a technical word, in this context, used for delivering a prisoner for punishment. Persecution of believers has often been the official policy of governments. Such persecutions give opportunity for testifying to the truth of the gospel (John 16:1-4; 2 Tim. 4:16).

The religious people would not accept them. "Scourge", probably, means whip. These "holier than thou" people would declare them not of God, and whip them publicly.

Matthew 10:18 "And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles."

This message that Jesus said to the disciples here, is even true today. If you are bringing the true messages of God, the authorities will give you a problem even now. The Gentiles that were spoken of in this verse, probably meant the Roman magistrates.

Matthew 10:19 "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak."

Do not be anxious, take no thought. This verse is meant as a comfort for those under life threatening persecution. He was promising the Holy Spirit's aid for times of persecution when there can be no preparation.

Matthew 10:20 "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."

We should not be concerned about what we say for the Lord, either. God wants His Spirit to minister through us.

Verses 21-23: These verses clearly have an eschatological significance that goes beyond the disciples' immediate mission. The persecutions He describes seem to belong to the Tribulation period that precedes Christ's second coming, alluded to (in verse 23).

Matthew 10:21 "And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against [their] parents, and cause them to be put to death."

“And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death”: Christ having fortified the minds of his disciples by the foregoing promises of divine influence and assistance proceeds to open more largely and particularly the sorrows, troubles, and afflictions they must expect would attend the faithful ministrations of his Gospel.

True followers of Christ should not only be persecuted and betrayed, and delivered up into the hands of the civil magistrate, by persons that were strangers to them; but even by their nearest relations, brethren, whom the nearness of blood, should oblige to the tenderest regards to each other.

“And the father the child”: And the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. The father laying aside his natural affection for his child, whom he has begotten and brought up, and has took so much care of and delight in, and perhaps his only one, his son and heir.

And yet professing a faith different from his, such is his blind zeal and bigotry, that breaking through all the ties of parental relation and affection, he delivers him up into the hands of wicked magistrates to put him to death.

Matthew 10:22 "And ye shall be hated of all [men] for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."

The disciples truly were hated, and many of them were even martyred. I believe as much as for them; this Scripture is prophetically speaking of our day as well. We will have to hold on to every ounce of belief that we have to endure to the end.

Verses 23-24: The idea that the “Son of man” in this passage is Himself to be viewed as a forerunner of the yet-coming Messiah is ludicrous in light of all the statements made earlier in the Gospel of Matthew. Therefore, He must have His own second coming in view.

Matthew 10:23 "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."

Prophecy and the immediate were side by side here. Of course, the Son of man here, was Jesus.

Matthew 10:24 "The disciple is not above [his] master, nor the servant above his lord."

“Not above”: If the Teacher (Christ), suffers, so will His pupils. If they attack the Master (Christ), with blasphemies, so will they curse the servants. This was the promise of persecution (John 15:20).

Verses 25-31: “Beelzebub” refers to Satan himself, the ultimate evil spirit. The disciples are told to “fear ... not.” The disciples’ enemies can only take their physical lives, which cannot prevent their blessed resurrection to life everlasting.

In other words, Jesus reminded them that it was more important to fear Him who had authority over the “soul” as well as over the “body” and who has authority to cast men into hell, and not Satan, who will himself be ultimately cast into everlasting fire.

Conversely, Jesus reminded His disciples of the Father’s loving care, even for “sparrows”. “A farthing (Greek assarion), was a copper coin worth about one-sixteenth of a denarius. “Without your Father” means without His permission. Here we are reminded of God’s gracious providential care over His saints.

Matthew 10:25 "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more [shall they call] them of his household?"

“Beelzebub”: The Philistine deity associated with satanic idolatry. The name came to be used for Satan, the prince of demons.

Jesus said here, if they think I am evil, they will think my followers are evil too.

Matthew 10:26-27 "Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known." "What I tell you in darkness, [that] speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, [that] preach ye upon the housetops."

Ministers of the Word should only realize that what Jesus wants is an empty vessel that He can speak through. He has taught His people all through the ages through the parables, so that the world would not figure out with their minds the things of God. God is a Spirit. The Bible is Spirit. The Parables are Spirit.

We have to be taught of the Spirit: not mind knowledge, but heart knowledge. When ministers learn to depend on God for their messages to the people, they will hear what God would say to the church. It is not in their ability that they preach. It is God in them preaching.

Matthew chapter 10 questions

1. Any of the disciples did Jesus call to him?
2. Name the powers Jesus gave them?
3. What is the difference between Jesus' healings and the healings we perform?
4. Name the 12 apostles?
5. What does Peter mean?
6. What does Andrew mean?
7. Who were the sons of Zebedee?
8. What does John mean?
9. Which disciple was present at the crucifixion?
10. Which of the apostle's name means lover of horses?
11. Which apostle was, probably, a twin?
12. Which one betrayed Jesus?
13. Where did Jesus tell them not to go?
14. Who were they sent to first?
15. What were they to preach?

16. What other ministries were they to do?
17. Where would they get their necessities?
18. Where were they to stay?
19. What does salute mean, in verse 12?
20. If they do not receive, what should you do?
21. Give me two reasons it would be better for Sodom than a city who rejected this message?
22. He sent them forth as _____ in the midst of_____.
23. They were to be wise as what and harmless as what?
24. Why must they beware of men?
25. What does "scourge" mean?
26. When governors and kings stand you before them, what will you say?
27. Is it us speaking? Explain
28. Who were the Gentiles spoken of here, probably?
29. Who will rise up against each other?
30. Why will we be hated of men?
31. How long should we put up with troubles?
32. When you are persecuted, what should you do?
33. In verse 25, if they called the master of the house _____, how much more shall they call them of his household?
34. What Jesus speaks in darkness, what are we to do with it?
35. If it is not our knowledge preaching, what is it?