

Matthew 10  
Part 1 (1-23)  
Christ sends forth His twelve

- I. Authority is given to the twelve disciples. (1-4)
  - Note: Parallel accounts are given in Mark 6:7-11 and Luke 6:13-16.
  - A. The apostles had seen the mighty power of God. Now, they were given this power in two areas. (1)
    - 1. They had power over unclean spirits.
    - 2. They had power to heal all manner of sickness and diseases.
      - a. From His disciples He chose twelve to do a special work. (cf Lk 6:13)  
Note: We know He had at least 82 trustworthy disciples to draw from. (cf Lk 10:1)
      - b. Anyone can be Jesus' disciple, but it takes a special sending to be an apostle.
  - B. The apostles are mentioned by name four times in the New Testament. (2-4) (cf Mk 3:16-19; Lk 6:14-16; Acts 1:13)
    - 1. Peter is mentioned first in each of these listings.
    - 2. Peter, Andrew, James and John are always the first four mentioned. (cf 4:18-21)
    - 3. Much has been written about the apostles' deaths, all from uninspired sources, with two exceptions. (cf 27:3-5; Acts 12:2)
- II. Jesus commands them in what to do and what not to do. (5-15)
  - A. Do not go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans. (5)
    - 1. This is the reason it is called the limited commission.
      - a. Jesus would give them (us) the unlimited commission in about two years from this event. (cf 28:19, 20; Mk 16:15, 16; Lk 24:47)
      - b. The apostles would not actually follow the unlimited commission for several years after His death. (cf Acts 10:34, 35)
    - 2. There may be three reasons why these Gentiles and Samaritans were excluded.
      - a. They had no preparation for the coming Messiah. (John the baptizer went to the house of Israel. cf 3:1)
      - b. God's desire is to go where the harvest is ripe. (cf 9:37)
      - c. The time was very limited. Not enough time to go everywhere.
  - B. They were sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (6)
    - 1. The lost sheep were the Jews. (cf Ps 119:176; Jer 50:6)
    - 2. The house of Israel was God's family under the old law. (cf Ex 16:31; Num 20:29)
  - C. They were told what to preach and how to conduct themselves. (7-15)
    - 1. They were to preach "the kingdom of God is at hand." (7)
      - a. This is the same message that both John and Jesus had spread. (cf 3:2; 4:17)
      - b. They were sent to the nation of Israel to teach the kingdom was near.
      - c. This shows the kingdom is spiritual in nature. They, and many today, miss this point.
    - 2. They were to heal, cleanse and raise the dead. (8)
      - a. This is the first case of this power being transferred to His disciples.
      - b. The reason for the miracles was to confirm the message they preached.

Note: They were to give as they had received, freely. Freely means without charge.

- c. They could have easily gotten rich from these powers. (cf Acts 8:18-20)
  - d. This would have reduced these powers to merchandise, i.e., like the charlatans of today.
3. They were to make no provisions for their travel. (9, 10)
    - a. They were not to carry money.
    - b. They were not to take extra clothing.
    - c. They were to depend on God. (cf Lk 22:35)
  4. They were to take the message to the towns and abide in the worthy homes. (11-15)
    - a. “Worthy” means those showing the proper character. (cf Gen 19:1-3; Job 31:32; Acts 16:15)
    - b. They were to abide in one house and not to go from house to house. (cf Lk 10:7)
    - c. They were not to wonder around like vagrants or vagabonds. There was business to attend to.
    - d. “Salute” means to embrace. (cf Acts 20:1; Heb 11:13)
    - e. “Shake off the dust of your feet” was a Jewish idiom denoting unworthiness. (cf Mk 6:11; Acts 13:51; 18:6)
  5. “More tolerable” means more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for those who are unworthy of this message.

Note: Every time this word “more tolerable” is used in the NT it is used in connection to either Sodom and Gomorrah or Tyre and Sidon. (cf 11:22, 24; Lk 10:12, 14)

    - a. This shows God’s intense anger at being rejected.
    - b. We know what happened to these cities. (cf Gen 19:24, 25)
    - c. God will deal with these people who rejected His Son’s message in the same fashion. (cf 2 Pet 3:7; Jude 7)
- III. Jesus warns the apostles of the dangers which were before them. (16-23)
- A. His apostles were sent out as sheep among wolves. (16)
    1. The reality of a cruel world was before them.
    2. Up to this point they had been, basically, sheltered by the Master.
    3. “Wise as serpents” shows how eastern people thought of the serpent.
      - a. The Egyptians used the symbol of a serpent in their hieroglyphics as the sign for wisdom.
      - b. The serpent was held up in the wilderness for salvation. (cf Num 21:9; Jn 3:14, 15)
    4. “Harmless as doves” shows purity and innocence. (cf Phil 2:15; 1 Thess 2:10)
      - a. A dove was used to symbolize the Holy Ghost descending after Jesus’ baptism. (cf 3:16; Mk 1:10; Lk 3:22; Jn 1:32)
      - b. We see Noah using a dove to see if the water had abated from the earth. (cf Gen 8:8-12)
      - c. Turtledoves and pigeons were the only birds authorized for sacrifice under the old law. (cf Gen 15:9; Lk 2:24)
  - B. The persecution is described. (17, 18)

1. “Beware of men” is a reference to the wolves of verse 16.
  2. “Councils”, “synagogues”, “governors” and “kings” shows both Jewish and Gentile persecution. (cf Phil 3:2)
  3. We see these things fulfilled in years to come. ( Jewish- cf Acts 5:40; 22:19; 26:11; 2 Cor 11:24, 25, Gentile- Acts 24:24-27; 25:1-6)
- C. When this happened they would be divinely helped in what to say. (19, 20)
1. The Holy Ghost would lead them to use the right words so God would be glorified.
  2. The Holy Ghost does the same today through the written word. (cf 2 Tim 3:16, 17; Heb 4:12; 1 Pet 1:23)
- D. Persecution, even unto death, will be in many families as well. (21-23)
1. This was prophesied to happen. (cf Zech 13:3; Matt 24:10; Lk 21:16, 17)
  2. Many today still suffer, in some form, by these same words.
  3. “To the end” is used here as in Rev 2:10. It means “to the point of having your life taken.”
  4. “Flee” does not show cowardliness, but is being as wise as serpents.
    - a. Dead apostles could not spread the good news.
    - b. Their time was limited and the harvest was ripe.
  5. “Till the son of man be come” probably has reference to the establishment of the church. (cf Matt 16:28; Lk 21:27; Acts 1:8; 2:2)
    - a. This event was less than two years in the future.
    - b. It could not have reference to the destruction of Jerusalem (cf Acts 1:8; Col 1:23, 24)

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