

# THE MISSION OF THE MESSIAH

## MATHEW 09:35-38

### *Introduction — Jesus Christ, Mission*

The mission of the Messiah was threefold. (See Mt. 4:12-17; note 2 and *Gospel, Good News*, Mt. 4:23.)

- I. His ministry (v. 35).
- II. His compassion (v. 36).
- III. His vision (vv. 37-38).

### **I. *Mathew 09:35 Mission of Jesus Christ — Ministry***

The mission of Jesus Christ was to minister. Four things are covered about His ministry in this verse.

1. Jesus' method. Jesus Christ had but one method in reaching people: He "went through all the towns..." after people. He did not sit back, waiting for people to come to Him.

**Thought 1.** We are foolish to sit back and wait for people to come to us. The vast, vast majority will not come. They do not know to come; we have to go out after them.

**Thought 2.** The very same method is given to us in the Great Commission.

**Mat 28:19-20** "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

**John 20:21** Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." (see Luke 19:10)

2. Jesus' place of ministry. Jesus literally went everywhere: in all the cities and villages (Mt. 9:35), in the countryside (Mt. 5:1), in the synagogues (Mt. 9:35), on mountains (Mt. 5:1), by the seashore (Mt. 4:18), in boats (Mt. 8:23f), by graveyards (Mt. 8:28f), and in homes (Mt. 8:14; 9:10). There was no place where Jesus did not go to minister.

**Mat 22:9** 'Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.'

**Acts 1:8** "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

**Isa 45:22** "Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other."

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**Thought 1.** Note three striking lessons.

- 1) How much more *we* should go everywhere! How much more we should not neglect mansion or slum.
  - 2) Christ taught in the synagogues, in the existing establishments when they were open to Him. Note two things.
    - => He made use of what was available, *the existing establishment*, although they violently opposed Him.
    - => He went where there was a ready audience when He had the opportunity.
  - 3) There are places where some believers will not go: the small town, the obscure village, the Milltown, the country, the foreign country, the north, east, west or south, the lower class, the upper class. But not so with Christ; He went everywhere.
3. Jesus' work: teaching, preaching and healing. Jesus had a threefold work that should serve as the primary guide for believers.
- a. He preached. He proclaimed the good news of the King, God Himself. He brought the glorious message of salvation and redemption to man.
  - b. He taught. He rooted and grounded all who would receive the message. Hearing and receiving the good news were not enough. People needed to be taught (Acts 11:19-30).
  - c. He healed. He met the physical, mental and emotional needs of those who hurt and suffered.

*Acts 10:38-39* How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree.

*2 Tim 2:2* And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

*2 Tim 4:2* Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction.

**Thought 1.** Note three lessons.

- 1) What is preached needs to be taught and lived. Talking and preaching are not enough. What God has to say He wants taught so that men may know how to live.
- 2) Every believer is to proclaim, teach and heal. Jesus never intended for the minister to do the job alone. He has commissioned every believer, and He expects every believer to be about the business of reaching and helping people.

- 3) Men need to hear the message, but they also need to be taught the details of the message and how to apply it to their lives. The only conceivable way men can know how to live day by day is to be taught the details of the message.

**Thought 2.** When dealing with preaching, teaching and healing, there is a danger with each that must be guarded against.

- 1) *Preaching only* will feed only the major points of God's message to people. *Preaching only* will leave a person with a huge gap in his spiritual life. He will not know how to apply the will of God in his life day by day. Teaching is needed as well as preaching.
- 2) *Teaching only* leads to four errors.
  - a) It only leads a person into a discussion of God's Word and its details. It misses out on the proclamation of the overview and great subjects of the Bible.
  - b) It short-changes a person in the experience of worshipping around the proclamation of the King's message.
  - c) It short-changes a person in the experience of the Holy Spirit's working through preaching (1 Cor. 1:18, 21).
  - d) It minimizes God's chosen method to save men. It often leads a person to feel he grows into becoming a Christian because he learns the details of God's Word. Preaching (that is, proclamation) is needed as well as teaching (that is, discussion).

*1 Cor 1:18, 21 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God...For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.*

- 3) *Healing only* leads to an emphasis upon the needs of the body and a deemphasis on the needs of the Spirit. It can lead to a minimizing of salvation, to stressing healing over salvation. Preaching and teaching are needed as well as healing (See Mt. 4:17; 14:3-4).
4. Jesus' message: the gospel of the Kingdom (See *The Kingdom of God*, Mt. 19:23-24). Jesus Christ was the herald of the King's proclaiming the good news of His kingdom.
  - a. There is a King — God Himself.
  - b. There is the kingdom where the King dwells. It is called heaven, which is another dimension of being, another world. The King — His reign and power and sovereignty — rules everywhere in both heaven and earth, both the seen and unseen worlds, in both the spiritual and physical dimension of being.

*Col 1:16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.*

- c. There is the *true* herald of the King sent by the King Himself. Jesus Christ is the herald who is the perfect representative of the King. He proclaims the good news about the kingdom, a message without any falsehood, full of truth and hope, the hope for eternal salvation.

*Mark 1:14-15 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"*

*2 Cor 5:19-21 That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

### MATHEW 09:35 PREACHING (EUANGELIZO)

To proclaim, preach, herald, publish. The preacher is a herald who comes in the name of the king and who represents the king (see 2 Cor. 5:20). He comes to proclaim the message of the king and *only* the message of the king. He has no message of his own. If and when he begins to proclaim his own message, he is no longer the herald or the spokesman of the king. □

## II. *Mathew 09:36 Mission of Jesus Christ – Compassion*

The mission of Jesus Christ was to show compassion (See *Compassion*, Mt. 9:36). He was to express and demonstrate God's compassion, the kind of compassion all men are to have for all other men. Jesus "saw the crowds." He saw those following Him — those in the villages, in the cities, in the countryside, in the synagogues, on the mountains, by the seashore, by the graveyards, in boats and in homes — and He "had compassion on them." Jesus had compassion for the physical needs of men: their hunger, pain and suffering. He had compassion for the spiritual needs of men: their being lost and dead to God; their emptiness and loneliness and bewilderment; their having no purpose, meaning or significance in life. He saw them all, and He observed and studied them. No one escaped the eye or the heart of Jesus, and as He looked, He saw three things.

1. Jesus saw the crowds harassed and distressed (See *Harassed*, Mt. 9:36). They were weighed down and ready to collapse.

- a. Life weighed them down. Life was cruel, hard, impoverished, empty and without real purpose. Life too often seemed hopeless and worthless.
- b. Religion weighed them down.
  - 1) Religion lay burden after burden, demand after demand upon them. It required endless rituals, ceremonies and rules.
  - 2) Religion also misled them into beliefs that really did not lead them to God. Therefore, they were not spiritually satisfied. They were *dead to God*.
- c. Sin weighed them down. They were not taught the truth, but rather the ideas of religionists. Therefore, they were still dead in their sins (Eph. 2:15). The weight of their sins still rested upon their hearts and preyed upon their minds, weakening whatever confidence and assurance they had. Their sins made them uncertain of the future.

**Mat 11:28-29** *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”*

**Rev 22:17** *The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

**Isa 1:18** *“Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”*

**Isa 55:1** *“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”*

**Thought 1.** The crowds were harassed and distressed, for they were deceived by their leaders, teachers, preachers and priests. They had great confidence in them, but their leaders misled and deceived them. Therefore, they followed and lived in error, a road that leads to an empty destiny. They were empty, weary, perplexed and unsatisfied.

2. Jesus saw the crowds helpless (See *Helpless*, Mt. 9:36). They wandered about, not knowing which direction to go. They stopped here and there trying to find something that satisfied, but to no avail. They were without meaning, purpose or significance. Many turned...
  - to restrictive religion (Judaism) or philosophy (the Stoics).
  - to loose religion (polytheism) or philosophy (Epicureans).
  - to no religion (atheism) or philosophy (humanism).

However, nothing filled their inner being: nothing really satisfied, not spiritually. The human soul still ached for the truth of God.

**John 10:10** “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

**2 Tim 1:10** But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

**1 John 5:12** He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

3. Jesus saw the crowds like sheep without a shepherd. They went astray, just like sheep. They had no leader who had the courage to surrender to the truth and to live by it. There was no one to teach the truth. Practically every teacher seemed to be out to fleece the sheep, to secure his own position and build a following of his own ideas. Few led the people to God; many led the people away from God. The people were like sheep without a shepherd.

**Mat 9:36** When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

**Mat 18:12** “What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?”

**Jer 50:6** “My people have been lost sheep; their shepherds have led them astray and caused them to roam on the mountains. They wandered over mountain and hill and forgot their own resting place.”

**Ezek 34:6** My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.

### MATHEW 09:36 COMPASSION (SPLANCHNISTHEIS)

*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. **Mathew 09:36***

Compassion means to be moved inwardly; to yearn with tender mercy, affection, pity and empathy. It is the very seat of a man’s affections. It is the deepest movement of emotions possible, being touched with the deepest feelings possible. It is being moved within the deepest part of a person’s being.

**Rom 8:35** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

**Heb 4:15** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.

**1 Pet 5:7** Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

**Psa 78:39** He remembered that they were but flesh, a passing breeze that does not return.

**Psa 103:13** As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.

**Psa 103:17** But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children.

**Isa 63:9** In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them: he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

**Lam 3:22** Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. □

### MATHEW 09: 36 HARASSED — FAINTED (EKLELUMENOI)

To faint, grow weary, lose heart, lack courage, be fainthearted, bewildered. The word is used when a person has struggled and struggled against sin or stood against the barrage of insult after insult until he can stand no more. It means that a person has undergone trial after trial until he is ready to collapse (Heb. 12:3). □

### MATHEW 09: 36 HELPLESS — SCATTERED (ERRIMMENOI)

To be cast out, laid low, thrown down, prostrated, dejected and hopeless. Being scattered may come from experiences such as drunkenness, or struggling and fighting within and without, or being so wear}' that a person is just cast down. It is being prostrated by forces within oneself or laid low by forces outside of oneself. □

## III. **Mathew 09: 37–38 Mission: Share the Vision of Jesus Christ**

The mission of Christ was to share the vision of a world in desperate need. The vision of the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest challenge known to man.

1. The vision of a great harvest. All men everywhere are harassed, fainting, weary, bewildered, helpless. They are as sheep without a shepherd. But note a critical point: the Lord's vision is not only worldwide: it involves the changing of every human life on the globe (1 Pet. 3:9; 2 Cor. 5:17).

**John 4:35-36** “Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.”

**Gal 6:9** Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

**Thought 1.** The harvest is needful work.

- 1) It is great, that is, plenteous. There are fields and fields of people growing in the valleys and hills of the world (Mt. 9:36).
- 2) It is a ripe harvest, ready and desperate to be reaped (Mt. 9:36).
- 3) It has to be reaped in its season, that is, in its generation. There is only a short time when it can be reaped; otherwise, it will rot and die in the field where it grew.

**Thought 2.** Every generation has to be reaped in its generation.

- 1) Everyone has only a certain season (generation, life-span) when he can be reaped. His season for being reaped is short, ever so short.
- 2) Everyone has a peak season, a time when he is really at his peak and ready to be harvested. It is so much more fruitful and joyful to harvest a man in his peak season than to try at other times.

**Thought 3.** The harvest is plentiful.

- 1) A harvest of children needs to be reached and taught.
- 2) A harvest of young people needs to be reached and grounded in the Word.
- 3) A harvest of women needs to be reached and taught the confidence and protection of God’s love.
- 4) A harvest of men needs to be reached and taught the strength and security of God’s direction and care.

**Thought 4.** There is a world of opportunity out in the harvest. There are fields and fields of localities, nationalities, classes, professions, health, abilities, appearances, emotional states and mental conditions — and all are lost, spiritually sick and unreached. There is no end to the fields of harvest.

2. The vision of a great need for labourers. Christ needs people, that is, believers: men, women, boys and girls. Labourers are few. He needs many labourers, and He needs them *now*. Unless there are reapers to go forth, the harvest will die and rot upon the earth.

**Mat 9:37** Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.”



**Rom 10:14-15** *How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”*

**James 4:2** *You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God.*

**Thought 1.** There is an unlimited amount of work to be done, but there are so few to do it.

- 1) The harvest will never be reaped unless labourers go forth (Mt. 28:19-20; Jn. 20:21; see Lk. 19:10).
- 2) The harvest will rot in the field where it grows (the earth).

**Thought 2.** Labourers are desperately needed for every generation.

- 1) The harvest is always great. The harvest is every man, woman and child within a generation.
- 2) The harvest must have enough reapers to reap each living person during his or her season, that is, life-span. Just imagine — the whole population of the earth changes about every hundred years!

**Thought 3.** Why are there not more labourers?

- 1) Some reject the call of God.
  - 2) Some postpone the call of God.
  - 3) Some deny the call of God; they close their minds entirely.
  - 4) Some seek a profession, a position or a livelihood instead of really reaching out and ministering to people.
  - 5) Some preach false gospels. They seek to propagate their own rationale and ideas instead of the truth of God.
  - 6) Some just lack enough commitment to reach out and minister.
  - 7) Some are satisfied with the traditional ritual and approaches of religion.
  - 8) Some are more concerned with the bureaucracy than with labouring, more concerned with carrying things on as they have always been.
3. The vision of a great need for prayer. Labourers are needed, but they must be the labourers of God, for the harvest is God's. It is totally inadequate to humanly select the labourers, lay human plans, and send labourers forth in human strength. Such human action will not get the job done. God's call and God's appointment are needed. Christ is saying, “Pray that God will raise up enough labourers to reach your generation, the generation for which you are immediately responsible.”

**Mat 7:7** “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

**John 16:24** “Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.”

**Eph 6:18** And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

**Thought 1.** Note three significant facts.

- 1) Christ Himself prayed all night before choosing the first labourers and before sending them out on their first missionary journey (Lk. 6:12-13).
- 2) The number of labourers for any generation depends upon the prayers of God’s people in that generation. If God’s people are concerned for their generation, they pray for labourers to reach and minister to it. If they lack concern, they do not pray and labourers are few. Compare the *deadness of religion* in Christ’s day and the shortage of true labourers there had been for some four hundred years.
- 3) Christ first of all gives this charge to His apostles and ministers. They are to take the lead and to teach the absolute necessity of praying for labourers.

**Thought 2.** Note two things.

- 1) The harvest is the Lord’s. He knows the harvest, every stem and blade of it. He knows everyone — every body and mind, act and thought, need and provision (Mt. 10:30). He knows the heart and knows just what must be done to harvest the field in the most efficient and effective way.
- 2) Therefore, the labourers must be chosen, called and enlisted by Him. Christ is the One who must send forth labourers.

**Thought 3.** Three things should drive us to pray for labourers with all fervency.

- 1) The good news, the gospel of the kingdom (Mt. 9:35; See *Kingdom of God*, Mt. 19:23-24).
  - 2) Compassion for the souls of men, for those who are harassed and helpless, without a shepherd.
  - 3) Love for Christ and appreciation for what He has done (2 Cor. 5:14).
4. The vision of a great force of labourers. The harvest is so plentiful and ready that a great force needs to be sent forth and *sent forth now*. Note several truths in the Scripture.
- a. God is “the Lord of the harvest.” He is “the gardener” (Jn. 15:1). The harvest is “the vineyard of the LORD Almighty” (Isa. 5:7). The world is His. He can see that it is reaped if there are enough labourers.

- b. “We are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building” (1 Cor. 3:9). God works and we work; we both have a part. What a glorious truth and challenge, God needs us! What a glorious privilege — we are to labour side by side with God!

**Thought 1.** Note several significant lessons.

- 1) God desires every generation to have a great force of labourers. He wills for every man, woman and child to be reached with “the good news of the kingdom” (Mt. 9:35). He wills for none to be lost (2 Pet. 3:9).
- 2) It is God who is to send forth labourers, not men. He is to do the selecting, calling, ordaining and sending. Our task is to pray for labourers, and when God raises them up, we are to support them by utilizing every means possible.
- 3) God raises up people with very special gifts to harvest the fields. It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers. (Eph 4:11)
- 4) The harvest is God’s. It is to be harvested as He says and wills, not as we may wish. No man has the right to harvest by using his own message and ideas. Christ has clearly instructed and demonstrated that “the gospel of the kingdom” is to be preached.

**Thought 2.** The harvest is God’s. He can reap the harvest if several conditions exist.

- 1) If there is enough *concern* within our generation for the multitudes of people who are lost.
- 2) If there is enough *prayer* for labourers.
- 3) If there is enough *commitment* to surrender to His call to go.
- 4) If there is enough *dedication* to follow Him day by day and hour by hour.
- 5) If there is enough *faith* to believe Christ and the truth of the Scripture.
- 6) If there is enough *conviction* to stand true and firm through all. ■