

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."

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. ■

THE MESSIAH'S CALL TO HIS DISCIPLES

MATHEW 10:01–04

Introduction

The apostles were called earlier to be “fishers of men” (Mt. 4:18-22; 9:9; Jn. 1:35-51). Each one had been called in his own special way from his environment. Christ was now calling the apostles to go forth in the fulfilment of their first call. In a sense, we may say they were *called twice* (see Mk. 3:14; Jn. 12:26).

1. They received their *commitment call*. They were to receive formal training, learning how to become “fishers of men.”
2. They received their *commissioning call*. They were to receive practical training, actually go out to “fish for men.”

There are several important facts given about their commissioning call.

- I. They were called “to Him” (v. 1).
- II. They were given power and authority (v. 1).
- III. They were twelve in number (v. 2).
- IV. They were made apostles (v. 2).
- V. They included three sets of brothers (v. 2).
- VI. They were organized two by two for ministry (vv. 3-4).

I. *Mathew 10:01 Disciples were Called “to Him”*

The disciples were called “to Him” (Christ). There are three steps in the call of the disciples to the ministry.

1. *The discipleship call*. They heard about Christ, went to hear Him, and began to follow Him just as many others did (see Jn. 1:35f).
2. *The commitment call*. There were multitudes of people following Christ, but He noticed the unusual commitment of these twelve men. At this point, He called them to the ministry: to leave all and to begin a period of special training in order to preach and teach professionally. Note Lk. 6:13 where Jesus called His disciples to Him, and from among the many whom He called, “He chose twelve of them whom he also designated apostles.”
3. *The commissioning call*. Christ commissioned them to go forth with the message of salvation.

Thought 1. The disciples who had been *with Jesus* for some time had touched, talked, shared, communed, prayed, meditated and fellowshiped with Him. They had shared

and been taught the Scriptures by Him and probably had been taught how to preach and teach. They certainly had witnessed His preaching and teaching and how He went about both. Several lessons can be learned from this.

- 1) Every believer needs to be *with Jesus*. We must all learn to quietly meditate on and study His Word and commune with Him in prayer.
- 2) Every servant needs to go through a period of preparation and training before being sent forth. A servant must first be proved (1 Tim. 3:10).
- 3) A personal relationship, *being with Jesus day by day*, is essential for ministry. There is no substitute for the training a person receives at the feet of Jesus studying His Word, learning from His Spirit, and communing with Him in prayer.

Thought 2. Note three lessons.

- 1) A person must first be trained, then he can become qualified to serve.

Mat 5:1-2 *Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them, saying:*

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) The major prerequisite for ministry is to be “with Jesus,” learning from Him and His Word, communing with Him in prayer and in quietness.

Psa 1:2 *But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.*

Psa 46:10 *“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”*

Psa 145:18 *The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.*

2 Tim 2:15 *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

James 4:8 *Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

- 3) Public ministry requires two forms of preparation or training.
 - a) Private preparation with Christ: *being with Him* all alone (2 Tim. 2:15).
 - b) Public preparation or formal training: observing and learning from Christ as He ministers through others (Mt. 5:1f; 2 Tim. 2:2).

MATHEW 10:01 CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

*He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. **Mathew 10:01***

The call of the disciples is a precious study. Jesus called them “to Him”; He chose them “to be with Him” (Mk. 3:14). They were called out from among many followers (Lk. 6:13). □

II. *Mathew 10:01 Disciples were Given Power and Authority*

The disciples were given power and authority. The power to heal and cast out demons was given to prove that Christ was truly the Son of God (Mt. 9:6; Jn. 10:25-26). The apostles were given the same authority and power because they were being sent in His name. They were proclaiming Him and His message to be true; they were proving it by the power given them.

1 Tim 1:15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst.

The major thing that the miracles teach is this: God truly loves and cares for us here and now, physically. His care is not only for the future and for our spiritual welfare, but His care is for our deliverance in the here and now (the Great Redeemer).

Luke 10:19-20 “I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

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.”

Acts 4:33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.

Acts 6:10 But they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke.

Eph 3:19-20 And to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.

2 Tim 1:6-8 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.

Thought 1. Note three lessons.

- 1) A servant's power is derived from his master. The believer's authority is derived from his Lord.
=> This is great assurance. The Lord's servant does not face the world alone. He has supernatural authority and power behind him, the very power of the Lord Himself.
=> This is great responsibility. The Lord's servant has no right to strike out and act alone. He is to carry the message and deeds of the Lord, not his own message and behaviour.
- 2) The authority and power given by the Lord *concerns ministry* not position, wealth, fame or earthly dominion. The Lord's servant is given power to *reach and help people*. What a lesson for the motives and actions of God's servants, both lay and clergy!
- 3) The power given by the Lord is directed against the devil and evil spirits that control men. It is a spiritual warfare, fought against the evil that possesses the minds and hearts of men.
=> There is the evil of false teachings and doctrines or beliefs that are always so prominent among mankind (1 Tim. 4:1).
=> There is the evil of deceptive and fleshly behaviour that has always enslaved men (2 Tim. 3:1-7, 13).
=> There is the evil of some who rebel so much that they are given over to walk almost exclusively after the flesh (2 Pet. 2:10).

MATHEW 10:01 POWER AND AUTHORITY (EXOUSIA)

The Greek word means authority. Christ was giving *His own authority* to His messengers. They were sent forth by Him on His special mission; therefore, they were given His authority and power to minister.

Notice that the power to save or convert the lost is not given. Why? Only God can save and penetrate the spiritual world or dimension. Man's authority is limited to the physical world and dimension. □

MATHEW 10:01 UNCLEAN SPIRITS; EVIL SPIRITS

*He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. **Mathew 10:01***

Evil spirits are spirits of unholy, polluted, immoral and unjust behaviour; they are spirits belonging to the ungodly realm of darkness. Two things need to be said about evil spirits at this point.

1. Christ accepts and teaches the presence and reality of evil spirits. He sent His apostles forth with the authority to cast them out.
2. Throughout human experience, most beliefs have extremes that arise and surround the truth of the belief. Note several facts that every thinking and honest person knows about this fact of human experience.
 - a. The extremes of a belief range from extreme liberalism (denial) all the way over to extreme conservatism (superstition).
 - b. The fact that some carry a belief over into superstitious behaviour does not mean that there is not truth in the belief. It does not mean this any more than the denial of a belief means the belief is untrue.
 - c. The fact that some may and probably do misread and carry the belief in evil spirits over into the area of the superstitious does not mean there are not evil spirits. Christ did accept their presence, and He taught the fact of their existence to His apostles. (See notes, Lk. 8:26-40; Mt. 8:28-34.) □

III. *Mathew 10:02 The Call of the Twelve Disciples*

The disciples were twelve in number. A teacher, including Christ, can adequately teach only so many. Note that Christ taught some things to the multitudes; then He taught more to a much smaller number (Mary, Martha, Lazarus and some others); and finally He taught all things to a small band of men (the twelve apostles). We might say that He taught all He could to a small band of disciples who were to carry on His life's work (see Jethro's advice to Moses, suggesting that Moses organize the people into groups of ten for more efficient rule, Exo. 18:17-26).

There are two thoughts at this point.

Thought 1. How much we need to heed this method that Christ followed — the method of making disciples out of a few while ministering to the many. And note: the twelve were not to be administrators for Christ. They were to be ministers for Christ, men who would do the same work of ministry that He did. They were to carry on the ministry He had begun.

Thought 2. What would happen if every minister and teacher (lay and religious) disciplined just twelve persons in their lifetime, twelve who would carry on some kind of ministry? How long would it take to reach the world with the gospel?

MATHEW 10: 02 APOSTLES

*These are the names of the twelve apostles:.... **Mathew 10:02***

Why did Christ select twelve special apostles instead of some other number? There are several possible reasons.

1. There were twelve tribes of Israel. Israel had been the first called to be the people of God (Gen. 12:1-5). Christ wanted to reach out to Israel first and to give them a last chance. Therefore, He wanted an apostle to represent each of the twelve tribes, to equal the twelve patriarchs of Israel, that is, to equal Jacob's sons. The number twelve was symbolizing that He was making an attempt to reach all Israel.
2. The Jews had been the first called by God (Gen. 12:1-5). Therefore, they were to be the first called by God's Son. The twelve apostles were to be the representatives of Christ who were to bring Israel's twelve tribes to God the Father. Note an important fact: Christ said the twelve apostles were to judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22:29-30).
3. The twelve apostles were to be the patriarchs, the heads, the apostles of the new Israel (Rev. 21:14; Jas. 1:1; see Gal. 6:16; see Rom. 2:28-29). □

IV. *Mathew 10:02 Disciples were Made Apostles*

The disciples were made apostles (See, *Apostle*, Mt. 10:2). Note several things.

1. Christ Himself is called an apostle; that is, He was the messenger of God sent by God Himself. (See Heb. 3:1.)
2. These twelve men were also to be called apostles; that is, they were to be the messengers sent by Christ Himself.
3. There is a sense in which the ministers of every generation are the Lord's apostles, His very special messengers. They are the men who are sent forth by Christ to be His representatives. There is a lesson here in that God's people should respect the Lord's messenger as His special apostle.

John 1:6 *There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John.*

Jer 3:15 *Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.*

Jer 23:4 *"I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the LORD.*

John 21:17 *The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."*

Acts 20:28 *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.*

1 Pet 5:2 *Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve.*

MATHEW 10:02 APOSTLE (APOSTOLOS)

To send out. An apostle is a representative, an ambassador, a person who is sent out into one country to represent another country. Three things are true of the apostle.

=> He belongs to the One who has sent him out.

=> He is commissioned to be sent out.

=> He possesses all the authority and power of the One who sends him out.

The word *apostle* has both a narrow and a broad usage in the New Testament.

1. The narrow sense. It refers to the twelve apostles and to Paul as an apostle (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 9:1). In this narrow sense, there were at least two basic qualifications.
 - a. The apostle was a man chosen directly by the Lord Himself or by the Holy Spirit (see Mt. 10:1-2; Mk. 3:13-14; Lk. 6:13; Acts 9:6, 15; 13:2; 22:10, 14-15; Rom. 1:1). He was a man who had either seen or been a companion of the Lord Jesus.
 - b. The apostle was a man who had been an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 9:1).
2. The broad sense. The word "apostle" refers to other men who preached the Gospel. It is used of two missionaries: Barnabas (Acts 14:4, 14, 17) and Silas (1 Th. 2:6), and two messengers, Titus (2 Cor. 8:23) and Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25). There is also a possibility that James, the Lord's brother (Gal. 1:19), and Andronicus and Junia (Rom. 16:7) are referred to as apostles.

In the narrow sense, the gift of an apostle was bound to die out because of the unique qualifications to receive the gift. But historically, in the broad sense, there is perhaps a sense in which the qualifications and gift itself are still given and used by the Lord. The Lord's servants of all generations must *see* the Lord and know Him intimately. Similarly, we must personally *see and experience* the power of the resurrection. Certainly there are some in every generation who have *so seen* the Lord

Jesus and who *so know* and *so experience* the power of the Lord's resurrection. Perhaps the Lord Jesus endues some with the very special gift of an apostle to be used in a very special way throughout His most precious domain — the church. □

V. *Mathew 10:02 Brothers Made Disciples*

The disciples included three sets of brothers (See *Disciples*, Mt. 10:2). Note the influence of families upon children. Six of Christ's apostles, one half of the inner circle, were apparently from *closely knit* families. The brothers respected each other enough to listen and follow one another (see Jn. 1:40f).

MATHEW 10: 02 DISCIPLES

The disciples who were brothers were Simon Peter and Andrew, James and John (the sons of Zebedee), and the other James and Mathew.

James' father was Alphaeus or Clopos (Jn. 19:25). Mathew's father was also named Alphaeus. Thus, it is possible that James and Mathew were brothers. Tradition says that James was a tax collector just like Mathew. If true, this would give weight to their being brothers. □

VI. *Mathew 10:03–04 Disciples were Sent Two by Two*

The disciples were organized two by two for ministry.

Thought 1. Christ seemed to arrange the apostles two by two; note how Mathew groups them by twos. Several lessons can be immediately drawn from this.

- 1) We need each other, someone with whom we can be close in fellowship and ministry.
- 2) We need to go forth together two by two.
- 3) We need to organize for ministry.

Thought 2. Note the humility that Mathew teaches. He is the writer of this great Gospel, yet he demonstrates the ingredient so necessary for the servant of Christ (Phil. 2:3-4; see Rom. 12:10).

- 1) He mentions Thomas, his partner, before himself. The other two gospel writers place him before Thomas.
- 2) He again mentions his terrible past — that he was a publican and a traitor to the Jewish nation (See *Mathew, Tax Collector*, Mt. 9:9-13).

Thought 3. The presence of Judas Iscariot, a betrayer, did not permanently affect the others. Christ can and does overrule, working all things out for good (Rom. 8:28). ■

THE MESSIAH'S COMMISSION TO HIS DISCIPLES

MATHEW 10:05–15

Introduction

This is the commission of our Lord to His apostles. It was the very first expedition they had been sent out on all alone. Note how carefully Jesus instructed them and the clear implications for His followers in every generation.

- I. Jesus sent out His disciples: instructed them, “Go” (v. 5).
- II. First, go to Israel, to the lost of one’s own house (v. 6).
- III. Second, preach: the Kingdom of Heaven is near (v. 7).
- IV. Third, minister, sharing freely (v. 8).
- V. Fourth, receive compensation (vv. 9-10).
- VI. Fifth, seek a worthy host (v. 11).
- VII. Sixth, plan your ministry and your visits (vv. 12-15).

I. *Mathew 10:05 The Commission to “Go”*

Jesus sent out His disciples, instructing them. Note that Jesus did not send forth every disciple who was following Him. Only a few were chosen to serve as special messengers who were to devote *all their time* to preaching and ministering (See notes, Mt. 10:1-4). Most other disciples were to be witnessing for Christ in their work and in their other daily activities.

Thought 1. A person is sent forth by Jesus; he does not choose to go forth. If he does, he goes forth in his own strength and power. He cannot expect the power of Christ.

Thought 2. The ministry is not a profession; it is a commission. Christ calls and commissions. The man who chooses to be a minister without a true call and commissioning of the Lord experiences four things.

- (1) He finds himself ministering primarily in his own strength.
 - (2) He often finds his heart void and feels the constant pressure of having to come up with *human ideas* and *human programs*. He has difficulty maintaining a sense of meaning and purpose for both himself and his people.
 - (3) He senses a real void and shortcoming in proclaiming the gospel and in doing the work of the ministry.
 - (4) He often wonders what *good* is really being done. He just lacks the sense of a real call within; therefore, there is no *outside godly connection* to comfort and assure him that he is in God’s will. He is left to seek comfort and assurance only from himself or from some other human source. There is no supernatural Spirit or power to encourage him.
-

II. *Mathew 10:06 Commission to Witness*

First, go to Israel; that is, do not go to the lost of the world, but to the lost of one's own house (See *Israel*, Mt. 10:6). The offer of salvation was to go to Israel first; now it is to be offered to the whole world (Rom. 9:30; see Rom. 10:13).

Thought 1. A man is to go to his own house first.

- (1) He is to demonstrate love for his own family and friends first. If he does not love those of his own household, how can he love those whom he does not know?
- (2) He is to learn how to bear witness with those who are more likely to respond instead of react. Such knowledge better prepares him to face the world and its negative responses.

MATHEW 10:06 ISRAEL

“Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.” Mathew 10:06

Jesus had several reasons for sending His messengers to Israel first. (1) Israel held a very special place in God's plans. The nation was to be given first opportunity to hear the Gospel (See *Israel, God's Special People*, Jn. 4:22). (2) The disciples needed to concentrate their efforts right where they were lest their efforts be scattered. (3) God's method is always for a person to reach his own home and his own people first. A person is to begin his witness and work immediately right where he lives.

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.”

1 Pet 3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

A word needs to be said about Israel. Jesus was pointing out several things.

1. Israel has a very special place in God's heart (See *Israel, God's Special People*, Jn. 4:22). Therefore, the gospel was to be preached to Israel first.
2. Israel is as a lost sheep: “My people have been lost sheep” (Jer. 50:6). Note that the Gentiles are also called “lost sheep” (1 Pet. 2:25).
3. Israel's people were lost because their shepherds (teachers) let them scatter. Their teachers had not adhered to the truth (See note, Mt. 9:35-38).

Mat 9:36-38 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” □

III. *Mathew 10:07 Preaching the Kingdom of Heaven*

Second, preach — preach that the kingdom of heaven is near. Note the message is a *given* message, given by the Lord Himself. The disciples were not to proclaim their own ideas nor the ideas of others. They were to preach the message *given* by the Lord. No matter the generation, the message needs to be repeated and repeated.

=> It is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8). It was the message of Christ (Mt. 4:17, 23).

=> It was the message of John (Mt. 3:2).

=> It was the message of the apostles and ministers of Christ.

Rom 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

Thought 1. The Kingdom of Heaven necessitates repentance. The apostles preached repentance as they went out (Mk. 6:12). See *Kingdom of Heaven*, Mt. 19:23-24.

MATHEW 10:07–8 MINISTERS AND MINISTRY

“As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.” Mathew 10:07–8

The major areas of service for the apostles were twofold — the area of preaching the gospel and the area of ministering. Preaching is set off by itself as a major area (v. 7), and ministering is set off by itself as a major area (v. 8).

The apostles were to minister and to share freely. Christ gave them His authority and power freely; therefore, they were to minister freely, not charging *special fees for special ministries* (note this is not referring to *compensation* for special ministries, but to *special fees* for special ministries, v. 10). Their ministry and sharing were in four primary areas.

1. They were to heal the sick. Many had physical needs; they were ill, hurting and suffering. Some did not have enough to eat or wear and did not even have a place to live. Some were weak and had lost the will to fight. They were hopeless and helpless, discouraged and depressed. They needed the message of the gospel.
2. They were to cleanse the lepers. Leprosy was considered a form of pollution; therefore, it was a symbol of sin. The apostles were to cleanse the lepers. They were to cleanse those who had the actual disease, and they were to preach the power of Christ to cleanse a life polluted with sin.

3. They were to raise the dead. There is no record of the apostles' raising the dead before the resurrection of Christ, but the apostles were used by God to raise many to spiritual life. The Bible says men are *dead in transgressions and sins* (Eph. 2:1; See *Death*, Heb. 9:27). Therefore, the disciples were to preach the power of Christ to raise men to life eternal.
4. They were to cast out demons. Demon-possession means that a person is gripped by evil forces. When a man is gripped by an evil spirit, he is no longer in control of his life; he is controlled by the forces of evil. The disciples were to preach the power of Christ to deliver men from the spirits of evil. □

IV. *Mathew 10:08 Minister Freely to the Needs of the People*

Third, minister — sharing freely (See *Ministers and Ministry*, Mt. 10:7-8). Two things always need to be remembered about the apostle's unusual power.

1. Their power was a given power. It came from the Lord Himself. God gives His servant the gifts and power to preach and minister as He has called him (1 Cor. 12:28f; Eph. 4:11-13). The gifts and power are of God, not of the man himself. The gifts and the power of a man come freely from God; therefore, he is freely to give all he has. All the energy and all the toil necessary are to be poured into preaching the gospel and into ministering to people.
2. Their power was to confirm that God does love and care for the world and that the message being preached was actually from God (Note, Mt. 10:1).

Thought 1. Ministering to the needs of people shows two things.

- (1) God loves and cares for people.
- (2) The minister is a minister of love and care.

Mat 20:28 *Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*”

John 20:21 *Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”*

Acts 10:38 *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.*

Acts 20:35 *In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”*

Rom 15:1 *We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.*

Gal 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

V. Mathew 10:09–10 Receive Compensation for Ministry

Fourth, receive compensation. In financial matters, Christ expected two things from His apostles and His people. First, His apostles and servants were not to spend their own money on the ministry; and second, His people were to adequately support His apostles and servants.

1 Cor 9:14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

Gal 6:6 Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

Phil 4:14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

1 Tim 5:17-18 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages."

Thought 1. The apostles, God's servants, were forbidden to accumulate estates *through the ministry*. But they were not to spend their own money on the ministry. There were several reasons for this.

- (1) Their minds and hearts were to be centred on preaching the gospel and ministering to people, not on buying and selling and accumulating.
- (2) They were to trust God for their needs and by such example to teach dependence upon God (Mt. 6:24-34).
- (3) They were to teach and depend upon God's people to provide for them (see 1 Cor. 9:13-14).
- (4) They were to allow God's people the privilege of sharing in the ministry through their giving. God's people were to learn more and more trust by depending upon God to help them raise whatever funds they needed to support the ministers.

Thought 2. God's servant or labourer is worthy of being financially supported. In fact, Paul taught that God's servant is "worthy of double honour" (salary, compensation, financial support). (Notes, 1 Tim. 5:17-18; pt 2, 1 Cor. 16:5-9; see Lk. 10:7; Phil. 4:11-14.)

Thought 3. God's people were to support the Lord's apostles. The people were to allow the apostles to give their full time to the ministry and not be forced to labour in a secular job.

VI. *Mathew 10:11 Receiving Hospitality*

Fifth, seek a worthy host. In every city and place, there are some who have good reputations and some who have bad reputations. Several factors determine a worthy host.

1. A worthy host was a person with a good reputation concerning morals. Living with a person of evil and unjust morals would cause the apostles' own morals to be questioned. They were to reach out to the immoral, even as Christ did, but not to fellowship and live with them. They were to be careful in choosing their close friends.
2. A worthy host was a person with a good reputation concerning God. Some would have a spiritual interest and some would not.
3. A worthy host was a person with a good reputation concerning hospitality. Some would willingly care for strangers; others would not.

Rom 12:13 *Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*

1 Tim 5:10 *And is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.*

Titus 1:8 *Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.*

Heb 13:2 *Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.*

1 Pet 4:9 *Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.*

Thought 1. Note several lessons.

- (1) The apostles were to seek out the worthy host. They were not to seek out the wealthy and leading citizens of a community, nor were they to seek out the best accommodations.
- (2) Paul sought out God's people when he went into a new and strange place (Acts 28:14).
- (3) The good people of a place are usually known. All the factors that make up the quality of a person are usually known: honesty, decency, kindness.
- (4) Note the lesson about the believer's close friends. His close friends are to be God's people — people counted worthy by God.

Thought 2. God's messenger was to stay with the same host throughout his stay in a place. He was not to seek more comfort and luxury as he came to know a place. There are several reasons for this.

- (1) Such action might indicate favouritism and cause jealousy.

- (2) Such action might indicate a materialistic and selfish and soft mind, leading to the questioning of a person's commitment.
- (3) Such action distracts from a person's purpose and ministry.
- (4) Such action hurts and often alienates the first host.

VII. *Mathew 10:12–15 Plan Your Ministry*

Sixth, plan your ministry, your visits. The Lord sent His messengers forth, that is, out visiting in the houses of the city. They did not sit back waiting on the people to come. They went out carrying the gospel to the people.

Note the Lord told the apostles how to visit. Precise plans were laid.

1. The apostles were to approach a house cordially (v. 13). Saluting, that is, approaching cordially, does several things.
 - a. It communicates a friendliness and kindness which encourages an open reception.
 - b. It opens the door to more conversation which the messenger can turn into a presentation of the gospel.
 - c. It tells immediately whether a person is receptive or not.

Col 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Col 4:6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

1 Pet 3:8 Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

Thought 1. The messenger is to salute and be courteous to people, not forceful, demanding, forward or ugly.

2. If the people accepted the apostles, the apostles were to share peace (v. 13). The greeting of *peace* was to be given to every home and place they approached. If the people were worthy, the messengers were to continue their message of peace. If the people were unworthy, they were to let the salutation lie alone. They were to say nothing else. They were not to continue the message of peace. They were to take the message of peace and leave without sharing it.

Rom 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Col 1:20 And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Thought 1. The witnesses of the Lord must discern and make a judgment about the people to whom they are witnessing.

- (1) Are they kind and gracious or cold and hard?
- (2) Are they just shy and bashful or really disinterested?
- (3) Are they truly receptive or just kind and gracious to everyone?
- (4) Are they spiritually sensitive or just interested in religious questions?

Thought 2. The Lord's witness must not waste time. He must discern as quickly as possible who is worthy and receptive.

Thought 3. The greeting of the day was "Peace to you." The apostles were to use the greeting as the basis of their message. They were to expand it. Their message was to be peace — *peace with God and the peace of God* (See Note, Jn. 14:27).

Thought 4. Note this: when a true messenger visits a family and does not share the message of peace, it is a warning to them. Their behaviour, unkindness or disinterest stopped the sharing.

3. If the people rejected the apostles, the apostles were to leave. The Lord's messenger and witness could expect to be rejected by some. When rejected, the messenger was to do two things.
 - a. He was to leave the house or city.
 - b. He was to shake the dust off his feet. This was to be a symbol that...
 - they had lost their opportunity.
 - their wickedness was so detestable that it polluted the very ground upon which their house or city sat.
 - God would reject them even as they had rejected Him.

Thought 1. Note that some *do* reject. They reject two things.

- (1) The messenger himself.
- (2) The messenger's words.

Thought 2. Note that whole cities reject the gospel, not just some households.

Thought 3. When rejected, the messenger is not to argue or force the gospel upon the person. Christ expects His messenger to leave. Note the words: "When you leave."

- c. Rejecters were to be judged (See *Sodom and Gomorrah*, Mt. 10:15). Rejection of God's messenger and of the gospel condemns a person to a terrible fate. The person's judgment is to be more severe than even the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. Why? Because the person rejects God's very own Son. Sodom and Gomorrah never had the opportunity to hear God's Son. Our responsibility is much greater because our privilege to hear God's Son is much greater.

Heb 9:27 *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.*

2 Pet 3:7 *By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.*

Jude 1:14-15 *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones To judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."*

MATHEW 10:15 SODOM AND GOMORRAH

These two cities and their citizens are used as examples of the worst sinners (Deu. 32:32; Is. 1:10; Eze. 16:46; Mt. 11:23-24; Lk. 10:12-13; 17:29; Rom. 9:29; 2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 7; Rev. 11:8). The cities were destroyed by fire (Gen. 19:24-25) and are said to be "an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 7). □