



The King and His Kingdom *Matthew 10*

The religious leaders of the Jews began to notice the impact that Jesus' teaching and miracles were having in the countryside, and their opposition to him was beginning to grow. Their distaste for Jesus will increase when he gives power and authority to his closest disciples. This chapter includes Jesus' warnings to the twelve about what to expect when sent out as public witnesses that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

1-4 Jesus picked 12 men from a larger group of disciples and called them Apostles—envoys commissioned and empowered with authority to present the message of the one who sent them. They are, in essence, the new people of God, who replace the 12 tribes of Israel as nucleus of the New Testament church.

The Missionary Discourse of Jesus

PART ONE: Exclusive to Apostles' mission to Israel
(verses 5-23)

Remember, Matthew's Gospel demonstrates that Jesus of Nazareth is the fulfillment of God's Old Testament messianic prophecies to Israel.

5-8 The disciples' task is to proclaim the kingdom of God is at hand, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers and cast out demons in the name of Jesus.

15 Judgment will come on those who reject this message. "Truly I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town."

16 The Apostles are "sheep in the midst of wolves" who will share in the persecution of their shepherd.

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PART TWO: Instructions also relevant to Church today
(verses 24-42)

24-33 Proclaim the kingdom boldly! You have nothing to fear from the world. What you hear in a whisper proclaim with a shout. The worst that can happen is that your opponents kill you. Fear the Father, who has authority over both body and soul.

34-39 This is going to hurt. One would think that the Gospel would be exactly what everyone wants to hear, but not so! Most people reject God's will and authority. It is true even within families, where some of the harshest divisions occur. One cannot choose family over Christ and live.

40-42 Be thankful when you encounter other believers who treat you in accordance with God's grace and mercy. (See Matthew 25 regarding the reward.)

Walking in Matthew's Sandals

Further study and discussion:

In this chapter Jesus talked several times about people who were "worthy." Reread verses 11-14 and 37-38. What is meant by worthy? What is the result of being worthy? Of being unworthy? Refine your answers in light of verses 32-33 and 39.

Many people believe the Christian Church will face greater persecution in this country. What assurance do you find in this chapter regarding one's ability to stand firm in those times?

For next time, read and reread Matthew 11 and 12.