

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA. 55:10 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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TRUTH FROM MATTHEW 10:1-10

A vast amount of God's truth is revealed by means of one word, one phrase, or in one short statement. The casual reader will seldom see this, but it soon becomes the possession of those who meditate upon His words. The portion of Sacred Scripture being considered in this study contains important intimations of truth with which every student of God's Word should be familiar. These truths have an important bearing upon the correct interpretation of many passages in the Bible. The lover of truth will find the facts revealed in this portion to be of immense value if he will familiarize himself with them and incorporate them into his thinking.

In following out the activities of the Lord Jesus we find that an act related to this portion had previously taken place. In Luke 6: 12, 13 we learn that following a night spent in communing with God, our Lord called unto Him His disciples. Out of this great company He chose (*eklegomai-elected*) twelve. These He named (designated or positioned) apostles, and thus these twelve became divinely commissioned men, elected to serve in a special way. The Lord Jesus was "the Apostle" (Heb. 3: 1) and by giving them of what He was, they became apostles, that is, commissioned ones. The position given these men was out of Himself; therefore, they became **ekklesia** or out-positioned ones. They were this individually and they were this collectively. Furthermore, they became the foundation upon which His ekklesia would be built (Eph. 2:20).

As the portion which we are considering opens we find that the Lord called to Himself these twelve special disciples. And as insignificant as this act seemed to be, it was one of vast importance, and should be understood in the same way as "the President of the United States congressed (verb) the congress" (noun); or, "the Governor of California assembled the assembly." Even so this act could be properly described by saying: "The Lord Jesus *ekklesiazō* (verb) His *ekklesia*" (noun).

When they came together the Lord gave them authority (*exousia*) over unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease (Matt. 10:1). Thus they became apostles with enormous power. However, it was a power to be used only in connection with the service they were performing - heralding the kingdom of God. And it should be noted that it was "authority" that He gave to them; therefore, it was theirs. They were not told to seek it. All they needed to do was to exercise it. When they did, invoking His name as the source of their authority, unclean spirits were exorcised, and all manner of sickness and disease immediately disappeared.

This authority was in no way based upon their ability, personality, or education. It was in no way related to their faith, their righteousness, or their holiness. This is demonstrated by the fact that among those to whom this authority was given we find the name of "**Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him**" (Matt. 10:4). This authority was just as real and powerful in the traitor Judas as it was in the beloved John. It is evident that the Lord Jesus gave to these twelve men a share of the same authority which He possessed, to free men from demon possession and to relieve them of every form of sickness and debility. This provides us with a clear example of things given by the Lord to men with the end in view of increasing the body (essence or substance) of Christ upon the earth (Eph. 4: 12).

The names of the twelve are then given, grouped in pairs: Peter and Andrew, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew; James and Lebbeaus; Simon and Judas Iscariot. These twelve Jesus commissioned with authority (*apostello*) and commanded them saying: "**Take no road that would lead you to the nations, and do not enter into any Samaritan city**" (10:5).

At the time these words were spoken there were 2,500,000 Israelites living in Palestine and 5,500,000 that were living in exile, commonly called the *diaspora*, or the dispersed ones. James wrote to these exiles in his epistle addressed "**to the twelve tribes in the dispersion**" (Jas. 1:1). Some of these dispersed ones lived in far-away places such as Spain, but others could be visited by making a short land or sea journey. The twelve apostles may have earnestly desired to carry the good news to their kinsmen in exile, but this was forbidden by the One who commissioned them.

They were also prohibited from entering any Samaritan city. However, this prohibition should not be expanded. They were not forbidden to speak to Samaritans, for these were a part of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Note this in John 4:12. They could herald the message to any Samaritan as long as he was in Israel's territory, but no special effort was made to reach them by going into their cities.

It was to "**the lost sheep of the house of Israel**" that the twelve were to go, yet they

were prohibited from going outside of the land of Palestine. This directive of the Lord makes absurd and ridiculous the theory that those living in the land of Judah were "the Jews," and that the true Israel was to be found in such places as what is now called the British Isles. This inanity is the foundation of the "anglo-Israel" theory. But the Lord made it plain here that those in the land were the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The apostles never went outside the land until after the Lord's resurrection.

As they went forth they were to act as heralds. They were not to sermonize, debate, exhort, or counsel. The full responsibility of a herald is to deliver the message that has been given to him. He is to say exactly what he has been told. Their message was: **"The kingdom of heaven is at hand"** (V. 7). A more accurate translation of the Greek would be: "Near is the government of the heavens." This was their total message.

So they went forth, probably two by two, until they came to a place where people were inclined to gather. Here they would proclaim the simple message that had been given to them. And every Israelite who heard them knew exactly what they meant, for the coming of divine government was the national hope and the personal hope of all in Israel. They did not need to explain it. They were announcing its nearness, the soon coming of divine government that was the theme of Psalm and Prophecy. **"Thou shalt judge the peoples righteously, and govern the nations upon the earth"** (Psa. 67:4). **"As I live saith Yahweh Elohim, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule (be a King) over you. And I will bring you out from the peoples, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered"** (Ezek. 20:33,34).

Of course, as they made their stupendous declaration, they would be questioned as to their authority to act as heralds of the nearness of an event that vitally affected the lives of all who heard them. When this happened they were to perform certain miracles that would be positive evidence of the truth of their declaration. They were to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils. These miracles would be a confirmation of the truth of their messages, and they would also be a foretaste of the kingdom, showing those who heard what they could expect under God's government.

Those who examine the Greek will enjoy the beauty and simplicity of this passage. Each clause has only two terms: **"Sick heal; lepers cleanse; dead raise; demons eject; gratuitously received gratuitously impart."**

However, it should be noted that they were primarily heralds, not healers; they were to raise the dead, not raise money. These miracles were to be performed only in confirmation of the message they were heralding.

In preparation for their mission they were to acquire no gold, silver or copper for their girdles (in which money was usually carried), nor a pouch for the road, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor rod. He told them that the workman was worthy of his food. They were working for the Lord and He would take good care of them.

It should be evident to the careful reader of this passage that these directives given to the apostles are not to be taken as precepts for those who serve the Lord today; When I consider my own meticulous preparation for a Bible conference tour, I must admit that I violate every one of these precepts. I start out with money, travelers checks and credit cards, two suits plus the one I am wearing, six shirts, and other articles of clothing too numerous to mention. Yet, I feel no guilt because of this, I know that these were not eternal commandments, since some of these were radically changed within three years.

Later our Lord said to these same men: **"When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing?** And they said, Nothing. Then He said unto them; **But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one"** (Luke 22:35,36). These directions show a dispensational change within a very short period of time.

Many have noted and found a major problem in the fact that John the Baptist declared that **"the kingdom of heaven is at hand"** (Matt 3:2); that Jesus himself declared: **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand"** (Mark 1:15); and that when Jesus sent forth the twelve they were to declare that **"the kingdom of heaven is at hand"** (Matt. 10:7). Yet, they say, it never came.

No matter how much we study the Greek word *engizo* (at hand) it will always come out that this word means "near", in the sense of approaching and being imminent. This certainly gave all who heard the apostles the right to expect the kingdom of God, that is, God's long promised government, to come within their lifetime. In explanation of this the idea is set forth that the crucifixion of Christ caused the kingdom of God to be suspended, Israel to be set aside, and a new dispensation and purpose of God to begin on the day of Pentecost. This cannot be the truth, and even though it is taught throughout Christendom, it is flatly contradicted by numerous declarations in God's Word. See Romans 11:1,2 as an example.

Neither our Lord nor His apostles deceived the people. He had told them plainly that the government of God would come in stages: First, the blade; then the ear; after that the full grain in the ear (Mark 4:26-29). They had no right to expect anything except the **"blade stage."**

It was their privilege to see the "ear stage." The blade stage began when Jesus Christ arose from the dead. God's kingdom purposes were suspended at Acts 28:28. (See Issue No. **SB048**). They have been in abeyance for more than 1900 years.

End Issue No. SB131