

CHAPTER 9:36-10:42 THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH (W9)

Having left a section of narrative recounting nine miracle stories, Matthew goes on to his second of five major discourses: The Missionary Discourses.

Matthew indicates the conclusion of the previous section on miracles in verse 9:35 “35 And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.”

Which mirrors verse 4:23 “And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.” These two verses form an *inclusio*, serving as bookends of a literary section to mark the beginning and end of a section in Matthew’s Gospel (4:23-9:35).

This next section of the Gospel takes the “teaching and healing” ministry of Christ and focuses on the implications for the church who has been called, elected, and brought into being to continue the same ministry until Christ returns at the end of the age.

With the Pharisees having just accused Jesus of working with Satan (9:34), Matthew closes the last section illustrating our Lord’s perseverance in the face of opposition (9:35) and will now address Israel’s crisis in leadership (ungodly Shepherds) and the new leadership Jesus will establish in the twelve apostles as the new shepherds of the people (9:37-10:42).

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

Read Ezekiel 34: Lacking shepherds to guide them, the crowds are like sheep without a shepherd.

37 Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; 38, therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

The crowds have shown great interest in God and yet there aren't enough shepherds to reap the spiritual harvest.

And he called to him his **twelve disciples** and **gave them authority** over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. 2 The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Being there aren't any laborers, Jesus appoints twelve apostles to be the new leaders in his kingdom movement, representing the twelve tribes of Israel. The twelve are reminiscent of the twelve tribal leaders who assisted Moses (Num 1:1-6); Jesus, the new Moses, has appointed twelve Apostles to help carry out his mission.

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Apostles

5 **these twelve Jesus sent out**, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. **Jesus directs his apostles first to Israel, demonstrating God's faithfulness to his covenant people.**

7 And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ **Those sent preach the same message as He who sent them (4:17)**

8 heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. 9 Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, 10 no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. 11 And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. 12 As you enter the house, greet it. 13 And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let

your peace return to you. The greeting of God's peace was not a normal greeting, but a pronouncement of the arrival of God's Kingdom (Isa 52:7).

14 And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. 15 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. **Destruction awaits all who willfully reject the coming of the Lord.**

Facing Persecution

16 "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. 17 Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues (As Paul, 2 Cor 11:24), 18 and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake (As the Apostles experienced, Acts 4:1-22; 5:17-41; 6:12-8:3; 12:1-19; 16:19-40; 21:27-28), to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. 19 When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. 20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. 21 Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, 22 and you will be hated by all for my name's sake **In short, Jesus' disciples will face opposition from every aspect of society. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 23 When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. (Daniel 7:13, the Ascension of Christ and the sending of the Holy Spirit? The church's mission to Israel until the return of Christ at his second Advent?)**

24 "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul (A name for Satan "Lord of the House"), how much more will they malign those of his household (Sons and daughters of Satan).

Have No Fear

26 “So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. 27 What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. 28 And **do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul**. Rather **fear him** who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

We must always remember, the worst our enemies can do is ‘kill the body’, only God can destroy both body and soul in Ghenna.

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear not, therefore; **you are of more value than many sparrows**. 32 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, **I also will acknowledge** before my Father who is in heaven, 33 but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. *When we make the good confession, even unto death, Christ mediates for us in the presence of the Father, he remembers us before the one who can destroy body and soul. Matthew has recorded these words for the disciples of the Lord Jesus no matter when or where they are.*

Not Peace, but a Sword

34 “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36 And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. *(5:9; 10:12) I thought Jesus came to bring peace? Micah 7:6, the proclamation of the Good News will cause division not because of the MESSAGE but the WAY PEOPLE RECEIVE IT. Even families will be divided.*

37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

Here Jesus speaks of the ‘worthy’ disciple. The worthy does not love Father or Mother more than Jesus, neither son or daughter. Jesus says, “loyalty to me comes before family, this is the hallmark of true discipleship.” The one who puts family loyalties before Him is not worthy of Him.

38 And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. This is the first mention of the Cross in Matthew. Jesus' statement is more about the fate of his disciples than about himself. Those who seek happiness in life by pursuing their own interests will never be fulfilled. Only through givenness, to God and others, do we experience true fulfillment in this life as we await the next.

Rewards

40 "Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. The Father, to whom we are estranged. To receive Christ is to the receive the Father who sent him, his cross, and salvation. 41 The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward The knowledge of Christ, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. The salvation of the righteous, faithful One, Jesus Christ. 42 And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward." And any who shows the smallest act of mercy and compassion to the followers of Christ shall receive what is promised; Christ, stooped and made himself low to redeem humanity, and to him was given resurrection and Glory in the Kingdom of Heaven.