



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew

Chapter 10

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Introduction

In this Chapter We Will Discuss:

- The selection of the twelve apostles
- Jesus' evangelistic principles



An Overview

- At the end of chapter 9, Jesus looked at the crowds and *his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd* (Mt 9:37)
- Jesus has judged the hierarchy of the Old Covenant Church to be negligent shepherds who do not properly "tend" the flock of Israel, God's covenant people
- The metaphor of Israel as the flock of God is a common image in Scripture (i.e., 1 Kgs 22:17; Ps 77:20; 78:52; Jer 13:17, 20; 23:2-3; 31:10; Ez 34:3,6,8 four times, 10 three times, 15, 17, 19, 22, 31 three times, 37 and 38; Zech 13:7; etc.)



An Overview

- The imagery of Israel as God's flock and the metaphor linking God's ordained priesthood to "shepherds" of the flock is especially strong in Ezekiel chapter 34 where God condemns the shepherds of Israel (the priests) for failing to lead His flock and for profiting off His flock
- In Matthew 9:36, Jesus alludes to this passage as He passes judgment on the "shepherds" of Israel



An Overview

- Following His own call for prayer for more laborers (Mt 9:37-38), Jesus selected twelve disciples to be His apostles and gave them power to cast out demons and heal all kinds of disease (1-4)
- He then sent them to preach and heal throughout the cities of Israel with specific instructions in what has come to be called "The Limited Commission" (5-42)
- Almost the entire chapter is a speech by Jesus explaining to them their jobs as missionaries and witnesses for Him



The Twelve Apostles (10:1-4)

- Following His own call for prayer for more laborers (Mt 9:37-38), Jesus selected twelve disciples
- This account of sending the apostles forth is recorded also in Mark 6:7-11, and Luke 9:1-6
- St. Mark says that He sent them out two and two
- Twelve is the number of the tribes of Israel
- The twelve had already been called, and had attended the Lord for some time
- They were now commissioned and sent forth as apostles
- It is time for the disciples to stop just observing and time for them to start being a witness
- For Christians, a day like that must come for all of us



The Twelve Apostles (10:1-4)

- Their commission is to do the same kind of works of mercy which Jesus had done, and thus to carry out His mission
- Works of mercy and love are inseparable from the true preaching of the gospel
- Those who were Christ's apostles were first His disciples
- Men must be first taught of God, before they be sent
- Jesus Christ never made an apostle of any man who was not first His scholar or disciple
- These twelve apostles were chosen
- This is the first place where the word apostle is used

The Twelve Apostles (10:1-4)



- The account of their being called is more fully given in Mark 3:13-18 and Luke 6:12-19
- They enumerate the twelve in immediate connection with their appointment Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:13-16
- There are three pairs of brothers among them
- Andrew and Peter, James and John, James the Less and Judas, or Thaddeus
- With the exception of Judas Iscariot, all were Galileans; several of them were by trade fishermen, there was neither priest nor scribe among them; all were from the ranks of the common people

The Twelve Apostles (10:1-4)



- One should never believe that he is “inadequate” to be a witness for Jesus
- God can and does use anyone who is willing to be His disciple
- Some of these disciples we know a lot about, and some we know very little about
- Notice that among the 12 disciples, St. Matthew, the writer of this gospel, is the only one that lists his profession
- He never forgot “who he was”
- St. Matthew mentioned “who also betrayed him”, not only for further distinction's sake, but to his great reproach

Sending Out the Twelve (10:5-15)



- His first instructions were to go only to the Israelites; the people among whom the Messiah was born
- The Jewish law, national, exclusive, a wall of partition from Gentiles, was yet in force
- In a Jewish mind at that time, salvation was only to the Jews
- Christ, born under the law, and the apostles also were under it until it was removed
- To tell the disciples to go to Samaritans or Gentiles at this time would have been too radical for them to handle
- They and the Jews had been for ages bitter enemies

Sending Out the Twelve (10:5-15)



- Samaritans were the inhabitants of Samaria, a district between Judea and Galilee; descendants of a remnant of the Ten Tribes, mixed with Gentiles colonized there
- They accepted the five books of Moses, but worshipped on Mount Gerizim, instead of at Jerusalem
- When Christ died the old dispensation, the law, died with Him
- The handwriting of ordinances was nailed to the cross (Col 2:14)
- The old covenant passed away when the new came into force, sealed with the blood of Christ

Sending Out the Twelve (10:5-15)



- After the death and resurrection of Christ, the law ceased to be binding upon the apostles
- The distinctions of Jew and Gentile were destroyed
- The old covenant was with the seed of Abraham; the new covenant embraced all nations, Hebrews 8:13

Sending Out the Twelve (10:5-15)



- The grand subject of apostolic preaching was - The Kingdom Of Heaven Is At Hand! This was the great message
- It had not yet been inaugurated
- So the apostles were still to preach; it was near, but not in existence
- Jesus says to go perform the miracles like the ones He has done in the last two chapters
- Jesus is given them the authority to perform these miracles
- There is no cost associated with the given of this power
- Jesus simply says in effect "I'm given you this power for free"
- Since I give it for free, give it to others for free
- A rule very necessary, and of great extent

Sending Out the Twelve (10:5-15)



- This is about stepping out in faith
- Where God leads, God provides
- Have no money in your purse is a command
- Those to whom they preached should supply all their wants; compare 1 Timothy 5:18 to 1 Corinthians 9:7-14
- This has always been the law of Christ
- It is a maintenance, and that only, which a minister of God is to expect, and that he has a Divine right to; but not to make a fortune, or lay up wealth
- A staff was always carried in walking over the rugged mountains of Palestine

Sending Out the Twelve (10:5-15)



- They are directed what to do in strange towns and cities
- The servant of Christ is the ambassador of peace to whatever place he is sent
- They were not to throw themselves in the way of insult
- They were not to board round from house to house
- They were to content themselves with one house; not to wander about in the manner of beggars and mendicants; not to appear to be people of idleness and fond of change; not to seem dissatisfied with the hospitality of the people; but to show that they had regular, important work; that they valued their time; that they were disposed to give themselves to labor, and were intent only on the work for which he had sent them

Sending Out the Twelve (10:5-15)



- They are directed how to act as to those that refused them
- The whole counsel of God must be declared, and those who will not attend to the gracious message, must be shown that their state is dangerous
- This should be seriously laid to heart by all that hear the gospel,
- It was the custom for Jews and Israelites returning from Gentile territory before crossing the border into the Promised Land to shake the dust of the pagan lands off their feet as symbolic of the "uncleanness" of pagans and the "purity" of the Promised Land and those in covenant with God. Jesus command suggests that the disciples are to treat covenant members who reject their message proclaiming the kingdom like heathen Gentiles

Sending Out the Twelve (10:5-15)



- The judgment of covenant brothers and sisters who reject their message of the coming of the kingdom will be greater than the judgment on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah "two communities that were destroyed because of their wickedness and their refusal to honor God's messengers, the two angelic beings sent there to seek out ten righteous men
- The two cities in the plain near the Dead Sea became symbols of wickedness and judgment in the Old Testament (Deut 29:22-23; Is 1:9, 13:19; Jer 49:18, 50:40)
- The same symbol of wickedness and judgment connected to Sodom and Gomorrah was employed by New Testament writers (Rom 9:29; 2 Pet 2:6; Jude 7; Rev 11:8)

Persecutions Are Coming (10:16-26)



- God wants us to be a witness to the world, but at the same time not “trust” the world
- Our Lord warned His disciples to prepare for persecution
- They were to avoid all things which gave advantage to their enemies
- Sheep is defenseless by human means, among the fierce and cruel; among bitter enemies
- Serpents are very cautious in avoiding danger
- The dove, peaceful, never preying on other birds, has always been a symbol of innocence
- It would sound strange indeed that they are sent as sheep among the wolves

Persecutions Are Coming (10:16-26)



- However, “wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” is a wonderful combination
- The wisdom of the serpent would save them from unnecessary exposure to danger; the harmlessness of the dove, from sinful ways to escape it
- Be on your guard against people who are like wolves
- Do not run unnecessarily into danger; use suitable prudence and caution, and do not endanger your lives
- Christ foretold troubles, not only that the troubles might not be a surprise, but that they might confirm their faith

Persecutions Are Coming (10:16-26)



- This prediction was completely and abundantly fulfilled, Acts 5:26, 12:1-4, 23:33, 26:1, 26:28, 26:30
- The apostles hearing that they should be delivered up to councils, and brought before governors and kings, might be under some concern how they should behave, and what they should be able to say in vindication of themselves and truth, before such great persons; they were illiterate men; most of them poor fishermen; and might fear that the Gospel would suffer
- Now, in order to remove their fears and objections, and to strengthen and comfort their minds, our Lord promised them an immediate assistance

Persecutions Are Coming (10:16-26)



- The Holy Spirit will give them the word when they make their defense before civil magistrates
- This was an extraordinary promise, and was literally fulfilled
- Notice Jesus doesn't say, "If they arrest you", it says, *When they deliver you up*
- Persecution for following Jesus was to be expected
- *Your Father* - This is added to excite and increase their confidence in God

Persecutions Are Coming (10:16-26)



- The division in families was a prophecy of the end times, Micah 7:6
- The rest of the family shall turn upon their own kindred who accept Christ, and become their bitter enemies
- This has been fulfilled thousands of times in every age
- The human heart would be opposed to them, because it is opposed to Christ
- He that bears all these unspeakable sufferings, and who does not shrink and apostatize, will give decisive evidence of attachment to me, and shall enter into heaven, Revelation 3:21-22
- Perseverance gives proof of genuine faith, and is sure of reward

Persecutions Are Coming (10:16-26)



- They were not to rashly expose their lives where it would do no good, but go elsewhere and continue preaching
- Life is a sacred possession, and must not be flung away
- It may be given up for the sake of Christ
- All the commands of Christ, as well as their conduct, show that they were rather to lay down their lives than deny their Savior
- It is often used in the sense of the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened about thirty years after this was spoken, Matthew 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27, 21:32
- There is also the final coming to judge the world
- The disciples must expect to be treated like the Master

Persecutions Are Coming (10:16-26)



- Three relations in which Christ stands to His people are here mentioned; He is their Teacher—they are His disciples
- He is their Lord—they are His servants
- He is the Master of the household—they are its inmates
- In all these relations, He says here, He and they are so bound up together that they cannot look to be better than Him
- A general direction to all the persecuted followers of Christ
- Fear them not, for they can make you suffer nothing worse than they have made Christ suffer; and under all trials He has promised the most ample support
- Christ shall triumph, and all shall be brought to judgment, where every secret shall be made manifest

Jesus Teaches the Fear of God (10:27-31)



- The Lord had to teach them in private before He could send them forth
- The Lord directs them to speak in the most public manner
- These verses are about encouragement
- People have no power to injure the soul, the immortal part
- Temporal death is a slight thing compared with eternal death
- He directs them, therefore, not to be alarmed at the prospect of temporal death, but to fear God, who can destroy both soul and body forever

Jesus Teaches the Fear of God (10:27-31)



- Sparrows are among the smallest and least valuable birds, yet under the Divine care
- So cheap as to be offered in pairs for an insignificant coin, but God notes the fall of one
- He takes care of birds of the least value, if He regards so small a thing as the hair of the head, and numbers it, He will certainly protect and provide for you
- You need not, therefore, fear what man can do to you

Confess Christ Before Men (10:32-33)



- To confess Christ means to publicly acknowledge the Lord, and to live before men as His servant
- An acknowledgment of Christ is by obedience and by giving the life to His service
- Confession is a demonstration of faith
- Public acknowledgment and an obedient life
- A verbal acknowledgment of Christ is not enough if the life is a denial, for then it shows that the acknowledgment was a lie
- The two must correspond

Confess Christ Before Men (10:32-33)



- Christ sitting on the throne of judgment promises to acknowledge as His own faithful brother every one who has thus acknowledged Him before men
- The disciple who, through the cares of the world, turns away from Christian life, denies Him
- The Jews denied him when they rejected Him as Messiah

Christ Brings Division (10:34-39)



- This is taken from Micah 7:6
- Christ did not here mean to say that the object of his coming was to produce discord and contention, for He was the Prince of Peace, Isaiah 9:6, 11:6; Luke 2:14; but He means to say that such would be one of the effects of His coming
- One part of a family that was opposed to Him would set themselves against those who believed in Him
- The only sword that Christ or His followers use in the conflict is the Sword of the Spirit, but the persecutor has in every age turned upon them the carnal sword

Christ Brings Division (10:34-39)



- The spirit of Christ will not have union with the spirit of the world
- Even a father, while unconverted, will oppose a godly child
- Many converts have been turned out of home and banished by kindred, because he had confessed Christ
- Thus the spirit that is in those who sin against God is opposed to that spirit which is in the followers of the Most High
- It is the spirits then that are in opposition, and not the persons

Christ Brings Division (10:34-39)



- If we are not willing to give up all earthly possessions, and forsake all earthly friends, and if we do not obey Him rather than all others, we have no true attachment to Him
- The Lord does not require us to love these less, but Him more
- Love for Him must become the dominant principle of life
- St. Luke adds, daily (Lk 9:23); not once, but all the time
- The cross is the pain of the self-denial required
- The cross is the symbol of doing our duty, even at the cost of the most painful death

Christ Brings Division (10:34-39)



- Christ obeyed God, and carried out His work of the salvation of men, though it required Him to die upon the cross in order to do it
- And ever since, the cross has stood as the symbol, not of suffering, but of suffering for the sake of Christ and His gospel
- To follow Christ is to take Him for our master, our teacher, our example; to believe His doctrines, to uphold His cause, to obey His precepts, and to do it though it leads to heaven by the way of the cross

Christ Brings Division (10:34-39)



- Whoever counts his life of so much value that he will preserve it by sacrificing his Christian integrity, or will renounce his religion to save his life, will find in the end that he has lost his soul forever for the sake of a few transient years; while he who gives up all things, even life itself, will find an abundant reward in the life eternal
- All self-seeking is self-losing
- The Divine law is always to give in order to receive

A Cup of Cold Water (10:40-42)



- The apostles would go forth in Christ's name, as His servants and ambassadors
- They carried His message, and to receive it and them was virtually receiving Him
- Though the kindness done to Christ's disciples be ever so small, yet if there be occasion for it, and ability to do no more, it shall be accepted
- In all these three illustrations Christ meant to teach substantially the same thing - that he that would entertain kindly or treat with hospitality Himself, His disciples, a prophet, or a righteous man, would show that he approved their character, and should not fail of proper reward

A Cup of Cold Water (10:40-42)



- Little ones is a reference to their lowliness in spirit, their littleness in the eyes of an undiscerning world, while high in Heaven's esteem
- Cup of water is the smallest service
- Good deeds are never lost
- Note the six things here spoken of as belonging to discipleship of Christ:
 - (1) Confessing or professing
 - (2) Fighting
 - (3) Bearing his standard (the cross)
 - (4) Suffering
 - (5) Following
 - (6) Giving up life

These are all the duties of the soldier



Conclusion

- Describe the mission of the twelve when He sent them
- What were they to do if they were not received by a house or city?
- Why did Jesus choose 12 apostles, rather than 10 or 14?
- Why did Jesus tell the apostles to “go nowhere among the Gentiles”?
- What did Jesus acknowledge His teachings might do?



Conclusion

- With whom were the apostles supposed to stay in each town?
- What did Jesus mean by coming to bring a sword?
- What did Jesus say regarding whom to fear?
- Who is not worthy of Jesus?
- Who are the “little ones” in verse 42?



Conclusion

For application:

- How much like your master are you when persecutions, disagreements, and misunderstandings arise against you or what you stand for?
- What kinds of divisions has Jesus caused in your life? What would you do if Jesus asked you to turn away from or leave those you love most?
- How has the paradox of verse 39 worked itself out in your life? If you do not know, what might "losing your life" for Jesus' sake mean for you?