

## CHAPTER TEN

Apostles on the occasion of their entering upon the very work to which they had been earlier called, in the same way that the Sermon on the Mount was a fitting message of ordination for the occasion of their calling to the Apostleship. (Cf. Lk. 6:12-49)

One final word is in order about Matthew's orderly argument which this entire chapter exemplifies. Note how this section beautifully carries forward his presentation of the ministry of Jesus the Messiah:

1. Jesus the Messiah as proclaimer of the Kingdom of God (chap. 5, 6, 7). In that message typical of Jesus' preaching, the Master describes the Kingdom of God. He is elaborating His edicts.
2. Jesus the Messiah supernaturally accredited by miracle-working power (chap. 8, 9). In this section presenting a collection of miracles typical of Jesus' power, the Master proves His right to say the things He is. He is exhibiting His evidence.
3. Jesus the Messiah expanding His effort, multiplying His ministry and enlarging His effectiveness. (chap. 10)

## SPECIAL STUDY

### THE AUTHORITY OF THE APOSTLES

Many self-appointed theologians still echo the ancient lie of Satan asking, "Yea, hath God said thus and so?" hardly comprehending that to pose such a question is to question and quibble the eternal authority of the Author of their salvation. It is one thing to seek the clear evidences which would point to the revelation of God in human history, and quite another to seek, by feigned wisdom, to evade its message. Jesus clearly declares in this section that God will be revealing Himself through Jesus' twelve appointed and empowered ambassadors. It is sufficient to investigate with a true and honest heart whether God has truly spoken in human history. But, having discerned this, it is sufficient to obey.

The question of this study is not, then, why or how or should God speak through human messengers, but did He, in fact do so? Since we have the accurate message of Jesus recorded by honest, competent, reliable witnesses, we may assume that God's Son is competent to empower His rather ordinary disciples, thereby enabling them to speak extra-ordinarily the very word of the Almighty. Study these four major points of proof that the Apostles' ministry at this time was but the extension of Jesus' own:

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- I. God would verify their message as God's own by supernatural demonstrations of His presence and approval (Matthew 10:7, 8; compare Hebrews 2:3, 4; Mark 6:12, 13; Luke 9:6).
- II. Jesus declared that those who would reject His Apostles' message would surely receive heavier condemnation than the wickedest of Sodom and Gomorrah (Matthew 10:14, 15).
- III. Jesus promised that God's Spirit would speak directly in those human messengers in the hour of trial (Matthew 10:19, 20)
- IV. Jesus concludes His charge by asserting that to receive and hearken to the words of the Apostles is precisely equivalent to receiving Jesus Himself and the God who sent Him. (Matthew 10:40)

It was perfectly legitimate for every devout son of Abraham to require the credentials of those who claimed to speak for God. But, having received them, he must obey.

How often do we refuse God's proffered mercies merely because we reject the instrument through which He would make them available to us? Some would rather be accursed from God than receive God's bounties at the hands of Judas, who later betrayed Jesus! But in this ministry Judas assisted Jesus. Judas worked miracles probably along with the other Apostles. At this time all Twelve Apostles are but the multiplication of Jesus' personal ministry, even though these men were largely ignorant of Jesus' deeper meaning behind His messages, largely unaware of the necessity of the cross and deeply in need of further training. But they were nonetheless messengers of Jesus, hence, sent by the living God! Woe to that individual or city that rejects them! How blessed is that village or people that heard the voice of God in the Galilean accent of these simple men sent out by Jesus!

It should not be at all surprising, therefore, to see develop in the continuing revelation of Jesus, the Apostolic office, endowed with all the authority of the Holy Spirit. But now they are in training. Let us hear Jesus as He prepares them for this first task on their own.

## WHY TWELVE APOSTLES?

It is obvious, from the emphasis Matthew gives to it, that this commission given to the Twelve represents an important advance in the progress of Jesus' self-revelation, but what is its exact meaning? Mechanically, the number twelve represents a group of men small enough to be able to teach effectively and large enough to get the

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work done. But in reference to the mission they were to accomplish, what moved Jesus to set apart these twelve as APOSTLES?

- I. Jesus desired to multiply the effectiveness of His own ministry.
  - A. A. B. Bruce (*Training*, 96) thinks that "this mission of the disciples as evangelists or miniature apostles was partly without doubt, an educational experiment for their own benefit; but its direct design was to meet the spiritual necessities of the people, whose neglected condition lay heavy on Christ's heart."
  - B. Reed (*PHC*, 248) observes astutely: "The man who seeks to do the largest amount of good will recognize that far higher results may be attained by instructing a few persons of influence 'who shall be able to teach others also,' than by working always upon an inert mass, destitute of life and reproductive energy."
  - C. As this chapter shows, Jesus conferred upon His Apostles:
    1. His own mission: "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Cf. 15:24)
    2. His own message: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Cf. Mt. 4:17)
    3. His own miracles: cf. 10:1, 8 with 9:35.
    4. His own miseries: "A disciple is not above his Teacher." (10:24, 25)
    5. His own mastery: "He who receives you, receives me." (10:40)
  - D. The result of this commission was that it turned the Twelve into just that many more Jesus Christs to reach out into those areas of needy humanity where Jesus Himself could not go.
- II. Jesus planned that the Apostles become personal eye-witnesses of all that transpired while they were with Him.
  - A. While their very title signifies that they were to be *men sent forth* on special missions for the Master, yet they were specifically called to "be with Jesus," to be His companions (Mk. 3:14; cf. Lk. 8:1 later)
  - B. In fact, as McGarvey (*Fourfold*, 221) judges: (contrary to the opinion of Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 92f and Lambert, *ISBE*, 202f):

A necessary condition of their apostleship was this seeing of Jesus and the consequent ability to testify as to his actions, especially as to his resurrection (Ac.

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1:8, 21, 22; I Cor. 9:1; Ac. 22:14, 15). They could therefore have no successors.

- C. Reed (PHC, 247) asks: "But granted the need for witnesses, were the men upon whom the solemn choice fell, competent for the discharge of so grave a function?" He then answers:
1. "The miracles of Jesus were of a kind which the humblest observer could judge, and perhaps judge even better than his superiors in rank.
  2. . . . even if the Twelve were in any measure disqualified in inferior station from bearing trustworthy evidence, they were thereby just as much incapacitated for the concoction of a clever forgery," and, of course, their writings must be explained in some reasonable manner.
  3. Barnes (*Matthew-Mark*, 107) adds that they were not especially learned men, who could spread Christianity by their erudition;
  4. They were not wealthy men who could bribe others to join their movement by offers of wealth or worldly advancement;
  5. They were not men of positions of authority who could compel others to believe.
  6. They were just good men who make the best witnesses in a court of law: plain men of good sense, fair character, of great honesty with a favorable opportunity to ascertain the facts to which they bear witness. They were the kind of men everybody believes and especially when they are willing to lay down their lives to prove their sincerity.
- D. R. C. Foster's splendid description (*Standard Lesson Commentary* 1957, 44) deserves wider hearing:

The roster of the leaders whom Jesus had assembled to assist Him in His campaign and to receive intensified training from Him is given just before this commission is recorded. The list starts the reader into meditation upon the known and the unknown in their lives. But little is known beyond the name of most of these men. Yet how many significant accounts of their heroic faith and consistent victories might have been written! . . .

We are immediately impressed by the fact that these were what the intelligentsia of that day called "ignorant and unlearned men." Good and honest

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hearts constituted the first prerequisite. The simplicity, humility, teachableness, and burning devotion of these men made them choice material for the Son of God to fashion into noble leaders of the church. Some who read the historical accounts of the New Testament are prone to magnify the mistakes of these apostles and to sneer at their slow comprehension. Such hypercriticism needs to be reminded how much more rapidly the apostles apprehended the truth about Jesus than did the college trained scholars, the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem. The apostles heard and saw much more of the revelation Jesus presented than did these scholars, but the latter saw and heard enough to prove their unwillingness or their inability to learn and accept the truth which threatened their wicked way of life and their false leadership over the people.

The apostles lacked the formal training which the scribes possessed, but they were free from all the excess baggage of false ideas and ideals which overloaded the scholars. When Saul of Tarsus met Jesus and gave his life to Christ, he became the great apostle, for he had the natural ability, the intellectual discipline which men could give, plus God's divine revelation to him and a flaming faith and courage which enabled him to turn the world upside down. But Paul had a desperate time recovering from the false conceptions which the scribes had given him. It took a face-to-face meeting with the risen Christ before he was able to rise above the handicap of a false education.

The apostles came from different walks of life with the advantage of varied backgrounds giving peculiar points of contact with different people they met and peculiar power to their testimony as it was reflected against their own personal background. Being experienced in hardships, privation, and burdensome toil, they were qualified to become veterans in such strenuous campaigns as Jesus carried on. They could make long, forced marches; they could listen or proclaim; they could lend the helping hand in public ministry or in necessary arrangements for the physical

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necessities of their journeys; they could lie down on the hard cold ground at night for rest if no home opened a welcome to the divine One who had no place to lay his head. In less than four years they reached the heights: they could 'walk with crowds and keep their virtue, or talk with kings, nor lost the common touch.' They could stand unafraid in the midst of the high tribunals of state and under threat of death proclaim, with the utter simplicity of the truth, their testimony to the facts of the gospel and the divine revelation which Christ had committed to them. What a moving example they have set before us!

- III. Jesus intended for the Twelve to learn evangelism, share in His own service and then continue His work in the world after His ascension.
- A. On this staff of co-workers depended the immediate effect, as well as the long-range future success, of His mission to earth.
  - B. This is why He *chose* them from among the disciples, the "learners," from among men whose minds were open. (Cf. Lk. 6:13) Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 370) quips: "The shut mind cannot serve Jesus Christ."
  - C. He *called* them, but they could accept or refuse that summons: they were present because they chose to be with Him. (Cf. Mk. 3:14) Their acceptance of His calling to be with Him was extremely important, for, before they had anything worthwhile to say to men, they must learn to live in His presence, imbibe of His Spirit, think His thoughts after Him.
  - D. He *appointed* them (Mk. 3:14). This officially set them apart as "The Twelve," as Apostles. Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 370) thinks that "it was not a case of drifting unconsciously into the service of Jesus Christ; it was a case of definitely being appointed to it."
  - E. He *sent them forth* (Lk. 9:2): their lives were not meant to be spent in contemplation and study, even though, until they had done this, they had little to say. They must begin their service.
  - F. He commanded them to herald His message, not their own views or traditions, as Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 371) writes: "The Christian is not meant to bring to men his own opinions or

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his views; he brings a message of divine certainties from Jesus Christ."

### Section 23

## JESUS COMMISSIONS TWELVE APOSTLES TO EVANGELIZE GALILEE

(Parallels: Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6)

### PREVIEWING IN OUTLINE FORM

- I. Jesus Calls the Twelve and Empowers Them For Special Service (Mt. 10:1-4; Mk. 6:7; Lk. 9:1)
- II. Jesus Instructs and Charges the Twelve How to Proceed (Mt. 10:5-15; Mk. 6:8-11; Lk. 9:2-5)
  - A. Their Words and Works (Mt. 10:5-8; Lk. 9:2)
  - B. Their Equipment and Conduct (Mt. 10:9-15; Mk. 6:8-11; Lk. 9:3-5)
- III. Jesus Challenges and Warns the Twelve of the Dangers and Difficulties That Lie Ahead (Mt. 10:16-31)
  - A. General Warning (Mt. 10:16)
  - B. Persecution by the State "Church" (Mt. 10:17)
  - C. Persecution by the State Government (Mt. 10:18)
  - D. Promise of Power in the Hour of Peril (Mt. 10:19, 20)
  - E. Persecution by Their Own Families (Mt. 10:21, 22)
  - F. Prudence in Persecution (Mt. 10:23)
  - G. Suffering of the Savior and His Servants (Mt. 10:24, 25)
  - H. Freedom From Fear (Mt. 10:26-31)
    1. The Triumph of Truth (Mt. 10:26, 27)
    2. The Right Reverence (Mt. 10:28)
    3. The Care of the Creator (Mt. 10:29-31)
- IV. Jesus Requires and Rewards Loyalty of His Servants (Mt. 10:32-39)
  - A. The Supreme Honor For Loyalty (Mt. 10:32)
  - B. The Supreme Disgrace For Disloyalty or Cowardice (Mt. 10:33)
  - C. The Inevitable Enmities in Loyalty to Jesus (Mt. 10:34-36)
  - D. The Secret of Success Through Sacrifice and Surrender (Mt. 10:37-39)