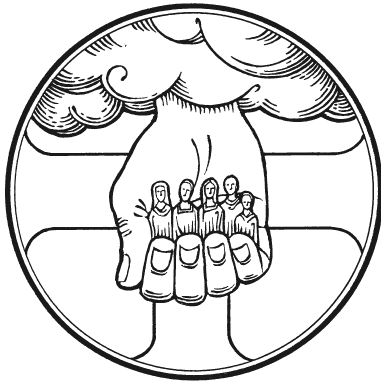


# St. Matthew

## Chapter 10

After telling His disciples to “pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (9:38), Jesus then send His disciples out to the fields. Matthew chapter ten comprises the second of the five great discourses in the Gospel, sometimes called the “Missionary Discourse.” Jesus first gives choses twelve of His disciples to send, He gives them authority, and then sends them forth. In this chapter He in instructing them and preparing them for the opposition which the Gospel always faces.



### Jesus' Disciples Become the Twelve Apostles (10:1-15)

*The Twelve.* The chapter begins with Jesus calling the twelve to Him and giving them authority (ἐξουσία, not power) to cast out demons and to heal all kinds of sicknesses, the same authority that Jesus had demonstrated in chapter 9. Unlike power, authority may be transferred. Authority concerns office and vocation while power is intrinsic to the self.

Matthew then lists the twelve who had been conferred this authority. It is illustrative to compare the list with those in Mark (3:13-19) and Luke (6:12-16):

Matthew (10:2-4)	Mark (3:16-19)	Luke (6:14-16)	Acts (1:13)
Now the names of the twelve apostles are these;			And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both
1. The first, Simon, who is called Peter,	1. And Simon he surnamed Peter;	1. Simon, (whom he also named Peter,)	1. Peter,
2. and Andrew his brother;	2. And James the son of Zebedee,	2. and Andrew his brother,	2. and James,
3. James the son of Zebedee,	3. and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:	3. James	3. and John,
4. and John his brother;	4. And Andrew,	4. and John,	4. and Andrew,
5. Philip,	5. and Philip,	5. Philip	5. Philip,
6. and Bartholomew;	6. and Bartholomew,	6. and Bartholomew,	6. and Thomas,
7. Thomas,	7. and Matthew,	7. Matthew	7. Bartholomew,
8. and Matthew the publican;	8. and Thomas,	8. and Thomas,	8. and Matthew,
9. James the son of Alphaeus,	9. and James the son of Alphaeus,	9. James the son of Alphaeus,	9. James the son of Alphaeus,
10. and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;	10. and Thaddaeus,	10. and Simon called Zelotes,	10. and Simon Zelotes,
11. Simon the Canaanite,	11. and Simon the Canaanite,	11. And Judas the brother of James,	11. and Judas the brother of James.
12. and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.	12. And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house.	12. and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.	



through God Himself, as God in this way called the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, without and intervening human means. And they who have thus been called have the testimony of the Spirit and of miracles that they do not err in doctrine. And the rest of the ministers of the church take their doctrine from them, and they must prove it thereby. And besides, the ministry of those who have been called without means is not bound and anchored to a certain church at only one place, but they have the command to teach all people everywhere.

### **Persecutions are Coming (10:16-31)**

Jesus had warned the disciples of persecutions in the Sermon on the Mount. He again promises His disciples that troubles will follow the preaching of the Gospel. The disciples go out like sheep in the midst of wolves, but they go with the gift of the authority of the Gospel, therefore they need not be afraid. In the face of ferocious wolves they can be peaceful and wise. The authority Jesus gives also serves to bind the disciples to Jesus, so that what happens to Him happens to them. Their discipleship is being rejected, picking up the cross, dying and then going to be with the Father. "You will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved." (10:22) This hatred and persecution is a mark of the Lord's church; the prophets have always been killed.

Notice how the Gentiles will hear the testimony of the apostles: in their persecution. "You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony (μαρτύριον, martyr, witness) to them and to the Gentiles." (10:18) In that hour the Lord Jesus promised to give the disciples the very words to speak. This is the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Lenski notes:

The apostles will not be like the demoniacs, their organs of speech and their very wills being violated by a demon. Absolutely the contrary: mind, heart, will operate freely, consciously, in joyful, trustful dependence on the Spirit's giving, who enables them to find just what to say and how to say it down to the last word, with no mistake or even a wrong word due to faulty memory or disturbed emotions occurring. This, of course, is Inspiration, Verbal Inspiration (λαλεῖν throughout), that which none other exists. It is here promised to the apostles for specific occasions, but that does not change *what* is promised. The argument is quite invincible that, if God's Spirit inspired the apostles when they were subjected to court trials, He was able to inspire them in the same manner at other times, for interest that were far greater (the Word for all ages and nations) according to Christ's promise, John 14:26.

*Before the Son of Man Comes.* Jesus commands the Twelve to flee persecution because "you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes." What does this mean? What is this coming? Jesus refers to this coming in three other places (in Matthew's Gospel):

**Matthew 16:28** Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

**Matthew 24:34** Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

**Matthew 26:64** Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

This coming is the terrible judgment that came upon Israel in 70 when Rome destroyed the city and the temple. Jesus (in Matthew 22:7 and 23:38-39) warned that this destruction was coming and explained why.

The destruction of Jerusalem is a key historical event for understanding the Scriptures, and especially many of the discourses of Jesus. In the ancient church Josephus' (an ancient Jewish historian writing for the Roman Empire) account of the destruction of Jerusalem was read on the 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity (the Gospel reading in Luke 19:41-48, Jesus weeping over Jerusalem. The 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity often falls close to the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 70.



*The Destruction of Jerusalem* Wilhelm von Kaulbach 1846

Harold Buls summarizes Josephus thus:

Josephus, the Jewish historian, describes it in his **The Wars**, books IV-VI. We summarize what he wrote: The Jews always proved to be the Most rebellious people in the Roman Empire. During the days of the apostles they were warned never again to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem or to fortify their city. But during the 60's of the first century, while Rome experienced internal troubles, the Jews rebuilt their walls and fortified the city. In the year 66 the Emperor Nero sent Gessius Florus and his legions to subdue the city. The Jews killed him and 5000 of his men. This angered Rome very much. They sent Flavius Vespasianus with his legions to deal with the city. Vespasian and his troops moved on to Jerusalem. But Vespasian was recalled to Rome because he was elected Emperor. Titus, his son, took over as commander of Vespasian's men. At the time of the Passover in the year 70 about 1,000,000 Jews gathered in Jerusalem. During the next five months Jerusalem was totally overcome and destroyed. They destroyed themselves. There were three parties in the city who were jealous of each other and did not trust each other. They destroyed each others' food supplies and homes. Thus the Jews were their own worst enemies. Jerusalem was circled by three strong walls. With great effort and at great expense the Romans conquered wall after wall. Then they went after the Temple. It was burned to the ground August 10, 70 A.D. Then 900,000 Jews were killed, starved or sold as slaves. Only about 100,000 survived. So desperate did they become that they killed and ate their own babies. Others ate their own excrement or cow dung. Some were found dead with hay in their mouths. After the city was conquered a soldier detected a Jew extracting gold coins from his own excrement. This gave birth to the rumor that the starving Jews had swallowed their gold. Thousands of Jews were cut open alive for the gold.



*Do Not Fear.* After warning the disciples of the trouble and hardship that is to follow them on their tour,

Jesus comfort them, saying, “Do not fear.” It is He, Jesus, who is sending them as sheep into the mouths of wolves, and so there is really no danger. They are in the service of the Lord, and there is no other master or Lord. Jesus is handing them over to them “who kill the body but cannot kill the soul” (10:28), that is, the devil and his kings, but the only One to be feared is “His who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell,” that is, the heavenly Father and His Son who has been given the authority to judge the living and the dead. This fear of God is keeping the first commandment to have no other gods before the only true God. As Luther has taught us, “We should fear, love and trust in God above all things.”

Jesus even reminds them of the comfort He had delivered in the Sermon on the Mount, assuring them that no a sparrow falls dead apart from the knowing of the Father, and that we are of more value than the sparrow. The devil lies when he tempts us to believe that God is far removed from our troubles, and that we have anything to fear but God.



### **Confess Christ Before Men (10:32-42)**

Jesus now speaks of confession. “Whoever confesses Me before men...” The word confess is the Greek *homologeō* (here *ὁμολογήσει*), to say the same thing or echo back or agree. We confess when we say what we have heard, when we agree with God. There are many different types of confession:

We confess our sins when we agree with God that we are sinners.

We confess our faith when we agree with God about who He is and what He has done.

This text tells us the content of our confession, “Whoever confesses *Me*...” It tells us the audience of our confession, “Whoever confesses *Me before men*...” And it tells us the result of our confession, “Whoever confesses *Me before men, him I will confess before My Father who is in heaven.*” This is a tremendous verse which gives great instruction and comfort. The Lord's Church continues to bear the name of Jesus and confess Him before men. By this word of Jesus He has seen to it that His church would always be a “confessing” church. On the other hand, denying Christ will have a similar result in heaven.

*Confessing Brings Division.* The Word of Jesus and the confession of His name always brings division. “Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.” (10:34) These words are difficult.

Was He not the Prince of peace, his church a haven of peace, his greeting “Peace to you!” and his apostles the bearers of peace (v. 12,13)? All this was true, indeed. But “upon the earth” takes in the world of men, and the effect of Christ's coming which, of course, means his mission is the opposite of “peace,” namely war as symbolized by “a sword.” ... The idea is this: if Christ had not come, the earth would have gone on undisturbed in its sin and its guilt until the day of its doom. Now Christ came to take away that sin and that guilt. At once war resulted, for in their perversion men clung to their sin, fought Christ and the Gospel, and thus produced two hostile camps. [Lenski]

See Luke 11:21-22.

So it is today that confessing the truth often brings strife and division, even of families. It is easy to cry out for peace, but this is, in effect, muting the saving confession of Jesus which comes with the sword. Here's a paragraph for the Lutheran Witness, January, 1918 (vol XXXVII, no 1, p 23):

Is doctrinal controversy an evil? If so, certainly not an unmixed evil. There is a certain pale, delicate, lavender-scented piety in our day which deprecates all strife among Christians, and pleads for such avoiding of dogmatism and such mutual concessions as will insure unbroken peace among all who claim to worship the same God. Exponents of this type of piety are never so happy as when they can bring together on the same platform Trinitarian, Unitarian, and Jew. They need to ponder the significance of the words: “The Son of Man came not to send peace, but a sword.” It is not by peace, but by warfare, persistent, uncompromising, that the victories of the Cross are to be won. Christ was born into this world that He might “bear witness to the truth.” He was a martyr to this witness-bearing. The Christian who has no convictions that he is willing to fight for is following the Master at a long distance, if at all. And if he is willing to fight for his convictions, he will find occasion.

Or, 383 years earlier, Luther says,

The sectarians who deny the bodily presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper accuse us today of being quarrelsome, harsh, and intractable, because, as they say, we shatter love and harmony among the churches on account of the single doctrine about the Sacrament. They say we should not make so much of this little doctrine... [Luther responds] Thus in theology a tiny error overthrows the whole teaching. Therefore doctrine and life should be distinguished as sharply as possible. Doctrine belongs to God, not to us; and we are called only its ministers. Therefore we cannot give up or change on dot of it (Matt. 5:18). Life belongs to us... [Luther on *Galatians 5:9*, AE 27.37]

Fighting for the pure confession of Jesus' name is what the Church is and does, and there is to be no desire for compromised peace when the truth of the Scriptures is at hand. But while the confessor of Christ enters into warfare, the sword is not for him to yield, but to yield unto. The confession of Jesus is taking us the cross, the instrument of one's own death.

Matthew 10:38 is the first mention of the cross in Matthew. It must have been somewhat troubling to the disciples to hear that following Jesus meant walking the way of the cross, but then Jesus adds the comfort that losing our life for His sake is finding it. This is how it always is in the kingdom of heaven, things are turned on their head. The Lord kills in order to make alive, He casts down in order to lift up, and life must be lost to be found.

And then there's more, comfort not just for the disciples, but for us, for we are given the promise that hearing the disciples is hearing Jesus, and receiving the disciples is receiving Jesus. What here serves as a promise for the disciples is instruction for pastors and teachers in the church, we are to so speak the inscripturated apostolic Word that whoever hears the pastor hears Jesus.