

## Episode #741 - Matthew 10 Part 1: Sending of the Twelve

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. In Matthew 9, the Lord healed many sick, such as a paralyzed man, a woman with an issue of blood, a girl who was so sick everyone thought she was dead, though the Lord said she was not, two blind men, and a demon-possessed mute man. He healed and taught in many cities and villages, and when He saw the multitudes coming, He had compassion on them since they were like sheep without shepherds to care for them. Today, He speaks to His disciples regarding this.

A. Verse 37. On the one hand the harvest is plenteous, but on the other hand the laborers are few. Where were all the shepherds? Where were all the laborers? We would like to think harvests are always plenteous, but not so. Sometimes harvests are great, at other times they are very sparse. At this time in Israel the harvest was great. In Israel laborers were often hired servants, hired day to day for daily tasks, particularly at important times like the harvest. Few were ready for God to hire them. Many missionary organizations like to emphasize the first. But the second is often true as well. There seem to always be fewer laborers than there is work to do. Satan’s agents are all too willing to step in and steal the harvest when the laborers are lacking.

B. Verse 38. This was realized within two years after this, when at Pentecost the laborers were increased. Can also have a violent connotation: drive forth. This is how it was with Paul, I Corinthians 9:16. Thanks to the work of Acts an enormous harvest was gathered in. This is not always the case.

III. Commissioning the Twelve. Matthew 10:1-4.

A. Matthew 10:1. He had many disciples, hundreds. These were a special group of twelve. He gave them power, Greek *exousia* or authority, over unclean spirits. Not called demons; this is a different term for these. These were fallen spirits who once had been clean. Now, they did foul work among Adam’s race, and needed to be cast or driven out. This is the same word as the Lord sending out laborers into His harvest. Here it definitely has a violent connotation. Here the healing He sends them to perform in no way was related to their faith. This was to demonstrate the benefits of the kingdom of God. They were not to go looking for the sick. They were heralding the kingdom of God, and when they encountered the sick they had the power to heal them. They were not a healing ministry, and never were to make money off of this.

B. Verse 2. Once the disciples receive a commission they become apostles. Here is one of several lists of the twelve. From comparing them we know some of them had multiple names. The lists are always divided 4-4-4. The first of the four is always the same, though the others can vary in order. The first four:

1. Simon, meaning “Hearing,” called Petros, meaning “A Stone.”
2. Andreas, meaning “Manly,” his brother.
3. Iakobos, Jacob, meaning “Supplanter.” The name supposedly became “James” due to a mispronunciation in Latin. Jacob (the son) of Zebedaiou (My Gift).
4. Ioannes (John, meaning “To Whom Jehovah Is Gracious”) his brother.

C. Verse 3. The second four.

1. Philippos, meaning “Lover of Horses.”

2. Bartholomaios, meaning "Son of Tolmai," Tolmai meaning "Furrowed." Some think this man is called "Nathanael" in John.
3. Thomas, meaning "Twin."
4. Maththaios, meaning "Gift of Jehovah," the publican as we saw him in Matthew 9:9 and the author of this gospel.

D. Verses 3-4. The third four.

1. Iakobos the (son) of Alphaios, meaning "Changing."
2. Lebbaios, meaning "Man of Heart," given the name Thaddaeus, meaning "Large Hearted" or "Courageous." Given by the Lord, perhaps, as Peter was?
3. Simon the Canaanite = probably an error for "zealous," he is elsewhere called "the zealot."
4. Ioudas, meaning "Praise," Iskariotes, meaning "Man of Kerioth," probably "Man of the City." He betrayed Him or delivered Him up. Yet Judas was given the same power as the other men! Their power was not based on faith or holiness. This thief and traitor had the power, because God gave it to him.

IV. Conclusion: The Lord told His disciples to pray that God would send laborers into His harvest. He quickly followed this up by sending His disciples to labor in Israel. He chose twelve, and we considered these important men the Lord chose out of all His disciples. We will continue to consider the important mission He sent these twelve on in our next program.