

## Episode #743 Matthew 10 Part 3-Persecutions 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 10, the Lord was commissioning His disciples for a mission on which He was sending them. He chose twelve of them, and commissioned them to go, not to the Gentiles, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They were to proclaim, “The kingdom of the heavens is at hand,” and to heal sick ones, cleanse lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons as they went, doing all this freely. They were not to take money or provisions or extra clothes, but to trust the Lord’s care. Today we continue to consider His orders to them, and how He warned they would be persecuted.

III. The Lord’s Orders to the Twelve. Matthew 10:5-15.

- A. Verse 11. Villages were small; could be at every crossroads. The worthy workman, verse 10, seeks a worthy house to abide in. Because of the lack of news a traveler was very important at the time. You were expected to enter the town and stay at one house, then the next house, then the next house, and so on to pass on all the news they desired. You were excused from this custom if you were on important business, which is what the Lord is saying they are on here.
- B. Verse 12. They are to salute joyfully the house. This would identify them with this house. But what if you were wrong and that house turned out not to be worthy? The Lord will not blame them for this. He gives them power to rescind the blessing.
- C. Verse 13. The house might on the one hand be worthy, and if so their peace, Greek *eirene*, a true union, which you had suggested by your salutation when you entered it, would be carried into effect. On the other hand if not, the salutation was revoked.
- D. Verse 14. Words = *logous*, expressions of truth. The shaking off of the dust was a symbolic thing showing they were through with this city.
- E. Verse 15. “Tolerable” is used only in this context in Matthew, Mark, and Luke (also of Tyre and Sidon). Notice that this implies that some cities will be judged less harshly than others. Ezekiel has already declared that Sodom will be restored someday by God, Ezekiel 16:48, 55.

IV. Opposition to His Disciples. Matthew 10:16-26.

- A. Verse 16. He is sending them, *apostello*, commissioned with authority, as sheep among wolves. In verse 9 they were to go to Israel’s lost sheep, and here He is sending them as sheep. Of course wolves are wolf-like men, just as sheep referred to sheep-like men. They thought of serpents as wise; doves as harmless.
- B. Verse 17. “Deliver up” could also be “betray.” “Councils” are sanhedrins. We think of the main one in Jerusalem, but really every Israelite city of sufficient size had its own sanhedrin, its size depending on the number of Jewish men in the town. The synagogues were the community meeting places, not like today.
- C. Verse 18. They will be brought (led, presented) to governors (provincial rulers) and kings (absolute rulers) to witness to them and the Gentiles (nations).
- D. Verse 19. Schofield says this is instructions to martyrs and witnesses, not to preachers. We must give very careful thought to what we are going to say before we speak. I would add that these were instructions for men not living in the dispensation of grace, but rather were living back when God actually could and did inspire His

people with words to speak. If I was going to testify for my life I **would** take thought as to what I was going to say, and I would not count it that I was disobeying the Lord's command. The Lord made this command to His apostles. He never made this command or promise to me, and if I count on it I might well be disappointed.

E. Verse 20. Notice this is Divine inspiration, characteristic of the Acts period but not of the dispensation of grace in which we live. We should not try to appropriate this for ourselves because it will not work.

V. Conclusion: The Lord orders His disciples to stay in one house when they come to a city, not to follow the custom of going from house to house. If a city does not receive them, they are to shake the dust off their feet against that city, and it will be more tolerable for Sodom in the judgment than for that city! He was sending them like sheep among wolves. They will be delivered up to be tried and scourged, and brought before kings and governors. He would give them inspired words to say when that happened. This was no easy mission, but what was important was that they be faithful to their instructions. So we ask ourselves: what has the Lord ordered us to do? Are we faithful to His instructions, no matter what?