

Pentecost IV: Matthew 9:35-10:8: The Twelve Sent to Israel

1. Vs. 35: The vs. is almost identical to Mt. 4:23. The word *παύσων* in this vs. (three times) and twice in 10:1 does not mean that He had visited every town and had healed every instance of disease, but rather that He had traveled very extensively in Galilee and had healed every instance of illness brought to His attention. There were still towns to be visited and there were still diseases to be healed. During the state of humiliation Jesus' human nature did not always use all the attributes which His human nature was given. *περιήγεν* is impf. of continued action, showing His extensive tours in Galilee. *διδάσκων*, *κηρύσσων* and *θεραπεύων* are participles of attendant circumstance. Note that, as in 10:7,8, preaching and teaching are mentioned before healing. The latter corroborated the former and, of course, also denoted Jesus' compassion. Jesus' compassion came to people through instruction in the Word and the power to heal. The expression *τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας* here proves that the *βασιλεία* is already present in the Gospel, the gracious rule of God in His Gospel.
2. Vs. 36: *ἰδὼν* clearly indicated Jesus' humanity. He learned by personal experience. There are three verbs in NT which denote compassion or pity: *σπλαγχνίζομαι*, *συμπάσχω*, and *έλεέω*. The first is the strongest. Bengel remarks: "The disposition of Jesus was most fruitful in works of mercy." That should never be forgotten. Lenski says: "The compassion of Jesus is one of the deepest, richest, most comforting of all his Savior qualities. The casual observer of the multitudes would never have seen what Jesus saw." True. Both the humanity and divinity of Jesus are implicit in vs. 36. *ὅτι* is causal, followed by a periphrastic construction. The perfect participles denote a constant state which had begun earlier. They are adjectives, to be taken literally. The translations are interesting: AV: fainted and were scattered; NKJV: weary and scattered; RSV and NIV: harassed and helpless; TEV and NEB: worried and helpless; JB: harassed and dejected; NASB: distressed and downcast. This means more than the lost condition of all men as the words "as sheep not having a shepherd" clearly indicate. Ylvisaker: "The shepherds in Israel were as hirelings who were concerned for themselves and not for the sheep, and the instructors gave stones instead of bread."
3. Vs. 37: In vs. 36 we had the figure of lost sheep. Here Jesus introduces another figure: that of a harvest and laborers. *τότε*, not just temporal but also causal. He was about to do something about this terrible condition. Here the twelve are called "the disciples". This word has various meanings in the NT. We quote Stoeckhardt: "When Jesus had withdrawn Himself to a lonely region, He chose the Twelve, whom He called Apostles. In all of Galilee Jesus had faithful disciples. Even though the great multitude did not change their hearts and attitude, and refused to accept the grace and love of Christ, His Word nevertheless brought some fruit. Especially those who had suffered and had felt His miraculous help, clung with their hearts to their Benefactor. Most of His followers remained at home and at their work, proclaiming the praise of the Lord, and were Christ's followers in the spiritual sense of the Word. But a good portion of His disciples also followed the Lord wherever He went. Not that they were constantly with Him in His journeys, but as much as their own responsibilities and work permitted, to hear from His own lips the words of eternal life, and to rejoice in the great deeds He performed. Out of this circle of disciples that followed Him, the Lord chose for Himself the Twelve and designated them as His Apostles. . . . The word 'Apostle' means 'a messenger who is sent'. Later the Lord would send these Apostles out to preach, and to proclaim Christ to the world, continuing His work here on earth. They were to be witnesses of Christ also in a special way, different from the other disciples, speaking and writing by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so that the church of the NT would be built on the Word of the Apostles, as well as on the words of the prophets, forming an unshakable foundation (Eph. 2:20). In confirmation of their special calling the Lord equipped them with miraculous gifts and power, and chose twelve after the number of the twelve tribes of Israel, being the holy patriarchs of the NT. In the night before, Jesus prayed on the mountain to God, speaking as the

eternal Son to the eternal Father, and agreeing with the Father about what He was going to do, Jesus choosing the twelve disciples 'whom He would' (Mk. 3:13), the twelve being directed to Him also by His Father." Note the μὲν-δὲ construction in vs. 37. δὲ means "but". Therefore, μὲν-δὲ denotes great contrast. We do not agree with Lenski who says that θερισμὸς is purely eschatological, denoting only the elect. BAG says it means "Of persons to be won, as in Lk. 10:2." Thayer says: "A multitude of men to be taught how to obtain salvation." Kretzmann: "The harvest of God is always great, since He wants all men to be saved. When the souls have grown weary and surfeited with the husks of human doctrines and traditions of men, they are more apt to feel and realize their need of the Gospel of Jesus, as in the case of many of the Jewish nation." Note the contrast: a large harvest-few workers. The workers are those who are qualified to do this work and are sent.

4. Vs. 38: οὖν "therefore" "in view of this distressing need". τοῦ κυρίου denotes the Father. During Jesus' humiliation the Father was "Lord of the harvest". It is far more than "Owner" (AAT) or "the one in charge" (LB). He is the One Who, through Christ, has compassion to send laborers. ὅπως introduces an object clause. The prayers of the saints on this earth are valuable in God's sight and unite their hearts to do His work. ἐκβάλλη: God alone sends workers whether immediately or mediately. Not even Christ sent Himself. Self-appointed workers try to outdo Christ.
5. 10:1: It is remarkable that before the disciples had prayed for workers, Jesus empowered them to be workers. He answers even before we call but that does not excuse us from praying. προσκαλεσόμενος, an aorist, middle participle, as often, denotes Jesus' tender call to Himself. ἔδωκεν cannot be stressed enough. These extraordinary, miraculous gifts were gifts. Jesus did not say: "Pray for gifts." He said: "Pray for workers." These gifts which Jesus gave were limited to the Apostles, to corroborate His message. On ἐξουσίαν Bengel says: "How great the authority of Him Who gives authority!" Right. He is divine. He has already conquered the unclean spirits, works of Satan, the very antithesis of a Holy God and His angels. The "authority" is twofold: "to cast out, to heal." As mentioned above, πᾶσαν does not mean "each instance" but rather "of every kind". It was a total authority over Satan and his work. The charismatics seldom mention this total authority over Satan. They merely try to impress us with a "higher spirituality". What Jesus gave His disciples is vastly different from this.
6. Vs. 2: Mk. 3:16-19 and Lk. 6:13-16 mention the Twelve earlier. Matthew places them here though they had been called earlier. The list is found once more at Acts 1:13. On the word "apostles" Bengel remarks: "Matthew calls them apostles once, in the present passage; Mark does so once (6:30), and that when they returned from that mission; John never does so, for in 13:16 he uses the word in its general, not its particular, meaning; Luke does so in his Gospel particularly, but only on occasions, and those the same as Matthew and Mark or subsequently, for other weighty reasons. See Lk. 6:13; 9:10; 11:49; 22:14; 24:10. . . . After the advent of the Paraclete, in the Acts and Epistles, they are never called disciples, but apostles. In the Acts, those only are called disciples, who had either learned with the apostles, or were then learning from the apostles, and were apostolic men. See Acts 6:1; 21:16. After which last passage the word 'disciple' does not occur again in the NT." The names of the apostles, as indicated above, are recorded four times in the Gospels and Acts. Fahling, pages 251-261, has an excellent discussion of the Twelve. From him and other sources we offer some summary thoughts. Space does not allow more extensive notes: 1) The Twelve are named in pairs. They went out in pairs; 2) In all four lists we find three quaternions, groups of four; 3) Peter is always first, primus inter pares, first among equals, in the first quaterion; Philip the first in the second group; James the son of Alphaeus in the third; and, Judas always last, though not found in the Acts list for obvious reasons; 4) The names within the quaternions vary in order, for example, Matthew places himself last in his quaterion; 5) The first six were formerly disciples of the Baptist; 6) The first four were

fisherman; Matthew was a tax gatherer; James, the son of Alphaeus was a relative of Jesus; Simon, the Zealot (that's what Canaanite means), was a proud Pharisee; Judas was not a Galilean like the other eleven, but from Judea. The point we are making is that Jesus called twelve men from various backgrounds, endowed with differing gifts, but sanctified and purified their natural endowments for His service. All were given to Jesus by the Father, even Judas. That was no accident. It had been prophesied. This does not mean that God willed Judas to betray Jesus but that He used the betraying apostleship of Judas to save all men from sin.

7. The commentaries point out that Matthew, unlike Mark and Luke, records Jesus' instructions (vss. 6-42) which cover not only the tour to the Jews in Galilee but also the instructions for their ministry to both Jews and Gentiles which begins at Mt. 28:19. Vs. 5b is very explicit: "Don't go on a road that leads to the Gentiles and don't enter any city of the Samaritans." Jesus came first for the Jew. This first tour, which somewhat resembled our modern vicarage, was a trial mission.
8. Vs. 6: δὲ μᾶλλον means "but instead". Here Jesus recalls the metaphor of vs. 36. Not only were the children of Israel lost, as are all men, but they had been miserably misled by their teachers. "The sheep, the lost, of the house of Israel" is very explicit. οἴκου is like "of the nation".
9. Vs. 7: πορευόμενοι, as a participle, is repeated from vs. 6. This vs. immediately reminds us of the preaching of the Baptist, Mt. 3:2, and of Jesus, Mt. 4:17. It was clearly the preaching of repentance, sin and grace. ἤγγικεν means "it has drawn near and therefore is now here." This is not eschatological. Jesus was the embodiment of the Kingdom of Heaven. In other words, the Twelve were to preach Christ. κηρῦσσω means to bear a message from a superior. The Twelve were true heralds.
10. Vs. 8: Note the four groups of unfortunates, victims of Satan. Four simple commands put in the present imperative. There is no record of the Twelve (as in the case of the Seventy) actually performing these miraculous deeds but Jesus gave them this authority temporarily. They did not pray for these gifts. There is no record of these gifts going beyond the Apostolic Age. In fact, Hebr. 2:4 makes it plain that these extraordinary gifts merely attended and corroborated the Apostolic message only in the Apostolic Age. They are always and ever secondary to the preaching of the Kingdom of Heaven. To absolve penitent sinners, to bring the spiritually dead to life, to prepare sinners for heaven, these are the great themes. This is the great ἐξουσία. NEB translates the last sentence: "You received without cost; give without charge." This in no way violates what is said in vs. 10: "The laborer is worthy of His food." Jesus means that we should never charge money for the spiritual gifts which He gives man in the Gospel. When a pastor takes perquisites for preaching, baptizing, confirmation, etc., he should make sure that he does not violate the principle: "You received without cost; give without charge."