

A golden wheat field at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the scene. The wheat stalks are in sharp focus in the foreground, with some blurred in the background. A dark, semi-transparent text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

MATTHEW 9:32-10:15
MESSIAH ON A MISSION (PART 18)
The Mission and the Missionaries

The Things Jesus Took Authority Over

1. (5:1-7:29) The insufficiency of the Law
2. (8:1-4) Authority over leprosy
(Corruption and the Law)
3. (8:5-13) Spiritual authority over the Gentile needs
4. (8:18-22) Authority over disciples
5. (8:23-27) Authority over creation
(Storms and Chaos)
6. (8:28-34) Authority over demons
7. (9:1-8) Authority over sin “Thy sins are forgiven thee... arise and walk”
8. (9:18, 23-26) Authority over death
9. (9:20-22) Authority over sickness, uncleanness,
and anonymity
10. (9:27-31) Authority over blindness

Authority is Prerequisite to the Harvest

“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”

(Matthew 9:37-38)

Authority is Prerequisite to the Harvest

- Jesus teaches the holiness of the kingdom (Matthew 5-7)
- Jesus reveals relationships in the kingdom (Matthew 13)
- Jesus demonstrates the presence of the Kingdom (Matthew 13)
- Jesus prophesies the future, teaching what will happen because of the kingdom (Matthew 23—Matthew 25)

Unclean Spirits

ἀκάθαρτος

1. pert. to that which may not be brought into contact w. the divinity, impure, unclean: of foods w. κοινός: πᾶν κοινὸν καὶ ἄ. anything common or unclean Acts 10:14, 11:8;. μεμισημένος of birds (and other animals Lev 11:4; Dt 14:7) Rev 18:2;(τὸ) ἄ. what is unclean 2 Cor 6:17; Is 52:11;
2. pert. to moral impurity (Is 6:5; 64:5; Sir 51:5; Pr 3:32 al) unclean, impure (s. ἀκαθαρσία 2) πλεονέκτης and εἰδωλολάτρης Eph 5:5.—τὰ ἄ. (w. πονηρά) impure things Hn 1, 1, 7. τὰ ἄ. τῆς πορνείας the impurities of fornication Rv 17:4 (ἄ. of actions, such as adultery, that defile one). (BDAG, p.34)

The First Missionaries

(Matthew 10:2-4)

Jesus didn't call any who were religious professionals.

He called a group of men that were diverse and varied in degrees of societal and religious participation. The striking contrast between these men is of great importance. The fact that he would call a tax collector (Matt. 9:9) who was obviously a pacifist and worked hand-in-hand with the Roman oppressors to collect unjust taxes on the Jews was scandalous, to say the least. Then call a Zealot who was a revolutionary who had been actively opposing the Roman occupation and inciting anti-Roman sentiment (Matt. 10:4). It is worth meditating on how these two could ever be in the same band of disciples, let alone be elevated to Apostles. Wouldn't this be a conflict of interest? Would these two warring factions and polar opposites not have irreconcilable differences? Apparently not! The unifying force of Jesus and His mission was so powerful that these men, even though nothing earthly, religiously, or politically unites them — Jesus unites them!

The Zealots

The Zealots were a group of ultra-nationalist patriots who were constantly agitating for the overthrow of their Roman overlords.

They were actively working to undermine all efforts of the Jews to collaborate with these Roman occupiers. The Zealots were the "Jewish Liberation Front" of their day, actively opposing Roman occupation. Their provocations led in 66 A.D. to open rebellion, which was crushed by the Romans with enormous loss of life, destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., and mass suicide of the last holdouts at Masada in 73 A.D. to avoid being captured and enslaved by the Roman army.



Jesus Calls His Disciples

“His disciple is a mixed group and somewhat of a motley crew. Some of their names have grand origins. Peter means “Rock,” Andrew means “Manliness,” and John means “The Lord Is Gracious.” Philip, on the other hand, means “Horse Lover.” Within the Twelve, there are two sets of brothers. One was first a disciple of John the Baptist, and one or two may have advocated violent revolt against Rome (Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot). There are four fishermen, one tax collector, and seven without a known occupation. We know some, such as Peter, who is first among the disciples, but not first above them, quite well. We know next to nothing about others, such as James the Lesser” (Archeological Study Bible)

The Gospel of the Kingdom Needs to be Preached (Matthew 10:7)

- This gospel about the kingdom remains the message of the Church today (Acts 8:12; 20:24-25; 28:31). They were told to preach to Israel (Matthew 10:7). We are told to go, teaching them and baptizing in the name (Matthew 28:19).
- We proclaim Jesus as Lord and that He is one. He is not the second person in a Trinity, but rather He is the Mighty God (Isaiah 9:6-7): he has all authority in the universe (Matthew 28:18; Dan 7:13-14).
- To make disciples for this King is to proclaim the good news that God's future reign is already active in this age (compare Matthew 28:20).
- The Gospel is expounded on in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4
- The plan of salvation that allows one into the Kingdom is John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38

Signs Bring Attention to the Gospel (Matthew 10:8)

“The disciples’ mission (vv. 7-8) replicates and extends the mission of Jesus in preaching the coming of God’s kingdom and in healing the sick
(see Matthew 4:23)”

Matthew emphasizes the continuity between Jesus’ mission and that of the disciples precisely because the model of ministry in Jesus’ ministry remains important for Jesus’ followers. Although hardhearted people may never be satisfied with signs

(Matthew 15:37—Matthew 16:1; compare Jn 11:47-48; 12:10-11; Acts 4:16-17), signs can draw other people’s attention to the gospel (Mt 11:3-6, 21, 23; see also Jn 2:11; Acts 4:29-30; 9:35, 42).”

(Keener: New Testament Cultural Contexts, (1996) 85-89)

FOOTNOTE 1: DEMONS AND DEMON POSSESSION IN THE BIBLE (CULTURAL BACKGROUND STUDY BIBLE)

Demons in the Old Testament

- The Old Testament is remarkably reticent about evil spirits, so much so that it seems to have no developed demonology. Even so, three facts stand out:
- There are no incantations, rituals or amulets prescribed for giving an individual protection from spirits. Considering how much of the Torah is devoted to ritual and to sacred objects, this is a remarkable omission.
- God is said to have complete authority over the spirits, which cannot operate in the world without His approval. If a “lying spirit” goes out it is only with divine consent (1 Kin. 22:23; cf. Job 1–2).
- The main concern of the Old Testament writers was that people avoid seeking to avail themselves of magical powers through contact with spirits (e.g., Deut. 18:10-12). Demons in the New Testament The New Testament demonstrates two realities about evil spirits:
- Jesus has absolute power over them; this was a matter of divine authority, not magic or sorcery.
- The New Testament mocks the claims of magicians by describing their inability to deal with real spirits. The failed efforts of Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9-24) and the sons of Sceva (Acts 19:13-16) to obtain apostolic authority illustrate the point that the miracles of the New Testament had nothing in common with ancient magic. Jesus had no use for demonic spirits and did not seek to employ them to do His bidding.

FOOTNOTE 2: CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL NOTES

Dress and Fashion in the Greco-Roman World

JAMES 2 In the Greco-Roman world clothing basically fit into two categories: the tunic and the mantle. The tunic was something like the modern T-shirt, but very long (of knee or ankle length), made of wool or linen, with or without sleeves. In ancient terminology one “entered into” a tunic to put it on. A mantle was something like a large blanket wrapped around a person. The tunic (or chiton) was the basic article of clothing for virtually all people, serving as a linen undergarment worn next to the skin. The only item of clothing the poorest people may have owned, it was often quite dirty.

- The average Roman man added a girdle and an abolla, a rectangular woolen mantle worn in a double fold over the right shoulder and fastened with a pin.
- Upper-class men wore a second undergarment over the tunic, in addition to the girdle.
- Prosperous Romans donned the familiar toga, a long, oval-shaped (or semicircular) woolen mantle draped over the body in a series of complicated folds. Although the toga originated among the Romans, it soon found wide acceptance by wealthy citizens throughout the empire and remained the standard formal dress for Roman citizens until the late Roman period.
- Alternative garments for upper-class men included the himation, a mantle of a Greek style more popular in the eastern part of the empire, and the chlamys, a short, woolen mantle (like a cape), often associated with soldiers

FOOTNOTE 2 Pt. 2: CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL NOTES

Lower-class women often wore only an ankle-length tunic, gathered by a belt across the upper abdomen, while women of higher economic status added a mantle — often either a himation or a peplos — over the tunic. These garments were held in place by ornate “safety-pins” called fibula.

- The himation for women was smaller than that for men. It was sometimes dyed in various colors or adorned with a pattern, although coloration and patterning were simple by modern standards. But the patterns and coloring, as well as the size, did distinguish whether a himation was intended for a man or a woman. A woman’s himation was often pleated and could be worn in a wide variety of styles (over the shoulder, as a cape, as a hood, diagonally across the upper body, etc.).
- The peplos was a single, large rectangle of cloth, distinguished from the himation by its size and especially by the way it was folded: The peplos always used a cuff-like overfold called an apotygma. A woman’s peplos was typically as long as the distance from her shoulders to her feet, plus about 12 inches (30.5 cm) for the apotygma. The fold for the apotygma was approximately at the shoulders, from which it draped outward and down over the upper body. The fold could be worn as a hood over the head as a sign of modesty when a woman was walking in the streets or taking part in certain religious ceremonies (cf. 1Co 11:6).

FOOTNOTE 2 Pt. 3: CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL NOTES

Clothes were draped over the body rather than fitted; indeed, this draping effect is part of the classical ideal of dignity and serenity. At night, one's clothing (especially the mantle) could also serve as a blanket. Leather sandals were the standard footwear for all ranks of society. In ancient sculpture, people often appear wearing only a mantle (if anything at all). This is because of the classical ideal of beauty and does not reflect ordinary dress. In fact, people almost always donned tunics under their mantles, and men ordinarily wore loincloths as underwear as well. A scene from Pompeii depicts two female athletes wearing garments similar to a modern two-piece swim suit, suggesting that women of means had a fairly wide variety of underwear and outerwear available to them. Upper-class Roman women often frequently sported exotic hairstyles, often with an outlandish display of curls. Dyeing the hair and wearing expensive cosmetics were popular with women (cf. 1Pe 3:3), who also wore decorative tiaras, pins and nets with their hair. The wearing of rings and other jewelry by both men and women contributed to the display of wealth. James warned his readers not to be so dazzled by the finery of the rich that they showed partiality to wealthy believers over their less fortunate Christian brothers and sisters.

(Archeology Study Bible: James 2)