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Missionary Discourse (Part 1)



The Life and Teachings of Christ - Steve Gregg

In this discourse, Steve Gregg examines Matthew chapter 10 verses 5-15 where Jesus gives instructions to His disciples before sending them out to preach the gospel. Jesus prays for laborers, and after mobilizing them, they are instructed to preach to the lost sheep of Israel. Gregg points out that the disciples were also given the opportunity to demonstrate the kingdom and rely on God's care as they traveled. The focus is on the message of the gospel and trusting in God's provision rather than generating funds.

Transcript

Today we're going to be looking at Matthew chapter 10. The way Matthew has arranged his gospel is the second discourse in Matthew. We've pointed this out on a number of occasions, that Matthew has arranged the teachings of Jesus around five centers in five large discourses.

Chronologically, this isn't the second because the one that Matthew has as the third discourse, which is in Matthew 13, which is the parables discourse, we've already taken because it would seem to fit earlier chronologically. Matthew is not following a chronological approach, he follows a topical approach. Of course, the first great discourse in Matthew is the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5 through 7. Then comes this one, Matthew 10, which we could call the Missionary Discourse, given on the occasion of Jesus sending out the twelve on a brief, temporary mission, not to be confused, of course, with the Great Commission later on.

Then chapter 13 has Matthew's third arrangement. We call that the Parables Discourse because it's principally made up of parables about the kingdom of God. Then Matthew 18 has a lengthy discourse, and not everyone gives it the same name, but it would seem to be about relationships and humility.

And then the last great discourse in Matthew is the Olivet Discourse, which is longer in Matthew than it is in the other two synoptic gospels by a full chapter, Matthew 24 and 25. Now, this one then is like the others in Matthew, the other discourses. This is a compilation of sayings of Jesus on relevant subjects.

Now, one way we know that is that there are parallels to it in Mark and Luke. And in Matthew 10, verses 5 through 15, give us a description of Jesus sending out the twelve and giving them certain instructions. Now, in Matthew 10, the instructions would seem to go all the way to the end of the chapter, through verse 42.

But, verses 5 through 15 have parallels in Mark, chapter 6, verses 7 through 13, and also in Luke, chapter 9, verses 1 through 6. That's Mark 6, 7 through 13, and Luke 9, verses 1 through 6. Now, it's very clear parallels there. It's very obvious that in both those places, in Mark and Luke, Jesus is sending out the twelve, as he is also here. However, after what is equivalent to verse 15 here, the other two gospels say that then the disciples went out and preached and healed the sick and so forth.

In other words, Mark and Luke both would break off this discourse at verse 15. Now, in addition to that, we have further evidence that this is a compilation. And that is that the remaining portions of Matthew 10 are all found, with the exception of a single verse, are all found to have parallels in other parts of the life of Jesus as recorded in Mark and Luke.

And even in some cases, other parts of Matthew. Let me break it down for you, if I can, here. Matthew 10, verses 1 through 4, essentially talks about the call of the twelve.

Now, it doesn't really talk about the call, their initial call here. They were dealt with, or we were introduced to them on another occasion, which was really the appropriate occasion, in Luke, chapter 6, just before giving the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus spent a night in prayer on a mountain, then he came down and selected the twelve out of the larger group of disciples.

And their names were given in that place, in Luke, chapter 6. And when we studied Luke, chapter 6 and that particular event, we noticed this list here also. The list of the twelve is given four times in the Gospels. Once in Matthew, once in Mark, and once in Luke, and once in Acts.

But the difference between Matthew's list, which we have here, and the lists in Mark and Luke, is that Mark and Luke tell us of his selection of these men and give their names at the time. Matthew doesn't talk about their initial selection, he talks about them as if they are an existing group already. In verse 1 he says, and when he had called his twelve disciples to him, he gave them power over unclean spirits.

His twelve were obviously a defined group already. He called these twelve to him, and he gave them this authority, and then it gives their names in verses 2 through 4. And we've talked about their names before, we won't deal with them again today. But then it goes on in verse 5 to talk about him sending them out.

These twelve Jesus sent out and gave them certain commands. And those commands, as I pointed out, are in verses 5 through 15. And those have their parallel, as I already told

you, in Mark 6 and in Luke 9. Now, after verse 15, there is material that has parallels elsewhere.

In Matthew 10, verses 16 through 22, these verses are parallel to the Olivet Discourse, or at least they are found in the Olivet Discourse, particularly in Mark and Luke's version of it. Matthew seems to have the verses located here, also something like them in Matthew 24. But in the verses 16 through 22 here, I'll give you the verses in the Olivet Discourse.

Mark 13, 9 through 13. That's Mark 13, 9 through 13. And Luke 21, verses 12 through 19.

Of course, we'll look at those as we come to the proper place. The only verse that does not have a parallel anywhere else in the Gospels is Matthew 10, 23. It's the only unique verse, I guess we could say, that has nothing like it elsewhere in the Gospels.

Then, verses 24 and 25. Matthew 10, 24 and 25. Parallel, something Jesus said in the Upper Room, much later than this, in the Upper Room Discourse, just before his own betrayal, in John 15, 20.

Somewhat expanded in Matthew 10, 24 and 25. The next segment in Matthew 10 is verses 26 through 33. That's Matthew 10, 26 through 33.

You can see in many cases the paragraph breaks. If you have paragraph breaks in your Bible, it may resemble these segments, but not exactly. 26 through 33 are found in a different context in Luke 12, verses 2 through 9. That's Luke 12, verses 2 through 9. Then, verses 34 through 36 are also found in Luke 12, but verses 49 through 53.

Again, that's Matthew 10, verses 34 through 36 have their parallel in Luke 12, verses 49 through 53. So, we could say that altogether in Matthew 10, verses 26 through 36 are found in Luke chapter 12, but not real close to each other in Luke 12, but they are there in that chapter in Luke. And in an entirely different context than Matthew gives them.

Now, Matthew 10, verses 37 through 39 seem to parallel, at least in thought, Luke 14, verses 26 and 27. Again, in a totally different context than they're found in here. Luke 14, verses 26 and 27.

Then those last verses here in Matthew 10, verses 40 through 42, seem to expand upon John 13, verse 20. Verses 40 through 42 in this chapter seem to be an expansion on John 13, verse 20. I wanted to give you all of that first before we go verse by verse through it and get the meaning and the ideas out of it.

But just so you'll see, when I tell you that Matthew puts things together from all over the place, from all over Jesus' teaching ministry and puts them in one place because they resemble things he said on a given occasion, you can see this is a good example of that, just like the Sermon on the Mount was a good example of this and the Olivet Discourse is a good example of this. So this is a typical thing that Matthew does. Okay, by the way,

someone might say, well, how do we know that Jesus didn't say all these things in Matthew chapter 10 at the same time? And it's Luke, for example, who divides them up artificially into other categories and other contexts.

And how do we know that Matthew 10 isn't, in fact, the entire missionary discourse that Jesus gave when he sent out the Twelve on this occasion? And that Mark and Luke, in giving their parallels, simply abbreviate it and shorten it and only give a small part of it. How do we know that? In other words, how do we know for sure that Matthew is, you know, collecting things that Jesus said elsewhere? Maybe the other Gospels are the ones that are to blame for what's going on here. Frankly, I shouldn't have said to blame because there's no blame to be affixed.

There's no guilt in arranging information topically if one chooses to do so. But there is clear evidence that we have more than one discourse given on different occasions here. For example, in verse 5, Matthew 10, 5, Jesus said to the Twelve when he sent them out, Do not go into the way of the Gentiles.

Do not enter a city of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But later, in the segment that parallels the Olivet Discourse, in verse 18, Jesus says, And you will be brought before governors and kings for my sake as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. Now, this mission trip he was sending them out on initially here was not to involve Gentile territories.

It was to be simply within the bounds of Israel. However, in verse 18, he's looking at a broader mission, a worldwide mission where they'll be brought before kings and governors. Well, that didn't happen, I'm sure, on this very brief mission he sent them out on this occasion.

And they'd be, you know, bear witness to all nations. He says later on, they'll be hated by all nations. In verse 22, he says, And you'll be hated by all for my name's sake.

Actually, the same expression is found in Matthew 24, but it says, by all nations. And also in the parallels in Luke 21 and Mark 13. So, what we can see is that not all of these things were relevant to the particular mission.

Everything up to verse 15 was, and everything else comes from some other context, but Matthew no doubt has joined them here because they do, everything here has something to do with missionary work, something to do with the commission either given at this time or at a later time to the disciples in terms of reaching the world with the gospel. And therefore, Matthew has brought them all together in one place. Now, the context of this, for the context, we need to pick it up at verse 36 of the previous chapter, at the top of the previous paragraph.

Matthew 9, 36 says, But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for

them, because they were weary and scattered like sheep, having no shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, The harvest truly is plentiful, and the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

And having told them to pray for this, he then mobilizes them for that very task. In other words, if you're going to be praying, God, please send more laborers in the harvest. God, please send more missionaries.

You better be prepared for him to send you. You better be prepared to put your money where your mouth is. And so, we see in chapter 10, verse 1, And when he had called his twelve disciples to him, he gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

Now, when he sent them out, in verse 8, it has him saying to them, Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. These are the things he told them to do, in addition to preaching. See, verse 7, he tells them to go and preach, saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand, but they're supposed to demonstrate it by, according to verse 8, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, and casting out demons.

Now, not surprisingly, the Alexandrian text leaves out both cleanse lepers and raise the dead, probably because there's no reference to those in verse 1. In verse 1, it says he gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal all kinds of sickness. So, healing the sick and casting out demons is specified as what he gave them power to do in verse 1. And in verse 8, however, he would add to that cleanse lepers and raise the dead. If the text is receptive, it is to be trusted.

I personally trust it better than the Alexandrian text, so I accept it. Now, what does it mean that he gave them power over unclean spirits in verse 1? The word power there is... Actually, the Greek word there is *exousia*, which means, more properly, authority. There is a difference.

Although, the parallel statement in Luke 9, 1, says he gave them power and authority. That would be *dunamis*, power, and *exousia*, authority. Here it only refers to authority, though the New King James and the King James wrongly translate it as power.

He gave them authority to cast out demons. And he gave them authority to heal the sick. But also, according to Luke's version, he gave them power to do so as well.

Now, it's one thing to give authority, and it's another thing to give power. I can give you authority if I possess it, but I may not be able to give you power to do something. For example, if my son said to me, can I go out and cut down one of those trees out in the yard, and it's about three feet thick, I can authorize him to do it.

I can say, go ahead, have at it. You've got my blessing. And I have thereby given him authority to do it.

I've given him the right to, because it's been my authority. The trees are mine. They're on my property.

And I can tell anyone I want to that they can cut them down. And if I give them permission, they have then been authorized. They have authority.

They have the right to do it. But to give him the power to do it is another thing. I could cut down a tree perhaps.

I probably could cut down a great number of trees that my son couldn't, because the difference in his size and mine. But I couldn't give him the power to do it. I could only give him the authorization.

There's a limit to what I can do for my son. But Jesus was able to give the disciples authority, which in a sense could be just permission. It could be authorization.

But he was also able to give them power. He was able to transfer his power to them. Now, no doubt this power was of the Holy Spirit since Jesus himself cast out demons by the Spirit of God, he said.

That was the power and authority at work in him was the power of the Spirit of God. He said that in Matthew chapter 12, in verse 28, if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. And since Jesus did cast out demons by the Spirit of God, if he gave power to the disciples to do the same thing, it might be suggested that he gave them the Spirit of God.

And that they were able to go out and operate in the power of the Spirit. Well, I have no doubt that this is true, although this was only a temporary endowment. Because it wasn't until after his resurrection that they were able to receive the Holy Spirit long term.

We can read in John chapter 7, for example. In John chapter 7, in verses 37 through 39, well, we'll just take verse 39. John 7, 39 says, But he spoke concerning the Spirit whom those believing in him would receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

So the Holy Spirit wasn't really given to the church until Jesus was glorified. That would be in his resurrection and ascension. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the church.

And looking forward to that, Jesus said to his disciples in Acts 1.8, You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. Now, he spoke of that as a future thing in Acts 1.8. And it was fulfilled in Acts 2.4, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they received power. In fact, they did the same kinds of miracles we read up here.

But the question is, how do we explain this? I mean, the Holy Spirit was not yet given,

because Jesus was not yet glorified. It was as yet future that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them. And yet, here he gave them power to go out and do those things, to heal the sick, to raise the dead, and so forth, and cleanse lepers.

I guess, I don't know the answer. Usually I ask questions in order to answer them, but I don't know the answer. I think it would be fair to say he did give them an endowment of the Holy Spirit on this occasion, but not a permanent one.

It's sort of like when you get short-term insurance for one trip or something like that. I mean, later on, or on other occasions, you might have permanent or ongoing insurance, but sometimes for a special journey, you might insure your car just for that trip if you'd otherwise have the car parked and not using it. You are then authorized for that period of time only to use your car.

And I don't know if there's a parallel there. Not simply because I don't understand exactly what the disciples experienced when they were given power over unclean spirits, or authority and power, on this occasion. And yet, they didn't have it later.

You know, it was after this, at the Mount of Transfiguration, that nine of these same twelve men were unable to cast a demon out of a young boy. Now, when they asked Jesus why, it's true, he didn't say, well, because the Holy Spirit hasn't come yet on you. He said it's because of your lack of faith, and because this kind comes up with prayer and fasting.

But it's interesting that they didn't seem to have the power to cast out demons on a later occasion than this. So I would have to say that this mission of the twelve was sort of a foretaste with a temporary endowment of power to go out and do the kinds of things they'd be doing permanently after his departure. It was perhaps part of their training, as much as it was part of a ministry of Jesus.

On the one hand, if we ask why did Jesus send them out on this occasion, on the one hand, it was no doubt to get the word about the kingdom out to more people, because Jesus saw the multitudes, and they were like sheep without a shepherd, and so he couldn't be everywhere at once, so he sent them out to many villages. But that doesn't, you know, if he couldn't himself come to those villages, they'd still be sheep without a shepherd. They really couldn't have their circumstance reversed until after he was gone and sent his spirit, and the apostles then, of course, would evangelize the same areas as well as the rest of the world.

So why send the disciples out on this occasion? They couldn't do much permanent good for the people of Galilee, probably. They could heal some sick and do some miracles, but as far as bringing the kingdom of God, their announcement was simply the kingdom of God is at hand, the kingdom of God is near. They couldn't bring people into the kingdom because Jesus hadn't yet fully established it.

Now, later in the book of Acts, we read of Peter going around from place to place in this very region in Galilee and ministering in different cities and towns, but, and the other apostles probably did so too, but I have a feeling this particular mission was principally for the apostles' benefit, for them to get a taste of what their ministry was going to be without him. Later on in this discourse, he warns them about persecution they're going to have, and no doubt that would scare them a little, unless they had a taste of the kind of power they would also have. And so, you know, you don't really read of the apostles doing any miracles, except here, and on one other occasion, recorded in Luke 10, where Jesus sent out 70.

It was apparently a second mission like this one, but in the second case, which is recorded only in Luke, and chapter 10, he sent out 70, not just the 12. Now, we know that, and I see some critics or some skeptics have thought, well, in the story of Luke's, Luke chapter 10 of Jesus sending out the 70, we don't really have another event, but it's just a corruption of this story. You know, that's just what critics are always saying, liberals are always saying, well, you know, we see the same tradition underlying both of these stories, they're different in detail, and so forth, but that represents a corruption of the tradition before it was written down, and so forth.

And, you know, Matthew thought, and Mark thought, that Jesus just sent out the 12, and Luke thought it was 70, or changed it to 70 for some reason to represent the 70 nations of the Gentile world, or whatever. I mean, there's all kinds of explanations given. The fact, however, is that Luke records both the sending out of the 12 and the sending out of the 70 as separate events.

Luke records this sending out of the 12 in Luke 9, and the sending out of the 70 as a separate thing in Luke 10, which suggests that Luke was aware of both as separate events, and treats them as separate events. It is true that Jesus said to the 70 in Luke chapter 10 many of the same things he said here, but that should not be surprising, it was a similar kind of omission. But, apart from this time when Jesus sent out the 12, and the other time when he sent out the 70, we have no record of the apostles doing miracles.

So, we have no record healing the sick, casting out demons successfully, or any of that, before the resurrection of Christ, and before the day of Pentecost. So, it would appear that there were two occasions, and as far as we know, only two, that Jesus bestowed on the disciples temporarily power and authority to go out and cast out demons and to heal the sick. And this would be probably just for the duration of the mission.

And the purpose of the mission was no doubt partly for the sake of planting seeds throughout Galilee that could later be watered when the apostles would later come through after Pentecost. But, I think, again, as I said, also probably very largely for the benefit of the disciples. This gave Jesus an occasion to get their feet wet in the very

ministry that they would be devoting their whole lives to later after his absence, but they could do so before his departure.

It was sort of like supervised assigned field work, you know, I mean, it's part of their training. He tells them what to do, then he lets them go out and have a lab for a little while, and then they can come back and he can adjust them and so forth. And the case of the 70, in Luke 10, when the 70 came back, they said, Oh Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name.

And Jesus said, Well, don't rejoice in this, the demons are subject unto you, but rejoice that your name is written in heaven. So Jesus obviously gave them a chance to get out and get their feet wet in what they were doing and see what their reaction would be and if necessary put some kind of balance on it or some kind of correction. It's just a good way to train people.

It's not to just have them in the classroom all the time, but to get them out on some outreach and see if they're really learning and give them a taste for what it's going to be like out there. In fact, I've thought, I've many times thought, but I've never done this, that it would be a positive thing for me to add to this course at the end, you know, after graduation or whatever, or maybe even before graduation, but after we finish going through the Bible, an outreach segment, which would be not just a typical outreach such as you might get in a short-term missionary school, but more of a living by faith lab. I think I told one or two of you about this before.

I've mentioned it several different years. I've just never employed it because I haven't had any students running forward saying, here am I, send me, you know, but the idea would be to do just what Jesus did here, to send out students two by two, two guys. I don't think the girls would be sent out like this because the idea would be they'd hitchhike, although I guess girls could do it if they took the Greyhound or something, but a couple of guys going out with no money, and they're supposed to hitchhike, and they're supposed to tell no one their needs, tell no one that they're traveling by faith, but just minister the gospel to whoever they meet, and their assignment is to get to the East Coast and back in four weeks.

And... Does that sound like fun? I'll tell you what. Jefferson says this isn't the 1960s. That's exactly right.

See, what I just described is what I used to do. I used to do that very thing. That's how my ministry got started, hitchhiking around, telling no one my needs, living by faith, having no money, just preaching the gospel, and you know, that did something for me that I wish I could give to my students, and I can't give it to them in the classroom.

I can give you lectures about living by faith. I can give you lectures about, you know, trusting God for finances or just about the faithfulness of God, and you can take it all in

and see the scriptures and nod your head and say, oh yes, that's truly scriptural. But, uh, unless you really get out there and do it, you don't know it, I think.

Now, I'm not saying everybody should be hitchhiking. That's not the only way to live by faith, but it's just something that occurred to me. Every year when the students come in here, especially the ones that are zealous to be in the ministry, I just wish I could take out of me my experience and just plant it in them, and I can't do that.

I can tell them about it, but they've got to get their own experience, and that's why I thought it might be, you know, a valuable part of the training. It would have to be optional and voluntary, but to send out teams like this, two by two, just like Jesus did, to go out on a mission that had some, you know, defined, limited duration, and they'd have to do the very things that Jesus said to do here, do it by faith, and so forth. We're going to get to that in a moment.

But, um, I'll tell you, it changed the lives of the people who did it, and I'm sure that that's why Jesus had his disciples do it, so they could get a little bit of meat on their spiritual bones, a little bit of experience under their belt, before he had to leave them on their own. And so, that's probably why he sent them out. In any case, he gave them what would appear to be a temporary bestowal of the Holy Spirit.

It wouldn't be until later, until the day of Pentecost, that the Holy Spirit would come and permanently reside in them in power. But they got to have a foretaste of it, as it were. Now, the names of the disciples are given in verses two through four.

We won't belabor that, but look at verse five. These twelve, Jesus sent out, in my opinion, Matthew words this in just such a way as to call our attention back to the last verse in chapter nine, where Jesus says, Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labors into his harvest. Matthew 9, 38 says, Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers.

And in chapter ten, verse five, these twelve, Jesus sent out. The Lord of the harvest began sending out labors, echoing the words of what he told them to pray for. And he commanded them, saying, this is verse five, Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Now, why is this? Now, you might recall that they had already seen one very successful campaign in Samaria. Jesus, when he stopped and talked to the woman at the well, later the whole city came out and got converted. If the disciples went to certain Jewish cities, they'd find obstinance there.

Jesus indicated that they would in the later part of the discourse. They'd find resistance. No doubt they'd be tempted to go back to one of the cities of Samaria, where the people

were more receptive.

Jesus had already pointed out more than once that Gentiles were, in some cases, more receptive than the Jews. However, on this particular mission, they were not to go to the Gentiles, nor to the Samaritans, though they might be sorely tempted to do so when they find out how hard-necked their fellow Jews are toward Christ, in many respects. But they were to go to Israel first because, and this is a very important thing that comes up repeatedly in the New Testament, even in the book of Acts, Israel had a prior claim to Jesus.

The lost sheep of the house of Israel have a prior claim to Jesus before the Gentiles and the Samaritans do. Now, he refers to Israel in verse 6 here as the lost sheep of the house of Israel. That echoes what we saw back in chapter 9 verse 36.

Jesus, when he saw the multitudes moved with compassion for them because they were weary and scattered like sheep, having no shepherd. And it's this shepherd's heart that Jesus had for these lost and scattered sheep of Israel, of his own countrymen. That was the reason for his sending the disciples out on this occasion to those lost sheep.

Now, Israel did have a prior claim. For one thing, even though Jesus was coming to bring in a new covenant, one which would ultimately embrace all nations including ourselves, yet the new covenant itself was first to be given, as the scripture says, to Israel. In Jeremiah 31, where we have the clearest passage in the Old Testament on the subject of God establishing a new covenant, it begins like this.

Jeremiah 31, 31 says, Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. There's no reference there to Gentiles being part of this deal. And he goes on to tell about the new covenant being him writing his laws in their hearts and so forth.

This is the very thing that Jesus came to do to initiate this and to bring in this new covenant that Jeremiah predicted. But Jeremiah said, God's going to make this covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. So they get first chance.

Now, if they reject it, or even if a portion of them do accept it, it will later be offered to other people as well. But Israel was the covenant people of God already. They already had a relationship of covenant with God, and he promised that they'd get first crack at participation in the new covenant.

There's other places in the scripture that suggest this, even in the ministry of Jesus. In Matthew chapter 15, when a Gentile woman, a Seraphim nation woman, who had been came to Jesus seeking help for her daughter, Jesus said in verse 24, Matthew 15, 24, he answered and said, I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. So initially, he wouldn't give her anything.

Initially, he ignored her. She was a Gentile. He was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

But she persisted, and Jesus finally gave her what she asked for because of her faith. In verse 28, Jesus answered and said to her, Oh, woman, great is your faith. Let it be to you as you desire.

So, in verse 28, even though Israel had prior claim, a Gentile who had enough faith could press in and get the blessing too, obviously, just as it was true also in the Old Testament times. But when Jesus said, I have not been sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, what he's saying there is it's not time for me to go out and do any evangelistic missions going with Gentiles. The lost sheep of Israel are the ones that God has made a promise to.

He's got to fulfill that promise to them first. Yes, Jenny? It was because of God keeping a promise that he made to them that he would that he'd give them the first chance. Now, remember, when he said, I'll make a new covenant with the house of Israel, Jesus made that new covenant in the upper room with his disciples.

The house of Israel, the promises are made to the remnants, the believing remnants of the house of Israel. I don't know if you were here when we went through the Israel series. We had about six tapes on Israel.

Did you get a chance to hear any of those? That would explain this a little more than I'm able to do right now. But basically, the Bible indicates that God's promises, and this says this in the Old Testament as well as the New, that God's promises to Israel were really applicable to the believing portion of the nation of Israel, the believing remnant. Isaiah said, for example, though the children of Israel be as the multitude of the sands of the sea, yet only a remnant shall be saved.

And there are other passages like that that indicate that the believing remnant within the nation of Israel were the ones to whom the promises applied. Well, Jesus, the promise was he'd make his covenant with Israel. Well, the believing remnant was in the upper room with him on that evening when he said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood that is made with you.

And so, after that, of course, he commissioned them to go to all nations, although for a long time they still went to Israel. Look at Acts chapter 13. You'll see Paul's feelings are very much the same on this as were Jesus' feelings.

In Acts 13 and verse 46, Paul received bad treatment at the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch. And it says, Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first, meaning the Jews of that city. But since you rejected and judged yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turned to

the Gentiles.

Because God had already been in relationship with the Jews by a prior covenant, they had first claimed on the new covenant. Now, when we say that all nations are the same after the cross, we have to remember there was a transitional period, very much so, between the cross and the destruction of Jerusalem. There was a 40-year period there during which evangelism still was, well, let's just say the church was still centered in Jerusalem.

It was still a largely Jewish-dominated organization. The apostles were all still alive, or most of them. Some of them had died, but they were mostly still alive and were the Jewish leaders of the church.

The church was considered to be part of Judaism for the most part by many. Paul understood otherwise and so did others. But not until the destruction of Jerusalem did it become clear that the church was not a Jewish movement.

It was an international movement. It was not ethnically tied. But I don't think that God necessarily objected to that obscurity during that 40 years.

I think that 40 years was the time of transition, just like the Jews had a 40-year time of transition from the time they left Egypt until they came into the Promised Land. God made the covenant with them at Sinai just as soon as they came out of Egypt, but there's another 40 years before they fully inherited the promises of that covenant. So also when Jesus brought in the new covenant, it was like 40 years' time before the church came into its own, apart from any association with Israel.

And while it was true that in the sight of God the nations of the world were all equal with Israel during that 40-year time, I mean, God would accept a Gentile as readily as a Jew, as Paul makes very clear in his epistles. Yet it was a time during which God was still reaching out to the Jews in a way that was intensive compared to afterwards. After 70 A.D., there was no special treatment given to the Jews at all, but Paul, even when he went to these Gentile territories, would first go to the Jews and try to reach as many of them as he could to extract from the synagogue that Jewish remnant that really belonged to the true Israel of God.

And then to extend it to the Gentiles in the same city. Frequently it happened. Paul said that in Romans 1.16 that the gospel is the power of God for salvation to all who believe, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

It's the Jew who had the first chance at it. So when Jesus went out to twelve, on this occasion, Matthew 10, it was not at all time for the outreach to the Gentiles, and so he restricted their activity to those lost sheep of the house of Israel, to the Jewish cities, probably of Galilee and possibly including some in Judea, depending on how long the

mission extended. By the way, I want to make this clear, we don't get the record of their return.

We're not told how long the mission was. Some have speculated it was only a few days. Some have speculated it was several months.

It's certainly more likely to have been months long than days only. Given the instructions that we're about to read that Jesus gave them, they can hardly hope to have accomplished it in a few days. Probably weeks or months would be more like it, though we aren't given any specific duration of this outreach.

Verse 7, he gives them their specific instructions. And as you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. That was their message.

He doesn't tell them anything else to say. Just go and tell people the kingdom of heaven is at hand. That's what John the Baptist was saying.

That's what Jesus, in fact, said in Mark 1, 14 and 15. That's the basic message. Now, to the Jew, that would be pregnant with meaning, of course, because the kingdom of God represented the hopes and dreams of the Jewish people, although they really misunderstood what it meant.

They could be cleared up on that later. What they needed to know that this was, in fact, the appointed time. This was the time of which the prophets spoke.

This was the Messianic time. Now, the disciples were not given instructions to clarify this message. Now, let's face it.

If you went into a Jewish city in those days and said, listen, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and that implied the Messiah was coming soon, realize those people would have the wrong impression. They would think we're talking about a political thing, we're talking about a revolution, we're talking about a military Messiah, and all that wrongheadedness was going to go uncorrected on this mission. They were just to say, the kingdom of God is at hand, and leave it at that, apparently.

Well, they were supposed to do some other preaching, no doubt. Probably they were supposed to just tell people what they'd heard from Jesus. But they hadn't heard enough from Jesus for their own opinions to be corrected.

The apostles, even at this time, still didn't understand the spiritual nature of the kingdom. Therefore, Jesus didn't entrust them with elaborate teaching ministry at this point. That would have been disastrous.

They hardly even knew what their own words meant when they said, the kingdom of heaven is at hand or the kingdom of God is at hand. But they were, nonetheless, to get

people excited about the fact that the time, in fact, was near, of which the prophet spoke. Of course, after Pentecost, the apostles could go back to these same villages and explain what the kingdom of God was about, and give them the gospel that the people were supposed to be primed and set on the alert that the kingdom of God was near.

And this would be demonstrated, not with just verbal declarations, but with visible power, that the power of the kingdom was at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Remember, we looked a moment ago at Matthew 12, 28, when Jesus said, if I cast out demons by the spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Obviously, the ministry of casting out demons, the ministry of healing the sick, these things were signs of the invasion of the present order and the present age by the kingdom of God. The disciples were given the opportunity to demonstrate that as well as they declared that the kingdom was coming. At the end of verse 8, he says, freely you have received, freely give.

I'll comment on that in a moment. Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs, for the worker is worthy of his food. Now, here Jesus gives them sort of their financial policy for the ministry.

And there's a couple of things I want to observe. First of all, in verses 9 and 10, he tells them not to provide for themselves gold or silver or copper, that is, don't take money with them, nor a bag for their journey, not even a backpack, nor two tunics, that is, not even a change of clothes, nor sandals, nor staffs. In other words, you are supposed to travel light.

Now, this wasn't just because the mission was urgent. It was because, he said in verse 10, the worker is worthy of his food, meaning that this would not only give them a chance to exhibit faith in God for the provision, but it would give their listeners a chance to show themselves responsible to return physical blessings for spiritual. The Apostle Paul taught elsewhere that in 1 Corinthians 9, he said, if we have ministered to you in spiritual things, is it any great matter that we should receive back from you material things? And the Jews already understood this.

The Jews understood that the Levites, for example, were full-time in spiritual ministry. And therefore, it was legislated in the law that they had to give some of their finances, 10%, to support these people. In addition to that, rabbis who traveled around and came to the synagogue would often be supported by freewill offerings and so forth.

And therefore, for Jesus to send them out was to send them into a culture that would recognize that if they're giving us something of value, if they're giving us a message that is spiritually valued by us, then we will help these people provide housing and food and

so forth for them, like they would for a traveling rabbi. The thing is, though, that this was principally for the training of the disciples, that they might learn that God could be trusted when they had nothing, when they had no visible means of support. Now, let me turn your attention over to something in Luke that happened much later.

In Luke chapter 22, in Luke 22, verse 35, Jesus was now in the upper room with the disciples just before they went to the Garden of Gethsemane and he was arrested. So this is just prior to his arrest and just prior to his being taken from them. In Luke 22, 35, he said to them, When I sent you without a money bag, sack, or sandal, did you lack anything? So they said, Nothing.

Then he said to them, But now he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a sack. And he who has no sword, let him sell his garments and buy one. Now, the business about the sword we'll have to talk about later when we come to this passage.

It's one of the more peculiar and difficult passages in the teaching of Jesus as far as what he meant. But notice this contrast. He says, I sent you out before without money bag, without sandals.

Did you lack anything? No. Everything was taken care of. They're reflecting back on the very mission that we're reading about in Matthew 10.

In Matthew 10, we're just told of the instructions. We're not told of the outcome. But here we find they report back considerably later.

They say, Well, yeah, everything was provided for us. We lack nothing. And now he says, Okay, you passed the test.

Now you can take things with you. Now you can provide these things for yourself if you need to. In other words, the idea of traveling that life, of having nothing for your journey and so forth, was not to be a universal permanent ministry ethic or something, or ministry policy.

Although, having been through that, they would learn that someday if they didn't have extra shoes or extra staff or whatever, that by experience they knew God would still take care of them because they went out once having to trust God entirely. Once they went through that boot camp, then he says, Okay, now I don't forbid you to take those things anymore. You got the message.

You lacked nothing. Now you can, you know, from now on you don't have to do it that way if you don't want to. Now the point here is that people in ministry need to be unimpaired.

By shortages. If God calls you to go on the mission field, for example, and you say, Okay, I guess I'm going to need X amount of dollars per month on the mission field to support

myself, as soon as I can generate that much support I'll go on the mission field. Well, what if you never generate that support? I have a friend who went to, he used to be on our staff in Bandon, he went to YWAM, he did DPS there, did an SOE there, and he stayed a year on the base in Honolulu waiting for support to be generated so he could go to Thailand.

And for some reason there's this enormous sum that had to be pledged monthly for him to go to Thailand. And he never got it. He never got that money.

He eventually came back to Oregon with his tail between his legs and kind of embarrassed and so forth. He made this big deal when he was leaving that we're going on the mission field, going to Thailand and so forth and came back having not generated the funds and so forth. And it's not that he didn't have enough plane fare to get over there, he just didn't have enough pledged money to guarantee that if he got there that he'd be supported month by month.

And the particular people that he met