

## Jesus Sends Out the Twelve - Lesson 2

### Matthew 10:16-42; Mark 6:12-13; Luke 9:6

Jesus first commanded the disciples to go to the people of Israel with the message of the kingdom. He gave them power and authority to heal and cast out demons legitimatizing their message. The second portion of the instruction looks beyond this specific mission to future dangers and even gives a glimpse of eschatological times. In this mission, the disciples will probably suffer very little if any persecution. But in the future, they will all give their all for the sake of Christ.

#### I. Nature of Future Persecutions

**“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves : be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. <sup>17</sup> But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; <sup>18</sup>And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them (Lit. - witness to them ) and the Gentiles. <sup>19</sup> But when they deliver you up, take no thought (Gk - don't be anxious; worry ) how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. <sup>20</sup> For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. <sup>21</sup>And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. <sup>22</sup>And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. <sup>23</sup> But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. <sup>24</sup> The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. <sup>25</sup> It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more (Lit - certainly) they call them of his household?” Matthew 10:16-25**

Proof for a Future Interpretation:

1. No evidence of the twelve disciples suffering persecution on this tour of Galilee. We do have a few brief verses about the disciples' return after their mission trip, and nothing was mentioned about persecution or trouble. Mark 6:30; Luke 9:10
2. No Gentile ministry. (v. 18) Jesus was very clear, the disciples were only to preach and heal among the Jews. But in verse 18, we are told of testifying to Gentile government officials.
3. No Holy Spirit had been given at this point. (v. 20) Yet Jesus tells them the “Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you” would give them the words to speak in times of examination before officials. This is something that happened beginning in Acts after the coming of the Holy Spirit. Don't miss how Jesus said the Holy Spirit would be “in you!”
4. No world-wide persecution happened. (v.22) Jesus' words are very clear that they would be hated “of all men for my name's sake.” They did not feel this kind of pressure from “all men.” Nothing of that level of hostility was part of the disciples' experience.

5. No Lord's return. (v.23) The term "till the Son of Man be come" can only be speaking of Christ's second coming at the end of the Tribulation. Most scholars believe this extreme, worldwide persecutions are speaking of the time of the 144,000 Jewish witnesses. Jesus is seeing and speaking in view of the hatred witnesses will experience across the ages, from that day until the end! Though difficult levels of persecution have happened many times throughout church history, it will climax in the Tribulation period as described by Jesus here!

"wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" – A snake is wise in its self-preservation. They hide, camouflage, slithered away quickly, hiss, coil, and sometimes strike, all seeking to protect themselves. Most people don't like snakes for all of those reasons! But the dove has no defense mechanism, they don't cause alarm to anyone. They are pretty harmless! What you see, is what you get! Jesus desires His people to be both. In Greek, the phrase "be ye therefore" means seek, learn, and practice this combination of living. As we are among the wolves seeking to persecute us for our belief in Jesus, we must be wise like a snake in recognizing danger, yet innocent, keeping our integrity and Christian testimony while dealing with them. In verse 23, Jesus will tell His followers to flee when persecutions start. Witnesses were not to be foolish or too prideful to escape. Martyrdom was not to be sought. Reasonable care was to be taken.

"beware of men" Jesus told the disciples He was sending them as sheep into the middle of a wolf pack of men. Wow! Not a great picture! Wolves are vicious; they love to chase, hunt in groups, and often kill for no reason. The disciples were described as sheep, dumb and defenseless sheep. The raging wolves were a reality! We must remember these attacks are **satanic in nature**; a battle between the God of Heaven and the god of this world! Christ went on and identified these cruel wolves.

1. **Religious Leaders** – Throughout church history it was organized religion that has always led the **Satanic attack** on Christ's followers. Much of this animosity stems from pride; an I'm right and you're wrong mentality. It takes a sincere, good heart to examine the Scriptures, ask questions, admit your system, teachers, library, and peers are wrong, and eventually separate from them. Those who led a religious group often enjoy prestige, power, and control over people, and like the Religious Leaders in Jesus' day fought hard to keep it! Jesus begins His description with Jewish persecution in verse 17, but religious oppression has followed much the same pattern over the ages. Remember, religious freedom is a relatively new concept in government, and it is very fragile!
2. **Governments** – Here we see Religious Leaders and the government working together. World history is full of this scenario. State churches, men who ruled over both church and state, were the norm for much of history. Verse 18 tells us it's the religion that hands over the believer to the government. This **Satanic assault** has been part of the lives of Christians since the time of Pilate and Herod at Jesus' trials and it will continue until He comes again! (v.23)
3. **Family** – This is the one that always makes me very sad. I love my family; I've always felt a closeness to my extended relatives; cousins, aunts, uncles, all my in-laws; but in verse 21 Jesus gives the sad truth that even family will actively persecute His followers even to the death! How can this be? How can belief in Christ bring that much hate? Why can't we just tolerate each other, speak kindly, and even reject respectfully? Remember, the only explanation – **Satanic hatred** is what causes men to lose natural

affection! This is not a new concept for those who love and serve God. Micah 7:5-7 tells us the same happened to Old Testament saints.

“take no thought how or what ye shall speak” – The KJV phrase, “take no thought” means don’t worry or be anxious. This makes me smile – after hearing Jesus describe the future persecution, I would have been shaking with fear! But Jesus said in verse 20, don’t worry about standing before all those “great ones” of religion or government, the Holy Spirit would give the very words to say. Again, the truth of the Holy Spirit placed here in Matthew 10, is evidence these persecutions did not happen at this time, for these disciples did not have an indwelling Holy Spirit, that was to come after the ascension of Christ. These truths of active persecution against them were all in the future. Verse 18 tells us God’s promise that He will use these Holy Spirit words given to the Christians as a very witness to those unbelievers! There in the judgment halls, a wonderful testimony of God’s truth would be given out! In his commentary on Matthew, Bromberg said, “In countries today where Christianity is outlawed, more people learn about the Gospel in the courtroom than on the street.” p. 175 Acts 4:5-8; Phil 1:12-14

“ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake” – We see very distinct phrases that give clues to the futuristic time of this passage. This is another in verse 22. Jesus made it very clear, that there are only two choices when the truth of the gospel is heard, and those who reject Him will hate those who follow Him. Christ went on to say, “all men” will hate you for “my name’s sake.” In Greek, the tense for the word “hated” is a continuous hatred! It won’t quit, but goes on and on! As one identifies with Jesus and follows His ways, this **Satanic attack** of hatred is on them! There is much hate for Christians in the world today, but at the end of the Great Tribulation, it will be a complete hate of all those who have chosen to follow Christ! Later in that same verse, a promise is given to those faithful believers in Christ, “he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” “end” can mean both the end of the age or until one’s death. Paul said this in 2 Timothy 4:16-18.

“when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another” – Jesus gave permission, and highlighted the wisdom is escaping persecution. We will often see Jesus avoiding areas or people who sought to kill or hamper His ministry. The thought that his “hour” had not come was often associated with these times of escape. Jesus would be put to death for our sins, but it was on God’s timetable, not because of Satan’s hate, and we must realize our life is in God’s hands as well. He calls us to be “wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” when dealing with vicious men. Believers are not to be foolish, naive, or pridefully hold their ground, realizing persecution often keeps the gospel moving from place to place! Throughout Acts, the Epistles, and even Christian history, we read of men and women who fled from one town to another, and from one country to another. Remember, America was founded by those escaping religious persecution!

“Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come” – This is a futuristic statement. Scholars see this as the 144,000 Jewish witnesses at the end of the Tribulation Period. Then Jesus will come again and we will be with Him! Then Israel will have their witness and their King on the throne of David!

Rejection to come: master -> disciple; lord -> servant; master of the house -> household – Jesus uses three everyday examples illustrating why His followers' would endure such persecutions. As He, their Master and Lord, suffered persecution and hostility, hatred and insults, and was completely misunderstood; they too would certainly endure the same! Their association with Christ would bring similar treatment.

## II. Desired Reaction to Future Persecutions

“ Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. <sup>27</sup> What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. <sup>28</sup> And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. <sup>29</sup> Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. <sup>30</sup> But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup> Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.”

**Matthew 10:26-31** I’m pretty sure with all these vivid descriptions of persecution even to the death, the disciples were visibly shaken. Up to this point, they had not been a part of anything like this. Jesus had sheltered them from the pressures of His ministry and really, outside of just a few times, Christ had been involved with very little open, physical hostilities. The Religious Leaders were still using wit and trying to discredit Jesus among the people, but here Christ was speaking of the coming of severe suffering. But now He repeats three times not to fear and actually tells them who **should be** feared, reminding them of previously taught wonderful truths that should bring calm to both their hearts and ours!

“Fear them not” – Why should we not fear these persecutors?

1) God will vindicate Himself and His followers and reveal truth at His coming. (v. 23, 26) The day is coming when God will show the world all things. All the wrong thinking, misjudging, and misunderstandings will be made clear! With this in mind, Warren Wiersbe said, “Our task is not to please men, but to proclaim God’s message.” p. 32 They were not to hold anything back in fear, but to fearlessly publicize the gospel! We are called to the same task!

2) Man can only kill the body, but as a believer in Christ our home in heaven is sure. It was Paul who said in 2 Corinthians 5:8, “...to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” He goes on in verse 9 to say, “Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.” Though Martin Luther missed some very real truths of the Scripture, his stand against the religious establishment did bring him persecution. Luther’s resolve to God is found in his classic hymn, *A Mighty Fortress is our God*, “Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also; The body they may kill; God’s truth abideth still; His kingdom is forever.”

3) God values His own, He sees them and keeps a close account of them! Twice in the Gospels, Jesus used the market value of sparrows to encourage His followers! After a quick search, I found that people would roast sparrows over a fire. It was described as a sparrow kabob! Needless to say, sparrow was a poor man’s meat. But our all-omniscient God knows every movement of these common, insignificant birds. In the scheme of things, the death of a sparrow is not noteworthy, but to God, He takes note of it! I also love that Jesus twice uses the numbering of one’s hair in the Gospels. Hair has always been a point of tease between me and my husband. God gave me a big, thick head of hair and John received fine, feathery light, and unfortunately thinning hair. But it doesn’t matter to God, He has them all counted! I certainly have more than John but that is ok! So Jesus’ point was if God knows the fate of sparrows and the number of each person’s hair, then He certainly knows our troubles, pain, fears, needs, weakness, loneliness, and suffering, both in persecution for His name sake, and in life!

“rather fear him” – Why should we fear God?

The wonderful, loving, attendant God of Heaven is the One who we should fear. He holds the keys to our eternal destiny. If we have not placed our trust in Him for the salvation of our soul, we have much to fear. We will lose our body and soul eternally in hell. (v. 28) Shepard, in His book The Christ of the Gospels said, “A wholesome and reverent fear of God casts out the fear of man. It is the fear of offending God that frees from the

fear of the persecutor.” p. 252 In Romans 8, Paul alluded to the persecutions he and those around him suffered (v. 18, 28), let’s read his thoughts as given to him by the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:32-39

### III. Two Possible Responses to the Gospel

“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. <sup>33</sup> But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. <sup>34</sup> Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> For I am come to set a man at variance (Lit. - incite, turn against, to divide in two) against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. <sup>36</sup> And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. <sup>37</sup> He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy (Lit. - deserving) of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. <sup>38</sup> And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. <sup>39</sup> He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. <sup>40</sup> He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. <sup>41</sup> He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. <sup>42</sup> And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.”  
Matthew 10:32-42

Confession or Denial of Jesus – Action & Reward

- Acknowledge Christ (v. 32-33) – The word “confess” in verse 32 means acknowledge, declare allegiance to. The characteristic of a Christian is confessing – we become a “confessor” of Him! God had always called for an open, public confession of belief in Him. (Ps. 119:46) The fact is, after one is brought to Christ in salvation this is a spontaneous reaction of even the shyest new believer. One’s overwhelming joy at the removal of their sin and guilt brings about an instinctive desire to tell others – be a “confessor”!

In Greek, the phrase “deny me before men” speaks of a consistent denial in life and word, to disowning of Christ and His word. This could be one who had once confessed Christ, but not necessarily. But this is not describing one as Peter, while sitting around the fire during Jesus’ trial, under the pressure of harm, denied Jesus and later wept in repentance. But this is describing a full-out lifestyle of rejection of Jesus as their Lord. If a true believer denies Jesus under the pressure of persecution, they will be a miserable soul because of it and living in disobedience to the Bible.

In the face of a negative response or severe persecution, a faithful follower will stay loyal to God and His word. A mature Christian understands the very principles Jesus is teaching here to the disciples: God’s judgment is real, man’s life is short, obedience to God is rewarded, and eternity is a long time! Please notice, that the first two words of verse 32 are “Whosoever therefore.” Jesus is connecting one's confession of faith in Him to the wonderful, attentive care of God the Father! And not just to the twelve disciples He was preparing to go out on this tour of Galilee, but to “whosoever!” God loves and cares for all those who confess Him. With this in mind, Jesus tells His disciples that those who confess Him, He will confess before His Father! 1 John 4:14-16

- Put Christ above Family (v. 34-39) – The descriptions of inner family persecution even to the death are very disturbing and hard to understand in our culture. Jesus’ statement in verse 34, “I came not to send peace, but a sword” seems very different from the angels' song to the shepherds, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.”. But what the angels were saying on that first Christmas day, was great peace with God would be given to those who accept Christ and follow His

ways. (Rom. 5:1) Jesus did not come to end human conflict but made it possible for us to make peace with God. The reality is, the person of Jesus brings out the worst in the world. There is a raging battle between righteousness and unrighteousness, spiritual and unconverted, light and darkness, a God lover and a God hater. It is ultimately the continuing war between the God of heaven and the god of this world! As we have said, the battle is satanic! Paul said in 1 Cor. 1:18, “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” Ours is the life that will cause family divisions! The nearest and dearest often become the enemy of our faith! One's loyalty and love shift from family and home to Christ and His word. Bromberg said, “Devotion to family is a cardinal Christian duty but must never become absolute to the extent that devotion to God is compromised.” p. 181 This is hard for the unconverted family to understand. Remember the words of Jesus in the upper room, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

“he that taketh not his cross” – This is the first recorded time Jesus mentions a cross in His teaching. It must have been chilling to the disciples. The Jews were very aware of crosses and crucifixion. It was a regular, public, violent, degrading method of execution used by the Romans. We must keep in mind that we know the end of the story, we know Jesus will end up on a cross, bearing the sin of the world but that day the disciples were only visualizing how Rome dealt with their enemies. When Jesus used this word picture He was emphasizing the allegiance necessary to be His follower. They must be willing to endure bitter suffering, public shame, disgrace, embarrassment, and the loss of all things. Jesus goes on to say, that without this cross-carrying level of commitment, they were “not worthy” of Him, or in other words, does not deserve Him! Christ finished this thought with, “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.” A true disciple is willing to forsake everything for Christ. A fulfilling life is found in Him, not in leisure, entertainment, power, popularity, or financial security but in Jesus! Cross-carrying on earth is worth it now and in eternity!

- Receive Christ’s Messengers (v. 40-42) - Jesus is teaching two points here. First, one who receives the message of the kingdom is ultimately receiving the Christ of the message and God who sent Him, and because of it would also receive the messenger. It is all tied together! And then secondly, those very ones who accept the message can have a reward in assisting to see the continuance of the message! This is a principle we see elsewhere in the New Testament. (Galatians 4:14) Many feel Jesus is using examples of different levels of messengers ---prophets, righteous man, and little one. But definitely, we are seeing Jesus express that rewards are given as one assists God’s ministers!

Receive the Truth → Receive the Messenger → Receive a Reward  
 Message                      Help & Aid                      God-given

**IV. Summary of Third Galilean Tour** Most Bible teachers believe this tour of Galilee lasted about 2-3 weeks.

**“And they went out, (“and went through the towns, preaching the gospel.” Luke 9:6) and preached that men should repent.<sup>13</sup>And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them (“everywhere” Luke 9:6).” Mark 6:12-13**

“preaching” – I love that the first thing mentioned was the most important. The twelve went out and “preached the gospel” saying “that men should repent.” We must keep the gospel which includes repentance, in the center of our dealing with people and in our churches. It’s easy to slide the gospel to the side or simply add it to our message, but it must be front and center, on the tip of our lips!

“healed” – And then they healed! In Greek, the anointing with oil here is symbolic of the healing work of God. It would be like lying on of hands, praying over; it’s not the oil that healed but it was a symbol of God at work in the healing.

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Believers Application:** Jesus was training and working with His disciples every day they were with Him. Occasionally, in the Gospels, we get to listen in and be instructed with them! This is such a passage. Let’s just review a few of the points Jesus made before He sent them out on that first “solo flight!”

1. Suffering is to be expected – All believers will suffer in life. Loss, death, disappointment, and poor health are all part of life, and God seeks to use these things to teach us patience and faith. But here Jesus is teaching the need to give the gospel and with it the rejection and even persecution that will come. The one who loves God will actively give the Gospel, and stand for righteousness. And Jesus is saying they will suffer at the hands of the wolf pack of sinful, Satan-driven men! Phil. 3:1-11

2. Christ honors those who confess Him – Today Jesus stands before His Father, He prays for us, and He mentions us by name. Please realize, that as we confess Christ, and stand for Him, He will confess us before His Father. He does now and will in the day of Judgement. John 12:27 reminds us God honors those who follow Christ. “If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.”

3. We can be a blessing and share in the reward of service – There was a time in our classroom teaching ministry, I used a half hour before my piano lessons started to clean the two school bathrooms. They needed it and I was available. I would smile to myself and realize my day started at the lowest point and worked up from there! As I was sloshing cleaner around in the toilet and wiping the bowl, I often thought of the truth of Hebrews 6:10, “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.” Those little saints were going to have clean poddies that day! But really, cleaning bathrooms is the least of it, when it comes to serving God and His people, we need to remember, God sees and keeps the records of all our “labor of love” done in His name and for His people. So perhaps it is cleaning poddies, or wiping tables, or teaching a class, or making a meal, or singing a special, or writing an email, or listening to the same story again from your friend with dementia, but keep in mind, God does not forget. He sees, is pleased, and will reward!