

THE 12 UNIQUELY COMMISSIONED

In Matthew 8-9, there is a strong emphasis on Christ's Lordship authority in relation to His kingdom miracles performed over disease and demons. That theme of Jesus' authority now continues on as we come to chapter 10. Chapter 10 marks the second major discourse of five that are given in the book.

The 5 Discourses in Matthew

1. The Sermon on the Mount – Matt. 5-7
2. Commissioning of the Twelve – Matt. 10
3. Parables of the Kingdom - Matt. 13
4. Community Instructions - Matt. 18
5. Olivet Discourse (End Times) Matt. 24-25

Note that there are what I term the two bookends summarizing Christ's Galilean ministry as seen in Matt. 4:23 and Matt. 9:35, which further ties to Christ's apostolic commissioning of the 12 disciples.

Matthew 4:23 (NKJV)

23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

Matthew 9:35 (NKJV)

35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Jesus, in 9:36-38, said the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few, and therefore the disciples should pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out more laborers. In chapter 10 we now see the disciples (in part) were themselves to be the answer to these prayers. They were to pray, and now they are being sent.

What characterized Christ's ministry was now to be multiplied in and through the ministry of the disciples as they are given a specialized apostolic commission.

Matthew 10:1 (NKJV)

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.

This marks about midway point in Christ's earthly ministry so the 12 disciples had been following Christ for some time.

The word "disciple" means learner or follower – it is a learning follower. It is the idea of being a student. The word as used in the gospels can denote true devoted followers but is also used at times of merely curious followers who were not sincere. Context determines which is in view.

John 8:31–32 (NKJV)

31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are **My disciples indeed**.

32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Before being appointed as apostles, they first needed to just LEARN from Jesus. They were disciples before they became apostles. For about the first year and a half of Christ's ministry, the 12 disciples just watched Him. They interacted and observed, but they did not have a "kingdom announcing" ministry like Christ.

That was now about to change.

As Jesus called His twelve disciples to Him, the text says, "***He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.***" Note this is the very same type of miracles that Jesus Himself had been doing as seen in the summary verses of Matt. 4:23 and 9:35.

This is what it meant to be an apostle, as they are now named to be, as seen in the next verse. They were empowered with a special calling to represent Christ in a very special and personal way. They were Christ's unique ambassadors doing similar type miracles. In effect, to be an apostle meant that they were uniquely an extension of Christ's ministry.

They now too were proclaiming "The kingdom is at hand" with visible demonstrations that indeed it was being presented to Israel on the condition of repentance as noted earlier in Matthew 3:2 and 4:17.

Matthew 10:7 (NKJV)

7 And as you go, preach, saying, '**The kingdom of heaven is at hand.**'

Note that the kingdom and miracles of healing go together in keeping with OT prophecy. When the Messiah God comes and ushers in the kingdom, He will do so with miracles of healing. He will come “with healing in His wings” (Mal. 4:2).

Isaiah 35:4–5 (NKJV)

4 Say to those who are fearful-hearted, “Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you.”

5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

It was no small thing to be an apostle. They were empowered to do special “kingdom miracles” that no one else other than the Messiah could do. And they could only do it because they were His special authoritative representatives.

2 Corinthians 12:12 (NKJV)

12 Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

I share this because today various wild-eyed charismatic teachers want to claim that they too are apostles in the same sense as Christ’s apostles. That is crazy talk. The true apostles’ ministry was very unique – in effect being an extension of Christ’s ministry.

Note the extent of their newfound apostolic ministry. Just like Christ, they were given power over unclean spirits and over ALL kinds of sickness and ALL kinds of disease. Nothing could stop them. Their ministry at this point was very extensive – just as Christ’s was – which is indicative of the coming kingdom. Their ministry had a very specialized kingdom purpose at this point that was totally unique to this time period and context.

On behalf of Christ, as His special apostolic ambassadors, they were presenting the kingdom as being at hand with the kingdom evidence of miracles. Truly this was kingdom stuff. However, as we go along, we find that Israel rejected Jesus as their Messiah and the kingdom offer was withdrawn and delayed.

We are no longer, at this time in the Church Age, proclaiming “the kingdom is at hand” because the kingdom right now is not being offered and is not imminently at hand. Right now, we are proclaiming “***the gospel of Christ***” and not the gospel of the kingdom as being at hand.

What is imminent now is the coming of Christ for His Church in the event called the RAPTURE. Philippians 4:5 says, "The Lord is at hand." James 5:8 says, "...the coming of the Lord is at hand."

Titus 2:13 (NKJV)

13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

However, once the church is raptured then the "***gospel of the kingdom***" will again go forth to the ends of the earth as it will then again be on the horizon. This is the context of Matthew 24 – which is a Tribulation context.

Matthew 24:14 (NKJV)

14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

A key thing to note in Matthew 10:1 is that Christ had the AUTHORITY to delegate this kind of power. This shows His greatness, as only God can do this.

"This was without precedent in Jewish history. Not even Moses or Elijah had given miraculous powers to their disciples. Elijah had been allowed to transmit his powers to Elisha, but only when he himself was removed from the earth." - ***Alfred Plummer***

"Other men had performed miracles, but no other man ever conferred the power on others." – ***William MacDonald***

Actually, the word "translated" as "power" here in verse 1 in the NKJV is the Greek word "***exousia***" meaning AUTHORITY instead of "***dunamis***" which would mean power. So, this is Christ having the AUTHORITY to impart AUTHORITY to do the supernatural. Only God has this kind of AUTHORITY. Jesus is God!

It emphasizes Christ giving them the right to do it – not merely the power. Again, only God can give this kind of authority resulting in this kind of power. This once again HIGHLIGHTS the Lordship AUTHORITY of the Lord Jesus Christ.