

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

7. For Old Testament examples, consider the death of Uzzah (II Sam. 6:6, 7); Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1, 2); the leprosy of Gehazi (II Kings 5:27) and of Miriam (Num. 12:9-14); the blindness of the Syrian band (II Kings 6:18-20); the destruction of army (II Kings 19:35).

8. Seth Wilson, "*The Purpose of Miracles*", Christian Standard, Nov. 2, 1957.

9. Hamilton, pp. 89, 90.

10. Wilbur Smith, *The Supernaturalness of Christ*, (Boston: The W. A. Wilde Co., 1958), pp. 142-150, 158.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

13. Hamilton, pp. 90, 91.

14. Smith, *Ibid.*, p. 133.

15. McGarvey; *Ibid.*, p. 112.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 112-114.

17. See John 20:30, 31; 2:11, 23; 3:2; 4:45, 54; 5:1-36.

18. Hamilton, *Ibid.*, p. 92

19. McGarvey, *op cit.*, p. 146.

20. See MacGarvey, *Evidences*, Part III, chapter XII, p. 146ff. Also Wilbur Smith, *Therefore Stand*, chapter VIII, especially p. 422ff.

21. Wilson, *Ibid.*

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER TEN

IS THIS SERMON OF WHOLE CLOTH, OR PATCHWORK?

On first reading this entire chapter it has the appearance of uniform wholeness. It requires only a glance at other Gospels, however, to cause the reader to realize at once that he has encountered some of this same material in quite different places and connections. A bit of first-hand familiarity with Matthew's neat organization of his materials according to topical, rather than strictly chronological, considerations, is almost sufficient to tip the balance in favor of the conclusion that the publican-Apostle is again organizing by collecting materials out of other discourses given on other occasions.

The modern Christian, hurried by immediate, practical concerns, is tempted to ask, almost with impatience: "Why bother to dig into this old question? After all, the chapter has come down to us all in one piece. What is there to gain by puzzling over the problem?" The seriousness of this problem lies in two directions: (1) Matthew's good judgment is placed in doubt, since he seems to ignore propriety by setting down in this place admonitions and predictions that not only were not given so early in the Apostle's training, but would have no connection with their immediate work, necessities or understanding.

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(2) If the material, however, is set forth in its proper place in the self-revelation of Jesus to His disciples, then there is much to gain from this vision of Him as Prophet of the finest order, as General briefing His staff, and as Supreme Lord demanding loyalty due only to God. So, what are the evidences?

A. Arguments offered against the unity of the discourse:

1. Matthew stands alone giving this message in relation to the limited mission of the Apostles in Galilee, whereas the other Synoptic writers include large parts of this discourse in different contexts as messages preached much later on other occasions. (See, for example, Mk. 13:9-13; Lk. 12:4-9, 11, 12, 49-53; 21:12-19) Moreover, in his version of the great sermon on the end of the Jewish nation and of the world, Matthew seems deliberately to omit most of those statements of Jesus he has already included in his report of the Apostolic Commission (Mt. 10), though Mark and Luke both include them in the great eschatological message.
2. In the Lord's farewell address to the apostles during the Last Supper, Jesus specifically remarked, (Jn. 16:1-4)
I have said all this to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues; indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. And they will do this because they have not known the Father, nor me. But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you of them. I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.

So it would seem to some that this obvious declaration eliminates categorically any predictions of persecution, prior to the discourses of the Last Week. Consequently, Matthew has placed the material describing persecutions in quite the wrong place.

3. Considering the immaturity and inexperience of the Apostles, it is thought quite unlikely that Jesus would disturb His yet untried warriors by making allusions to perils not likely to menace their simple, limited labors in Galilee.

B. Considerations strongly recommending the unity of the section:

1. The first and most obvious factor that argues the unity of

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this discourse is the fact that Matthew intends to give the clear impression that he is signalling both the beginning and the end of one discourse.

10:5

These twelve Jesus sent out,
charging them, . . .

11:1

And when Jesus had finished
instructing His twelve dis-
ciples, He went on from
there to teach and preach . . .

2. The mere fact, that Matthew omits from his report of the great sermon on the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the world (Mt. 24) some materials which he already used earlier (Mt. 10), is no indication that he was ignorant of the fact that Jesus made the declarations reported by Mark and Luke in that great eschatological pronouncement. His deliberateness, rather, is evidence that he DID know about those Last Week statements and chose not to use them again. The inclusion of those remarks by Mark and Luke, on the other hand, does not prove that these sayings were exclusively said by Jesus during the great discussion of Jerusalem's fall and could not have been repeated often earlier. The very sayings themselves are of such nature that they conflict deeply with the then-popular notions about the Messianic Kingdom, held even by the Apostles themselves. So it would not be at all surprising if Jesus had to repeat in similar language on several occasions the very same warnings and the same instructions about how to react.
3. A misplaced emphasis in the reading of John 16:4 can give the impression that Jesus had never before prophesied persecutions, a view which would of course leave Matthew's record under suspicion of forgery or, at least, of improper appropriation of materials, if not outright contradiction. The case stands, however, as Hendriksen, (*John*, II, 322) puts it.

To be sure, there had been predictions of coming persecution (Matt. 5:10-12; 10:16-39). But *these things* (15:18—16:3)—the fact that the world hates the disciples because Jesus has chosen them out of the world; that this hatred was in reality directed against Jesus *and against the*

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Father, that it was absolutely inexcusable and was rooted in the sinister condition of the heart which deliberately refused to acknowledge the true God, that the time was actually coming when men would regard the putting to death of Christ's followers to be tantamount to an act of worship altogether pleasing to God—*these* things, with *that* emphasis and in *that* forthright manner, had never been revealed before. One does not find "these things" in Matt. 5:10-12, which speaks only of persecution in general and of slander in particular—, nor in Matt. 10:16-29, which describes the outward forms of persecution (arrest, flogging, death, name-calling), but says very little about the hidden root from which this persecution springs (only Matt. 10:22, 24, 25, 40; cf. Jn. 15:20, 21). The reason why Jesus had not said these things from the beginning was that it had not been necessary then, because he was still with them. As long as he was physically present, the brunt of the attack was directed against *him*, not against his disciples.

4. It is a false assumption that the allusions to persecutions had no potential connection with realities involved in the Apostles' first, limited evangelistic activity in Galilee. Jesus was about to dispatch His missionaries right in the very bailiwick of that treacherous king whose command would shortly bring about the brutal murder of John the Baptist. The Twelve, commissioned especially to proclaim the identical message of that wilderness voice, must certainly come under the surveillance of that suspicious, testy old king.
5. Objections to Matthew's recording of the latter portion of this sermon (Mt. 10:16-42) disregard the obvious desire of the Lord to charge the minds of His Apostles on the occasion of their commission with a long-range, perspective view of the issues, conflicts and consequences of their ministry. His purpose is not, as is assumed by those who see this chapter as patchwork, merely to prepare His servants to experiment with their abilities in a county-wide campaign in tiny Galilee. No, it is as Bruce (*Training*, 106ff) thinks:

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This Galilean mission, though humble and limited compared with the great undertaking of after years, was really a solemn event. It was the beginning of that vast work for which the twelve had been chosen, which embraced the world in its scope, and aimed at setting up on earth the kingdom of God.

G. C. Morgan (*Matthew*, 102, 103) agrees:

As the King stood in the midst of the twelve, He looked at them and at the immediate present; but He also looked with those clear, far-seeing eyes into the near decades; and still further He looked down all the centuries; and speaking to the first apostles, He delivered a charge which in its comprehensiveness and finality is applicable to the whole movement of His enterprise, until His second advent. He declared the abiding principles, which must obtain through all the ages; and He described the changing conditions which necessitate changing methods.

So it is of real value to His Apostles, that Jesus should lay before them from the first moment of their commission in no uncertain terms the duties, dangers, instructions and encouragements in His description of the complete apostolic mission. From that moment on no disciple could complain, "Why didn't Jesus tell us this was going to happen?" Any repetition of portions of this charge on later occasions is naturally to be expected due to their importance.

6. Objections based upon "allusions to distant dangers" are groundless, since upon closer reflection even these warnings are reassuring and timely, with the result that the disciples, far from being frightened by them, could draw great strength from their memory of Jesus' words. Since they had been warned beforehand, their very suffering when it came would serve to justify and strengthen their faith in Jesus. Further, who can demonstrate it mathematically certain that the Apostles did not in fact encounter much on their first tour that tried their souls? Granted the almost certain probability that whatever they encountered was very light in comparison to later opposition, yet Jesus'

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forwarning them, and their own success in overcoming, was excellent training to endure even greater obstacles later.

C. Conclusions assuming the unity of the passage:

1. Edersheim (*Life*, I, 640f) decides:

It is evident, that the Discourse reported by St. Matthew goes far beyond that Mission of the Twelve, beyond even that of the early Church, indeed sketches the history of the Church's Mission in a hostile world, 'up to the end.'

2. Morgan's thinking (*Matthew*, 102ff) suggests the following comparative outlines of the three fundamental portions of the message, as if Jesus has three clearly distinct periods in view. The division into different periods comes, not out of textual exegesis only, but also from the fulfilment of these words of Jesus in the history of the Church.

THE ENTIRE APOSTOLIC MISSION

a. *First Galilean Tour* (10:5-15)

- (1) From the Apostles' ordination until the beginning of the Church.
- (2) Period of relative popularity, no serious persecution.
- (3) Particular zone of operation only among Jewish people.
- (4) Particular preparation: light equipment, dependence on Jewish hospitality.
- (5) Particular message: coming messianic kingdom.
- (6) Particular credential: miracles as identification with Jesus.

b. *The Apostolic Church* (10:16-23)

- (1) From the beginning of the Church until the end of the Jewish state and Jerusalem.
- (2) Period of Jewish persecution from Pentecost till fall of Jerusalem.
- (3) Wider sphere of influence even among Gentiles.
- (4) More thorough preparation and equipment, not based on hospitality. (Lk. 22:35, 36)
- (5) Open proclamation of accomplished facts; special help of the Spirit.
- (6) General credential: immediate inspiration as identification.

c. *The Whole Church* (10:24-42)

- (1) From the fall of Jerusalem to the end of the world.
- (2) Period of general difficulty, rejection, death.
- (3) General work: Confession of Jesus by ALL slaves and disciples of Jesus.
- (4) Emphasis on moral preparation, less on mechanical.
- (5) Widest possible proclamation of Jesus' message.

- (6) Moral credential: suffering as identification.

But after making such a neat outline of this chapter, which upon first, even on the second, reading of the discourse, is perhaps not so obvious as the neat rows of the outline would suggest, we might well ask ourselves if this outline is so important and necessary to

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the communication Jesus intended. For example, why did not Jesus come right out and identify the precise time periods to which each portion of instruction belongs? This would eliminate our having to guess at the applications. But this very observation may be the key: He did not wish His Apostles to concern themselves with a misplaced emphasis on apocalyptic times and seasons or to apply general principles only to particular periods and not to the whole of their ministry. As Edersheim (*Life*, I, 640f) has it:

At the same time it is equally evident, that the predictions, warnings and promises applicable to a later period in the Church's history, hold equally true in principle in reference to the first Mission of the Twelve; and conversely, that what specially applied to it, also holds true in principle of the whole subsequent history of the Church in its relation to a hostile world. Thus, what was specially spoken at this time to the Twelve, has ever since, and rightly, been applied to the Church; while that in it, which specially refers to the Church of the future, would in principle apply also to the Twelve.

If the outline suggested above has value, it is because we, who have appeared on the scene in our historic time period, have the distinct advantage of historical perspective, which the Apostles themselves, as men, standing there before Jesus, prior to the fulfilment, did not have. Even with the haunting spectre of reading into Jesus' words ideas that are not there, we believe we can make out in this sermon the prophetic foresight of the Master as He describes with unerring precision the pattern, problems and progress of the entire Apostolic mission. If it be objected that with the death of the Apostles themselves their mission ceased, then let it be said that if the Church exists today, it does so in direct proportion to its recognition and acceptance of the Apostles' mission. No, the Apostles' mission is not, and will not be, completed until Jesus comes again to call a halt to the Apostles' work. No, the Apostles are not through working, for they "though dead, yet speak" through that permanent teaching medium they prepared for areas and eras where they personally could not labor: the Scriptures. Any Church today may judge itself truly apostolic by its fidelity to that message which the Apostles taught and recorded for all ages.

Returning to the question of this study, we conclude that this sermon of Jesus is all of a piece, a fitting charge given to the

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Apostles on the occasion of their entering upon the very work to which they had been earlier called, in the same way that the Sermon on the Mount was a fitting message of ordination for the occasion of their calling to the Apostleship. (Cf. Lk. 6:12-49)

One final word is in order about Matthew's orderly argument which this entire chapter exemplifies. Note how this section beautifully carries forward his presentation of the ministry of Jesus the Messiah:

1. Jesus the Messiah as proclaimer of the Kingdom of God (chap. 5, 6, 7). In that message typical of Jesus' preaching, the Master describes the Kingdom of God. He is elaborating His edicts.
2. Jesus the Messiah supernaturally accredited by miracle-working power (chap. 8, 9). In this section presenting a collection of miracles typical of Jesus' power, the Master proves His right to say the things He is. He is exhibiting His evidence.
3. Jesus the Messiah expanding His effort, multiplying His ministry and enlarging His effectiveness. (chap. 10)

SPECIAL STUDY

THE AUTHORITY OF THE APOSTLES

Many self-appointed theologians still echo the ancient lie of Satan asking, "Yea, hath God said thus and so?" hardly comprehending that to pose such a question is to question and quibble the eternal authority of the Author of their salvation. It is one thing to seek the clear evidences which would point to the revelation of God in human history, and quite another to seek, by feigned wisdom, to evade its message. Jesus clearly declares in this section that God will be revealing Himself through Jesus' twelve appointed and empowered ambassadors. It is sufficient to investigate with a true and honest heart whether God has truly spoken in human history. But, having discerned this, it is sufficient to obey.

The question of this study is not, then, why or how or should God speak through human messengers, but did He, in fact do so? Since we have the accurate message of Jesus recorded by honest, competent, reliable witnesses, we may assume that God's Son is competent to empower His rather ordinary disciples, thereby enabling them to speak extra-ordinarily the very word of the Almighty. Study these four major points of proof that the Apostles' ministry at this time was but the extension of Jesus' own: