



International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

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Matthew 10:1-15 English Standard Version April 7, 2019

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, April 7, 2019**, is from **Matthew 10:1-15**.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

(Matthew 10:1) And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.

Jesus showed His divine power by casting out demons and healing all diseases and all afflictions; therefore, some people followed Jesus for the personal benefits. Some followed Jesus because they also loved His teaching; for Jesus taught about God as one with authority. These “learners” were “disciples” in the broadest meaning of the word (disciple means learner). From among these “learners,” Jesus called twelve disciples, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, to accompany Him and learn privately the most important truths about Him and His mission. After the twelve disciples had learned what they needed, and could faithfully represent Jesus and His teachings, Jesus promoted them to “apostles” (ambassadors) and sent them out to practice what He had taught. He gave them authority and power to cast out evil demons or unclean spirits as He

did. He also gave them the ability to heal every disease (such as leprosy) and every affliction (such as blindness and lameness) which demonstrated both the love of God for people and proved that Jesus was all He said He was and would become as their Savior and Lord. With the authority and power that Jesus gave them, they went out as Jesus' official representatives to do what Jesus did and teach what Jesus taught.

(Matthew 10:2) The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

Jesus set the twelve disciples apart from other learners (disciples) by calling them apostles. An apostle was one that Jesus sent out officially to spread the good news about Him and His teachings. Because of their official status and Jesus' personal training of them, they were to be listened to, believed, and obeyed as they taught Jesus' commands and revelations. Other disciples did not have the official status of apostles, they continued as learners. All the apostles began as disciples. Only a few disciples became apostles. The only apostles with authority given to them directly by Jesus Christ are those named in the Bible. A true apostle was one who had witnessed the ministry of Jesus personally. To choose a replacement for Judas Iscariot, the apostles established the qualifications of an apostle. In Acts 1:21-22, we read, "So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." Today, no one qualifies to serve as an apostle of Jesus Christ; today, no one has seen Jesus both during His earthly ministry and after His resurrection. Jesus personally called Paul to be an apostle on the road to Damascus or shortly thereafter, and the other apostles recognized his unique call as an apostle.

The Bible does not teach us much about the twelve disciples, preferring instead to keep our focus on Jesus and who Jesus is and the truths Jesus taught. Simon Peter (the Rock) is always listed first in the Bible's lists, and except for the Apostle Paul, we learn more about Peter than the other apostles. Simon Peter declared to Jesus: "You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68) and Peter was the first to declare: "You are the Christ, the

Son of the living God” (Mark 16:16). Only from tradition do we learn that the fishermen Peter and his brother Andrew were crucified. James and John were also fishermen, and the Bible tells us that King Herod killed James with a sword (Acts 12:1-2). John wrote his gospel, three letters that appear in the Bible, and the Book of Revelation. We know from tradition that John was the only apostle who was not martyred but lived into old age.

(Matthew 10:3) Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

Bartholomew may be another name for Nathanael. Philip introduced Nathanael to Jesus (John 1:45). Peter, Andrew, Philip (and perhaps Bartholomew) were from the city of Bethsaida (John 1:44). Thomas was called Didymus (the Twin) and became known as “Doubting Thomas” (John 20:24-28). Matthew was a tax collector. James became known as “James the Less” (Mark 15:40) as distinct from James, the brother of Jesus, and James, the son of Zebedee. The Bible tells us little about Thaddaeus.

(Matthew 10:4) Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

“Simon the Zealot” (meaning Fanatic?) or “was called the Zealot” (Luke 6:15) was perhaps politically active (violently?) against the Romans or was zealous in serving Jesus Christ. If he was a Zealot in the political sense, he and Matthew the tax collector would have been enemies until they became friends as disciples of Jesus. Judas Iscariot is always listed last because he betrayed Jesus. The Old Testament and Jesus predicted his betrayal. In Acts 1:16, Peter said, “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.”

(Matthew 10:5) These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans,

As a practical matter at that time, the twelve apostles were not yet prepared to reach out to Samaritans and Gentiles. The Jews were taught to avoid

contact with Samaritans and Gentiles as much as possible, so they would have known very little about how to teach them about Jesus. Only after they received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost would Jesus prepare them spiritually from the inside out for mission work among Samaritans and Gentiles. In addition to not yet being prepared to minister to Samaritans and Gentiles, doing so would have brought great controversy among the Jews (and eventually great controversy did arise in the Church over the issue), and this controversy would have interfered immensely with and detracted from Jesus' further teaching and stress on the true meaning of His dying on the cross and rising again for the forgiveness of the sins. Since Jesus commended the faith of some Samaritans and Gentiles, we know that Jesus was not prejudiced against them and set an example for all His followers on how to love all people and bless them.

(Matthew 10:6) but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Being Jews themselves, who had found or had been found by Jesus, they understood Jews and how to preach to Jews. As disciples and apostles, they had personally repented of their sins, trusted in Jesus as the promised Messiah, and had witnessed His loving ministry to others. They knew by experience what their fellow Jews needed and needed to do to receive eternal life. The "lost sheep of the house of Israel" had been taught the law of God, knew what sin was, knew they were guilty of sin, knew their sacrifices at the temple did not cleanse them from sin, and looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. Through the law and the prophets, God had prepared them to receive and believe in Jesus for salvation; therefore, with good reasons, Jesus told the apostles to go first to the Jews. It would have taken a long time for the twelve disciples to prepare the Samaritans and Gentiles to receive Jesus the Jewish Messiah as the Son of God, their Lord, and their Savior. Jesus did tell them that the gospel would eventually be proclaimed to all nations, including Samaritans and Gentiles (Mark 13:10).

(Matthew 10:7) And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

As ambassadors of Jesus Christ, they preached the same message as John

the Baptist and Jesus. By their words and deeds, they demonstrated that the kingdom of God was “at hand” (close to their listeners). If their listeners would believe the good news of Jesus and repent of their sins, then the kingdom of God would come to them in a new and personal way too. They could begin living in the kingdom of God with the expectation of more blessings from God to come into their lives as their faith in and obedience to Jesus Christ increased.

(Matthew 10:8) Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay.

Jesus did all these loving works to help others, and He commissioned the twelve apostles to do these same works as they taught about Him. These works would confirm that the love of God in Christ Jesus was truly working through them. They did not pay Jesus anything for the ability to do these miracles; therefore, they were not to charge anyone anything when they healed someone or raised someone’s loved one from the dead. Jesus never charged anyone anything to work a needed miracle in someone’s life. Doing these works for pay could have made the twelve apostles extremely wealthy and Jesus did not want them to misuse their authority and power. As Peter later ministered to the Samaritans after the Day of Pentecost, knowing the possible financial benefit, Simon the Magician wanted to buy the Holy Spirit from the Apostle Peter, and Peter told him that his heart was not right before God (see Acts 8:9-25).

(Matthew 10:9) Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts,

Gold, silver, and copper coins could be wrapped into a cloth belt and worn around the waist for easy carrying. People could conceal their wealth in this manner.

(Matthew 10:10) no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food.

Designed to train His twelve apostles while blessing others through them, Jesus may have intended that this missionary journey be of short duration;

so, their only real need would be food. They would not need to carry a bag of money or take a change of clothes or extra sandals or a staff for protection (or help in walking on a long journey). However long their missionary tour, if they depended on Jesus, Jesus would meet all their needs and do so through others. During their mission work, they would learn to trust more in Jesus and Jesus would prove faithful to them even from a distance.

(Matthew 10:11) And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart.

Joseph and Mary raised Jesus in a worthy home, and worthy people and homes existed in Judea, where people truly loved, trusted, and worshiped God, were honest, and blessed their neighbors according to the Law of God. These worthy people would have been looking forward to the coming of the Redeemer that God had promised to send for the forgiveness of their sins. Coming into a Jewish town, the apostles were to inquire and find a home that was worthy by reputation. Such a family would be the most likely to respond eagerly and believe the message Jesus told them to proclaim. If they came to believe, they could help the apostles spread the good news about Jesus, and the townspeople would most likely respect the testimony of those they considered worthy. Being concerned about others, they would be the most able to direct the apostles to those who most needed to be healed, have demons cast out, be delivered from an affliction, or receive the good news. Indeed, they could easily and quickly begin to demonstrate that the kingdom of God had come near through Jesus ministry through them. By commanding the disciples to stay only in one home until they departed a town, they could have more time to teach a family more about Jesus, and that home could become a center for further mission work by others and the place to first establish a local church.

(Matthew 10:12) As you enter the house, greet it.

Worthy homes usually extended hospitality toward travelers. Jesus told His disciples to respectfully enter a home and greet the family—probably by introducing themselves as apostles of Jesus, telling the family about Jesus the Messiah, and their mission in His name in their town.

(Matthew 10:13) And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.

Different people might have different ideas on who was worthy or a worthy house. The apostles might be sent to a house that really was not worthy. As apostles, they would come into a home bearing the peace of God that Jesus had given them. If the house was not worthy, the inhabitants might not recognize, or they might reject, the peace of God that the apostles exhibited and wanted to give them. In such a case, without arguing or being pushy, the apostles were to leave the house and the peace that they had brought into the house would leave with them.

(Matthew 10:14) And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town.

In a spirit of peace and love, the apostles were to teach people the truth about Jesus. If they or their message were rejected, they were to quietly walk away. When Jews left a Gentile or Samaritan area or town, they shook the dust of that town off their feet rather than take a part of that contaminated area or town with them back into Judea. When the disciples went on their way, they were to treat an unworthy house or town that would not receive them or their words as a Jew would treat a Gentile or Samaritan town. By their wordless actions, those they left behind without any arguments, words of condemnation, or rebuke would get the message; furthermore, they were not to carry any “dust” (bad feelings, anger, or resentments) with them when they left the town and went to another. Rather, they were to do as the Apostle Paul later wrote in Philippians 3:13-14, “Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: *forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead*, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

(Matthew 10:15) Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.”

Jesus declared that a day of judgment is coming. At the judgment, those who have heard or seen the most truth demonstrated by words and deeds of righteous people, but have rejected the truth of God, will suffer more than those who heard and saw less truth demonstrated. In John 18:37, Jesus answered Pilate, “For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” Since the people of Sodom and Gomorrah only had Lot’s words and example as a righteous man, the judgment would be more bearable for them than for the Jews who rejected Jesus and the good news He and the apostles preached and demonstrated. In 2 Peter 2:6-9, Peter wrote: “if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.”

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What kind of authority did Jesus give to His disciples?
2. Why do you think giving them this authority was important?
3. Why do you think Jesus told them to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel?
4. What were the disciples not to acquire as they preached about Jesus? Why do you think Jesus commanded them to avoid doing this?
5. What would you consider a worthy house or family to be, then and now?

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