


THE AUTHORITY OF THE KING 09:
Jesus' Authority over His Followers, pt. 1
Matthew 9:35—10:15

We have been looking at the Authority of Jesus over the past few months as Jesus has shown Himself to be King over all types of diseases, nature, and people. He is the authority over even the unseen forces, such as demons, and He has shown that He has the authority to forgive sins.

But now, starting in Matthew 9:35, we see a slight turn. He is still developing his theme that Jesus of Nazareth is the King of the Jews. But now Matthew is going to write about the Mission of Jesus. What is Jesus' plan to reach the world with His message of Himself?

BIG IDEA: THE MISSION OF JESUS IS TO REACH THE WORLD THROUGH ORDINARY MEN WHO ARE COMPASSIONATE, PRAYERFUL, AND OBEDIENT!

As Matthew articulates this mission of Jesus, he describes the commissioning of the twelve disciples for ministry. There is so much here that it is going to take us two weeks to work our way through this entire section, so I just want to begin this week talking about the commissioning of these men (which we find at the beginning of Matthew 10 and how that impacts us. Then next week, we will come back to describe these characteristics of compassionate, prayerful, and obedient and how that impacts us several thousand years later.

 *Matthew 10:1–4 [read]*

In these few verses, Matthew describes not the calling of the disciples, but the commissioning of these twelve men. We have seen so far in this book, the calling of five different men—Andrew & Peter, James & John, and Matthew himself. The calling of the others is not told to us in any gospel account. But we are told in Luke 6:12 that before Jesus called them to Himself, He spent all night in prayer. This probably took place before the Sermon on the Mount that is recorded in Matthew 5—7.

As we look at the calling of these men, there are a few notes of observation I would like to make at the beginning. *First, the 12 are listed in pairs.* Mark 6:7 tells us that Jesus sent them out “*two by two.*” It is certainly an interesting observation. Peter & Andrew; James & John; Philip & Bartholomew; Thomas & Matthew; James & Thaddaeus; Simon & Judas—all sent out in pairs, not wearing white shirts or riding bikes.

They were sent out in pairs, maybe for a few reasons. Think about it, going in pairs protects against this becoming something about them. It protects against

a following of just one person. They were not trying to develop their own following, but to point people toward Jesus. Listen closely, for many people have missed this: the entire point was not that they would worship Peter or any other of these men. The point is that these men be a window through which the world sees Jesus as God's Messiah.

Sending them out in pairs was also a gentle reminder that they needed one another. They couldn't do it on their own. It is a gentle reminder for us as well, that we cannot live this Christian life; we cannot be the faithful evangelist; we cannot be on a mission as Jesus calls us to without one another. Some Christians try and they fail. You will fail on your own. You need others.

Second, the 12 are broken down into smaller groups. There are four places these 12 are listed in the NT and in these places, we seen some interesting patterns that show us how they might have been divided for ministry.

<i>Matthew 10:2–4</i>	<i>Mark 3:16–19</i>	<i>Luke 6:13–16</i>	<i>Acts 1:13</i>
First Group of Four			
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Peter
Andrew	James	Andrew	John
James	John	James	James
John	Andrew	John	Andrew
Second Group of Four			
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
Third Group of Four			
James	James	James	James
Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot
Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot	Judas, son of James	Judas, son of James
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	

As you can tell from this list, the first person listed (Peter), the fifth (Philip), and the ninth (James) all are the same. That leads many people to assume that there were probably three groups of four. And even beyond that, Peter is generally assumed to be the leader among all of them. Matthew tells us in vs. 2, "*First, Simon, who is called Peter.*" This is not "first in the sense of chronologically." Peter was not the first one called or commissioned. He was though the first in the sense of responsibility (more about that in a minute).

Third, the 12 are distinguished from all other followers of Jesus. We will see this in more detail next week, but in vs. 37 of chapter 9, Jesus told His disciples "*the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.*" When Jesus said

that, He is probably talking to all of His followers, not just the twelve. That is why in vs. 1, we are told that Jesus called to Himself His “*twelve disciples*.” This was to distinguish between the general use of disciple (which simply means a learner or follower).

As well, in vs. 2, we are told they are called the twelve Apostles. This is the only time that Matthew uses this term of them, but the other gospel writer’s use it. Like the term “*disciple*” it can have a wide and narrow understanding. In its widest sense, an apostle is simply a sent person, a messenger. But narrowly, it is a term used of the special representatives chosen by Jesus to play a foundational role in the establishment of the church. These men are the 12 Apostles (capital A), while there are many who are called to be apostles (simply a messenger—small a).

Fourth, the 12 are given the authority of Jesus. Let’s be clear. They are not given the full authority that Jesus has, but they are given a portion of the authority that He displayed. In vs. 1, we are told that Jesus gave them authority over unclean spirits (demonic world) to cast them out and to heal all kinds of disease or affliction.

We will see more of this next week as we look at vs. 5–15, but for now it should be noted that the authority these men possessed as they went on this mission was not their own authority. It was a delegated authority. It was an authority they had only because they were connected to Jesus. We would be wise to remember that as we live and minister as well. Any authority we might have in the church or any position of leadership is only under a higher authority. Christ’s Authority! That is why we say it all the time here, that our authority in the church begins and ends with the Word of God as His authority has been written down for us to learn and teach.

These 12 men were significant in the start of the early church. They were key components that Jesus used to spread the gospel, the message of Himself, to the known world at the time. So, who were they? Let’s take a few minutes and look at these different men.

1. SIMON, WHO IS CALLED PETER

Peter is probably the most well known of the disciples. There is little doubt that he was the leader of the group. He is mentioned in the gospel accounts more than any person other than Jesus. He was originally a follower of John the Baptist when he was introduced to Jesus. His job before coming to Jesus was a fisherman, from the town of Bethsaida, but worked out of Capernaum.

The things we know and love about Peter is that he was impulsive and bold. His greatest strengths were also his greatest weaknesses. There is none of the disciples that spoke out on behalf of Christ more than Peter. He is the one that confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Matt. 16). But

there was also no one that said or did more foolish things than Peter. No one denied Jesus to the degree of Peter (other than Judas of course). Jesus was harder on Peter, but more shepherding to Him than any other disciple. After Jesus dies and is resurrected, He meets Peter on the shore for a good fish breakfast and commissions him once again by telling Him to shepherd the sheep of God.


We see Peter doing that at the beginning of the church in Acts 2 when he preaches the first great sermon of the church. Later on, Peter pens two letters of the NT, which interesting enough talks at length about humility, submission to authority, and suffering. All things he had to learn.

We can trace Peter through Acts 15, at the Jerusalem Council when the early leaders of the church confirmed that the message of the gospel was not just for Jews but also for Gentiles. But after this point in history, we seem to lose sight of him in the biblical record.

The early church history indicates that Peter was crucified. But it is recorded that before he was crucified, he was forced to watch the crucifixion of his wife. As he was watching her in that suffering state, it is recorded that he said, *“Remember the Lord.”* When it was his time to go up on the cross, he begged to be crucified upside down for he thought he wasn’t worthy to die the same death as his Lord.

2. ANDREW

Andrew is the brother of Peter. He seems as though he lived in the shadow of his brother throughout his life and ministry. Can you image that? Kids, if you have a sibling, do you know what it is like to live in the shadow of your brother or sister? I’m sure it is difficult. But I wonder if Andrew’s life is even harder than what you can imagine. You see, Andrew was known for one thing in the gospels—he consistently brings people to Jesus. And the first person that we see he brings to Jesus is his brother, Peter.

 *John 1:40–42 → “One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus.”*

Think of that for a minute. He is the one that brings his brother to Jesus and then the rest of the gospels; we see that Peter is the one that gets the attention. Kids, parents, if you struggle with a jealousy that others around you get more attention than you do, Andrew is a good role model. He doesn’t pout. He doesn’t get upset at Jesus or Peter for this. He simply continues to fulfill what he is good at—bringing people to Jesus.

In John 6, we are told that it was Andrew that brought the young boy to Jesus with the five loaves of bread and two fish when there were 5,000+ people really hungry. In John 12, we are told about a few Greeks (Non-Jews) who approached one of the other disciples (Philip) and asked to meet Jesus. I have no idea why Philip didn't take them to Jesus, but he did take them to Andrew who then took them to Jesus.

As the early church unfolds, Andrew is only mentioned one time in the book of Acts: in the list of the disciples in chapter one. From there, his name and what he did for the kingdom is left to the history books. Various Church Fathers wrote that Andrew preached in numerous cities, but is known as the patron saint of Russia. It is believed that he was the one that took the gospel to Russia for the first time (& probably Scotland).


It is said that he was martyred near Athens, Greece, for refusing to make sacrifices to the pagan gods. He was scourged and crucified. To make his death more lingering, he was fastened to the cross not with nails but with ropes tied to the wood. It is said that he hung on the cross for two days, praising God continually until he finally died.

As the tradition goes, for those two days that he hung upon that cross he was continually exhorting people that passed by to turn to Christ for salvation. The cross upon which he was hung was in the form of an X, which has come to be known as the St. Andrew's cross. After a lifetime of ministry in the shadow of his more famous brother and in the service of His Lord, he met a similar fate as theirs, remaining faithful and still endeavoring to bring people to Christ.

3. JAMES, THE SON OF ZEBEDEE

James is the lesser known, but older brother of the Apostle John. These brothers were fishermen from a well-to-do family in Capernaum. Their family business was so successful that they actually employed other people.

It is assumed that he was a very passionate and bold leader. In two of the lists, his name appears second to Peter. It might have been this bold leadership that led to him being the first Apostle to be martyred (and the only Apostle we are told is martyred in the NT).

 *Acts 12:1-2 → “About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword.”*

But this death of James was a fulfillment of prophecy by Jesus. In Matthew 20, we are told that his mom asked Jesus to grant that her sons sit on the left and right of Him in the Kingdom. Jesus asked them if they were able to drink the cup of suffering He would drink. James answered yes. As one commentator said . . .

“James wanted a crown of glory; Jesus gave him a cup of suffering. He wanted power; Jesus gave him servanthood. He wanted a place of prominence; Jesus gave him a martyr’s grave. He wanted to rule; Jesus gave him a sword—not to wield, but to be the instrument of his own execution.”¹

4. JOHN

As we just said, John was the younger brother of James. But even though he was the younger brother, he seems to have been the closest friend to Jesus on this earth. In the gospel of John, he constantly refers to himself as *“the one Jesus loved.”* Of course, that does not mean Jesus did not love others, but he seemed to share closeness with Jesus unlike any other of the Apostles.

John was the only Apostle at the cross when Jesus was killed. It was to John that Jesus looked while hanging on the cross and said, *“behold, your mother”* (John 19:27). From that moment, John took care of Mary like his own mother.

John is the writer of five NT books (Gospel of John, 3 Epistles, and the Book of Revelation). As you read those books, you realize that being close to Jesus must have rubbed off because he talks more about truth and love than anyone else. He is black and white in his writing. He contrasts the ways of God and the ways of Satan; light and dark. But over all these he continually talks about love more than any other writer.

As I just pointed out, his brother was the first Apostle to be killed, but history tells us John was the last. Don’t miss that point. Not only was his brother the 1st Apostle killed, but also all of his closest friends were killed at some point and he remained alive losing one after another. At one point, he was exiled on the Island of Patmos and forced to be all-alone. It is here that he has that vision of Jesus and writes the book of Revelation.

All reliable evidence tells us that John comes back from that exile to become the pastor of the church in Ephesus. It is said that in his final days in the church as he dies of old age, the one phrase he continually said was *“My little children, love one another.”* When he was asked why he continually said that, he responded, *“It is the Lord’s command and if this alone be done, it is enough.”²*

5. PHILIP

We know from John 1:44 that Philip was from Bethsaida. His name means *“lover of horses”*, which probably doesn’t mean a whole lot, but I figured it would make him Mary Scheuerman’s favorite Apostle. When Jesus called him, we are told that he went immediately to his friend Nathanael and said, *“We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote,*

¹ MacArthur, John. *Twelve Ordinary Men*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 91.

² Ibid., 117.


Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (John 1:45). He apparently was looking and was quick to notice Jesus as the One the prophets had spoken about.

But this man struggled from time to time. He is the average Joe. Towards the end of Jesus’ ministry, Jesus tells them that He is the way, truth, and life and that nobody comes to the Father but through Him. Jesus tells them that since they know Him, they know the Father. It is to this that Philip responds, *“Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us”* (John 14:8). He had lapses of judgment: Jesus just told them that if they knew Him they knew the Father.

I don’t know about you, but it helps me to realize that a guy who walked with Jesus for several years still had moments of unclear thinking. But after the resurrection, he must have fully understood. History tells us that he ministered the gospel in Asia and was one of the earliest Apostles to be martyred by being stoned to death.

6. BARTHOLOMEW

It seems most reasonable that Bartholomew is another name for Nathaniel, who came from the city of Cana in Galilee (John 21:2). He is linked with Philip, probably one of his closest friends. After following Jesus, Philip found Nathanael (Bartholomew) and told him about Jesus. How did he respond?

 *John 1:46–50 → “⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’ Philip said to him, ‘Come and see.’ ⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, ‘Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!’ ⁴⁸ Nathanael said to him, ‘How do you know me?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.’ ⁴⁹ Nathanael answered him, ‘Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!’ ⁵⁰ Jesus answered him, ‘Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.’”*

We learn one important thing about Bart here. He was a man of integrity, that’s what Jesus says: “an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.” Jesus didn’t say he was not a sinner. He said that his desire for the Messiah was genuine.


Early church history tells us that he took the gospel to Persia, India, and maybe even Armenia. There is no reliable evidence of how he was martyred. Some historian say he was tied up in a sack and cast into the Sea. Others say he was crucified.³

7. THOMAS

If there is any disciple that has received a bad reputation, it is Thomas. He is the one who is generally referred to with the nickname, *“Doubting Thomas.”*

³ Ibid., 147.

That is a result of his interaction or lack of interaction with Jesus after the resurrection. If you have been in the church for any length of time, I am sure you have heard the story that is told in John 20 about Thomas. Jesus appears to all the disciples except Thomas was not there. When he returns, they tell him about it and he says . . .

 *John 20:25–29 → “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”*

Eight days later, Thomas was with the rest of the disciples when Jesus finally shows up again and approaches Thomas and tells him to put his finger in his hands and to touch His side. He approached Thomas and cured his unbelief. Yea, he had a moment of unbelief at that time, but I doubt any of us would have responded differently.

In reality, Thomas might better be known as a man of courage. In John 11:16, when Jesus goes to Bethany where His dear friend Lazarus had died, the disciples knew that it was close to Jerusalem, the place where the religious leaders were planning Jesus’ death. Thomas steps up and says, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” Thomas is ready to die with Jesus.

And eventually, he will die for Jesus. History tells us that he took the gospel all the way to India. Many traditions say he was pierced with a spear as a martyr of Jesus.

8. MATTHEW THE TAX COLLECTOR

We talked about Matthew several weeks ago when we went through his calling to follow Jesus. He was a tax collector. He was a sinner of sinners. He hung around sinners. Even as he writes this, his own name is the only name that identifies his occupation. Maybe he always wanted to be remembered for how far Jesus brought him by His grace.

But his transformation must have been incredible. He ends up writing one of four accounts of the life of Jesus. He had a heart for the Jewish people as this gospel was written with a Jewish bent, to convince them that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the King of the Jews.


In fact, most of the early historical records indicate he spent his life ministering to Jewish people in Israel and beyond until he was martyred for his faith. Tradition says that he was burned at the stake for his faith in Jesus.

9. JAMES THE SON OF ALPHEUS

“The only thing Scripture tells us about this man is his name. If he ever wrote anything, it is lost to history. If he ever asked Jesus any questions or did

anything to stand out from the group, Scripture does not record it. He never attained any degree of fame or notoriety. He was not the kind of person who stands out. He was utterly obscure. He even had a common name.”⁴

So, the only thing we have in the biblical record is his name. Matthew gives us his father’s name, that he was the son of Alphaeus. I assume this is for two reasons. For one, he wanted to distinguish James from the other Apostle, James, the brother of John. But the other reason, I tend to think is that I wonder if he was Matthew’s brother.

 *Mark 2:14 → “And as he passed by, he saw Levi [Matthew] the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth . . .”*

It seems reasonable to me that Matthew and James were brothers. But we cannot be certain of that. History even gives us less information about him than the Scriptures. Some people say he took the gospel to Syria or Persia. Some historians say he was beaten to death; other say he was stoned; and still other say he was crucified.

It is guys like James that give us hope. You see, it is not about being famous or doing blockbuster things for the Lord that matter. It is about being faithful and doing what He called you to do. What we know about James is that he is numbered among the Apostles.

10. THADDAEUS

He is my favorite Apostle. ☺ But there is not much written about him. The obvious thing about this man is that he had many names. In some of your translations, it might give him the name Labbaeus. In other portions, he goes by the name of Judas (although, they always distinguish him from the trader, Judas Iscariot).

The only other account of Thaddaeus is found in John 14:22 where he asks Jesus a really good question. It appears as though he was very inquisitive about how things were going to operate in the ministry of Jesus. Maybe that is why I like this guy.

Historical evidence tells us that Thaddaeus took the gospel to Turkey and that he was eventually clubbed to death because of his faith in Jesus.

11. SIMON THE ZEALOT

The description of him gives us his previous political or religious associations. The Zealots were a faction of Jews at that time that were very political. They hated the Romans and sought to overthrow them; they might be compared to some modern day terrorists. They were extremists. Some

⁴ Ibid., 170–171.

people say that he might have retained that description because he had a fiery temperament. We don't know that for sure.

It is possible that originally, he followed Jesus because of what he foresaw in him politically. But eventually, he must have come to really believe Jesus for who He was. History tells us that he took the gospel to the British Isles and died a similar death as the rest of the Apostles.

That brings us to the last Apostle . . .

12. JUDAS ISCARIOT, WHO BETRAYED HIM

There is much we could say about Judas Iscariot. For instance, we could talk about how he was the treasurer of Jesus and the disciples. In John 12, we are told of the account where Mary anoints the feet of Jesus with expensive perfume. I mean, really expensive perfume. It was said to have been worth 300 denair—that was about an entire year's wages.

Judas was upset about this because he was the keeper of the moneybags and we are told that he used to help himself to some of the money. He embezzled money from Jesus (just think of that). And that seemed to be his issue, he was greedy. That is what eventually leads him to betray the perfect Son of God. He goes to the religious leaders looking for money in exchange for turning Jesus over to them.

Judas was a traitor; worse than Benedict Arnold. In fact, we continually see in the gospel accounts, the writers almost always mention that he was a traitor. After betraying Jesus, we are told that he felt remorse. So much so that he threw the money back to the religious leaders and went out and killed himself. Don't mistake this remorse for repentance. Nowhere are we told that he sought the forgiveness of God.

Sometimes, we are sold a lie that our stand against God will satisfy and when it doesn't, we are left with emptiness. That is what Judas had. And so he goes out and kills himself. There is much that we can learn from the failed life of Judas, maybe someday we will spend an entire week on him. But there is one thought that I want to get across this morning.

*"The life of Judas reminds us that it is possible to be near Christ and associate with Him closely (but superficially) and yet become utterly hardened in sin."*⁵


It should remind us that not all ministers and men of God are God's men. If Jesus bats 11 of 12, why would we think we would never have anyone turn on us? Leaders do fail you, but godly leaders will show signs of repentance and seek restoration. Godly sorrow trumps worldly sorrow.

⁵ Ibid., 182.


That's the twelve. Those are the Apostles. As we said from the beginning, these were ordinary men. They were men of all different types. There were fishermen. There was a tax collector. There were brothers. There was a zealot. Jesus took people from all walks of life.

None of us are called like these men were called. But we are still called to follow and live for Jesus. He can use a schoolteacher; he can use a construction worker; he can use an engineer. He can use a political figure. Jesus can use brothers and sisters. He can use people from all walks of life.

The thing that impacts me the most is that Jesus uses common people. He chose and used people the world often would look at as worthless or insignificant. He did not choose the high and mighty, He chose the down and outers; the average people. In fact, after the church began and Peter and John had impacted the community with their preaching boldness. This is what was said of them by the religious community . . .

 *Acts 4:13 → "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus."*

Listen, there is a reason why Jesus uses the common, average person to be His men and women. Think about it. God chooses and uses people that the world wouldn't expect because then the glory goes back to Him instead of the man.

 *1 Corinthians 1:26–29 → "²⁶For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹so that no human being might boast in the presence of God."*

God is not looking for the extraordinary. He is looking for the faithful ordinary, common person. D. L. Moody once said, "*The world has yet to see what God can do with and for and through and in and by the man who is fully and wholly consecrated to Him. I will try my utmost to be that man.*"

Listen, if Jesus can use them, He can use you if you will believe and trust in Him in all things in your life. And of course, the only reason why we can believe and trust in Jesus is because of what He accomplished for us on the cross. It is because of His life, death, and resurrection. What we do this morning in Communion is remember that He made trusting in Him possible.

Communion