



James Tissot, *The Exhortation to the Apostles*, 1886–1894, opaque watercolor over graphite on gray paper, 16.5 x 22.2 cm, Brooklyn Museum, New York. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

MATTHEW 9–10; MARK 5; LUKE 9

TWELVE CALLED, COMMISSIONED, AND TUTORED

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Matthew 9

Jesus heals a paralyzed man—Mt 9:1–8

Matthew's account of Jesus healing a man with palsy shares similarities with the healing in Lk 5:17–26 and Mk 2:1–12. All three Gospels refer to Jesus forgiving sins in addition to offering a physical healing from paralysis. Both healings show the tenacious friends' faith. But the events may be different healings since Matthew does not include the disturbing detail of the paralyzed man's friends lifting him down through the roof to access Jesus's healing. Palsy or paralysis was a common diagnosis as the Gospels include the word *palsy* twelve times in the KJV.

Mt 9:1. “entered into a ship, and . . . came into his own city.” Matthew refers to Capernaum as Jesus's “own city,” or His Galilean mission headquarters. (Obviously, Nazareth is not accessible by ship.) Jesus's fame as a healer caused crowds to throng Him. But undaunted by the crowd, this believing group determined to ask Jesus to heal their paralyzed friend.

Table 1. Events of Matthew 9–10 and their locations in the other Gospels

Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Healing paralytic	9:1–8	2:1–12	5:17–26	5:1–7, 8–9
Call of Levi/Matthew	9:9–13	2:13–17	5:27–32	
Fasting question	9:14–17	2:18–22	5:33–39	3:29–30
Bleeding woman	9:20–22	5:24–34	8:42b–48	
Jairus' daughter	9:18–19, 23–26	5:21–23; 35–43	8:40–42, 49–56	
Heals 2 blind men	9:27–31; 20:29–34	10:46–52	18:35–43	
Dumb demoniac	9:32–34; 12:22–24	3:22	11:14–15	7:20; 10:20; 8:48
Harvest is great	9:35–38	6:6, 34	8:1; 10:2	4:35
Commission of 12	10:1–16	3:13–9; 6:7–11	9:1–6; 6:12–16; 10:3	1:42
Disciples' fate	10:17–25; 24:9–14	13:9–13	12:11–12; 6:40; etc.	13:16; 14:26; etc.
Testify fearlessly	10:26–33	4:22	12:2–9; 8:17	
Family divisions	10:34–36		12:51–53	
Discipleship costs	10:37–39		14:25–27; 17:33	12:25
Disciples' rewards	10:40–42	9:41	10:16	13:20; 12:44–45; 5:23

Mt 9:2. “a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed.” The root word for “palsy” (*paralutikos*, “paralytic”) refers to several problems associated with paralysis. Beds for the wealthy may have been more like a mattress or couch, but the poor usually used a mat or small rug that they could easily roll up and move out of the way to use the space for cooking and other work during the day. (A small house was nine feet by twelve feet).

Mt 9:2 (JST). “knowing their faith said . . . Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.” The JST changes “seeing” to “knowing” to emphasize the friends’ faith. Jesus used this opportunity to teach about one of the most important aspects of His mission: that because of the His atoning redemption, the Messiah has the power to forgive sins (Mosiah 3:11, 16). As discussed in Lk 5:20, the Lord’s combination of healing the inside and outside simultaneously is intriguing. The state of our spirit can affect our bodies and vice versa.

Mt 9:3. “scribes said . . . This man blasphemeth.” We find references to scribes sixty-four times in the New Testament—all referring to men who oppose Jesus. In the Old Testament scribes were well educated in writing and acted as secretaries, often for high government officials, or transcribed texts and took dictation. In the New Testament, we find scribes often acting as a group. In Jerusalem, scribes were well educated in the Jewish law (Moses’s laws and the thousands of oral laws) and acted as religious teachers. Occasionally they acted as attorneys or judges. In Ephesus, a scribe was equated with a town clerk, or a secretary of the city. Matthew does not say if these scribes were from Jerusalem and visiting

Galilee or if they lived in Galilee. In either case, Jesus can read their thoughts and confronts their lack of understanding.

Mt 9:4–5. “Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, *Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?*” Jesus healed inside out, spirit before body. At the time, many Jews believed that sicknesses and disabilities were a direct result of specific sins.¹ Inward sicknesses that result from anxiety, consciousness of guilt, or fear must also be removed for full healing. By starting with the healing of the soul, Jesus was able to testify of His divinity (see Mk 2:8–12; Lk 5:22–26).

Mt 9:6. “*Son of man.*” See my comments on Jn 1:50.

Jesus calls Matthew/Levi—Mt 9:9; Mk 2:13–14; Lk 5:27–28

Mt 9:9 (Mk 2:14; Lk 5:27). “*Matthew.*” Only in the Gospel of Matthew is the publican named Matthew; in Lk 5:27 he is named “Levi, and in Mk 2:14 he is “Levi the son of Alphaeus.” Matthew is a Greek name meaning “gift of God.” Mark and Luke refer to the publican as Levi before Jesus calls him and then as Matthew after his conversion. Both names were common in Galilee. Possibly Jesus gave him a new name with his new calling (as He did Simon Peter and other covenant disciples). We do not find examples of the name Levi given to sons outside of the tribe of Levi (yet it may have been).

A physically healthy Levite had the honor to serve in the temple from age twenty-five to fifty. Levites prepared and slaughtered the sacrifices and acted as guards, custodians, musicians who sang and blew the shofar. Also they maintained and constructed the temple (Num 18:2–6, 24–25).

During the second temple period, priests had assignments to serve at the temple for five weeks throughout the year, and Levites may have had the same call of duty. This leads one to ask, would working as a publican disqualify a Levite from his temple service? Pharisees forbade eating with publicans. Even walking through a gentile town required cleansing rituals, let alone working for the Romans. Or could Matthew/Levi have been disabled in some way, making him ineligible for temple service? Did he take work as a publican after being disqualified for temple service? The text is silent.

Mt 9:9. “*sitting at the receipt of custom.*” Matthew sat at the tax collector’s booth, or toll house, so we assume he worked for or as a local publican for a Roman tax collector. At the crossroads of two significant highways, the port city of Capernaum would have been the ideal place for a custom house. Matthew and Mark have JST changes to clarify that “the *place where they receive tribute as was customary in those days.*” Some have asked if Levi may have been a temple tax collector, but the text says the customs office was in Capernaum, not at the temple in Jerusalem.

Roman tax collectors were known as publicans (*publicanus*, “public revenue”). The Roman Senate auctioned the right to collect taxes in a geographical area to the highest bidder, and that person became a chief toll collector. Once the agreed price was paid to the government, the publican could live off any excess money he collected. The nature of the job opened the way for dishonesty and greed. Chief toll collectors hired local custom officers (*telōnēn*), also known as tax farmers, to collect taxes in toll houses.²

Roman taxation included direct and indirect taxes. Under each Caesar adjustments were made to improve fairness, but there was still room for extortion. Taxation especially hurt the poorer classes. People living in Judea and Galilee were required to pay four general categories of taxes:

1. Flat poll or head tax: one denarius for every man aged fourteen to sixty-five and every woman aged twelve to sixty-five³
2. Ground tax: 1 percent of their land and 12 percent of their harvest, paid either in kind or in money
3. Sales tax: 0.5 percent of the price of all purchases (this reflects a tax cut made by Tiberius Caesar during Jesus's lifetime)
4. Tolls, tariffs, customs, etc.⁴

Generally speaking, Jews and Greeks despised publicans. The Greek poet Theocritus was asked, “What are the worst wild animals?” and he answered, ‘On the mountains, bears and lions; in the city, publicans.’ . . . The Jews had a proverb, ‘Take not a wife out of a family where there is a publican, for they are all publicans.’”⁵

Working for the Romans meant associating with someone unclean. Publicans were often dishonest and deceptive; they became rich through extortion. Therefore, no publican was allowed to be a witness or judge in a Jewish court of law. Lk 18:11 categorizes publicans with harlots and sinners. Even Jesus used *publican* to illustrate one despised: “Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and publican” (Mt 18:17). Nevertheless, Jesus saw beyond this cultural definition and saw the good in Matthew/Levi.

Mt 9:9 (Mk 2:14; Lk 5:27). “he saith unto him, Follow me.” Levi, the former publican, accepts the Lord's call to become a disciple and then an Apostle. Matthew's example is still applicable as disciples must be willing to leave all to follow Christ. (Today, disciples still must listen and obey and come when He calls).

Levi's dinner party for Jesus—Mt 9:10–17; Mk 2:15–22; Lk 5:29–39

Lk 5:29–30 (Mt 9:10–11; Mk 2:15–16). “Levi made him a great feast. . . . Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?” Jesus is the guest of honor and “reclining at table” (ESV) to eat the feast that Levi/Matthew provides. Across the Roman Empire in the first century, people ate with their hands and a small dagger. The wealthy hired servants to feed them so they could stay cleaner. Children often fed their fathers.⁶ In pious Jewish homes, if a male guest were present, the women ate in a separate room.

Those eating together dipped their bread or food in the same dish. Eating with “clean” people was especially important to upright Jewish men because it was part of their oral laws. Given the close contact involved in sharing a meal, it was culturally forbidden to eat with Gentiles. Eating a meal together was only done with very close friends as it required sharing food, space, conversation, and often values. Later Pharisaic Jewish laws forbade eating with publicans. This background helps us understand in part how offensive Jesus's breach of table manners was to the Pharisees.

Mt 9:12 (Mk 2:17; Lk 5:31). *“They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.”* Jesus is the master doctor and healer who can heal the body and soul. The worst of life’s plagues is sin. He explains that He came to help sinners that need Him.

Mt 9:13. *“go ye and learn.”* This was another common phrase, but to this crowd, it was as offensive as a slap in the face. In their accounts of this event, Matthew, Mark, and Luke have shared almost every word up until this phrase. Only Matthew adds this extra Old Testament quote.

Mt 9:13. *“I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.”* Matthew cites an Old Testament minor prophet, Hosea: “For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings” (Hos 6:6). Jesus asks His critics to study the spiritual meaning of the text from the prophet Hosea. God has always wanted people to develop mercy, charity, and compassion. But the letter of the law has become so important during this late second temple era that the people do not understand.

Mt 9:13 (Mk 2:17; Lk 5:32). *“I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”* The oldest and best manuscripts do not include “to repentance” tacked on the end of Mt 9:13 and Mk 2:17. It seems to be a scribal addition to harmonize this verse with Lk 5:32. Its absence is a doctrinal change—Christ calls sinners to Him, not just to repentance.

We find a similar phrase in Moro 8:8: “Listen to the words of Christ, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God. Behold, I came into the world not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance; the whole need no physician, but they that are sick; wherefore, little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin.” This opens the discussion on the Lord’s Atonement covering children until they reach the age of accountability.

Questions about fasting—Mt 9:14–17; Mk 2:18–22; Lk 5:33–39

Lk 5:33 (Mt 9:14; Mk 2:18). *“Why do the disciples of John fast often . . . but thine eat and drink?”* Mark includes the Pharisees as well as John’s disciples as those who fast. Mt 9:14 only mentions the Pharisees fasting. Looking back in the Old Testament we find over one hundred references to fasting. Moses included a national fast on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29, 31). We read in 2 Sam 12 that King David fasted to seek forgiveness. Isa 58:3–6 asks for a fast to feed to poor. Ezra 8:21–23 calls the Jews to fast and petition our God for help. After Jonah’s preaching, the Ninevites fasted as a sign of their repentance. Joel 2:12, 15 calls for “a holy fast” to return the Israelites’ allegiance to God with all their hearts. Many times, fasting was used to bring one closer to God (see Est 4:16; Zec 7:5; and so on). Later Jews fasted on the anniversary of the death of a loved one.

Mt 9:16–17 (JST). *“Then said the Pharisees unto him, Why will ye not receive us with our baptism, seeing we keep the whole law? But Jesus said unto them, Ye keep not the law. If ye had kept the law, ye would have received me; for I am he who gave the law. I receive not you with your baptism because it profiteth you nothing.”* Jesus’s conversation with the Pharisees

in Matthew extends from fasting to their baptism. Both are rejected by the Lord because they did not lead them to Him.

Mk 2:19 (Mt 9:15; Lk 5:34). “*Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?*” From the writings of Moses, Isaiah, and many others, we find the symbol of the Lord as the bridegroom. Here Jesus builds on that theme to explain why there is no need to fast when disciples may have access to their Lord. (See my discussion of Jn 3:29 for more.)

Mk 2:21 (Mt 9:16; Lk 5:36). “*a piece of new cloth on an old garment.*” A patch of newly spun and woven wool or linen cloth was unwashed, and thus it would shrink and pull away, tearing or stretching at the seams.

Mt 9:17 (Mk 2:22; Lk 5:37). “*Neither do men put new wine into old bottles.*” The NIV clarifies the gender by changing “man” to “people,” and then it changes “bottles” to “wineskins.” Newly pressed grapes were kept in animal skins because the flexible leather could expand during fermentation. Old leather was not as flexible and could burst. Christ’s higher law is symbolic of the new wine. Disciples must receive it with a flexible and soft heart.

Jairus asks Jesus to heal his daughter—Mt 9:18–19; Mk 5:22–33; Lk 8:40–42

Mt 9:18. “*there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come.*” Jairus worshipped the Lord by extending his faith in Jesus’s healing power. The Gospels differ, with Mark and Luke recording that Jairus’s daughter was not dead when the man sought the Lord’s healing but that she died before He arrived (Mk 5:36; Lk 8:50). In all three accounts the Lord agreed and hurried through the crowded streets of Capernaum to Jairus’s house.

Lk 8:42. “*only daughter, about twelve years of age.*” Luke tells us that Jairus’s daughter had arrived at the important age of twelve—she was no longer a minor, had to pay taxes, was old enough to marry, and was most likely betrothed (Mk 5:42; see my discussion of Lk 1:27 for marriage customs).

Jesus heals a woman with an issue of blood—Mt 9:20–22; Mk 5:25–34; Lk 8:43–48

All three synoptic Gospels recorded Jesus’s remarkable interaction with an unclean woman on a crowded street in Galilee as a throng of people accompany Him from the synagogue to Jairus’s home. With faith-filled determination, this woman sought healing from Jesus, even if it meant breaking all the social and religious rules of segregation.

Mk 5:25 (Mt 9:20; Lk 8:43). “*an issue of blood twelve years.*” The law of Moses identified when blood was ritually unclean.⁷ Because this woman’s “issue of blood” would have been unclean, for the last twelve years, all that she touched would be unclean. So she was undoubtedly ostracized as literally an untouchable for twelve years. According to Jewish oral laws, this meant that she could not go out in public, could not worship in the synagogue, and could not share her husband’s bed, and additionally her social position dropped drastically. As a result of this, she was more than likely accused by her neighbors and

family of some wickedness that brought on her uncleanness. A pious husband should have divorced and left her—another reason why she may have been utterly destitute (Mk 5:26). She was determined to find healing from the Lord, even if it meant breaking the oral laws that kept her from reaching out to God.

Lk 8:43 (Mk 5:26). *“spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any.”* Interestingly, Luke, the “beloved physician,” includes a stab at his fellow physicians who take money without providing healing (see Col 4:14). Mk 5:26 further complains that the woman “grew worse” under the physicians’ treatments. Ancient medical practices were often based on superstitions.

Lk 8:44 (BLB; also Mt 9:21; Mk 5:27–29). *“Having come behind Him, she touched the fringe of His cloak, and immediately her flux of blood stopped.”* The desperate woman reaches for the hem or fringe of Jesus’s outer garment. The fringe of blue or tassels (called *tzitziyot* in Hebrew) later were made to have 613 knots to represent each commandment in the Torah.⁸ They were tied to each corner of a Jewish man’s outer cloak as a sign of the covenant.⁹ This may have been a significant position to represent the covenant at the time of Jesus as well.

Lk 8:45 (Mk 5:30). *“Who touched me?”* The woman demonstrated even more courage when she answered Jesus’s question. She could have hidden herself and never spoken up, knowing that she had broken several of the culture’s oral laws to be in public and to touch a man. Jesus, too, defied the cultural norms that marginalized women. By acknowledging, touching, and healing this woman, He set a new standard for how women should be treated, in opposition to the standards of their segregated and hierarchical society.

Lk 8:46. *“Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.”* Virtue is also defined as “strength, inherent power, ability.” Healing requires Jesus’s power. Faith can draw out His power.

Mk 5:33 (Lk 8:47). *“the woman fearing and trembling . . . fell down before him, and told him all the truth.”* The woman’s confession was an admission that she had broken the law. Her courage to face the crowd even after deliberately breaking their cultural segregation code and the law of Moses speaks of her faith. Her main message to the crowd was her bold testimony of Jesus’s healing power. Jesus did not reproach her for breaching the law of Moses; instead, He praised her faith.

Lk 8:48 (Mt 9:22; Mk 5:34). *“Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole.”* Jesus did not take the credit for the miraculous healing but chose to uplift the weary woman: “Your faith has brought you salvation” (ABT).

Lk 8:48. (Mk 5:34). *“go in peace.”* Luke includes Jesus’s departing blessing. All unclean disciples need to strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ to become clean and whole—as Christians we are never powerless.

Jesus restores Jairus’s daughter to life—Mt 9:23–26; Mk 5:35–43; Lk 8:49–56

Mk 5:36 (Lk 8:50). *“Be not afraid, only believe.”* Mark’s Gospel gives us the most details (suggesting that his source was an eyewitness—possibly Peter). The different timing of the young woman’s

death in the Synoptic Gospels does not change Jesus's ability to restore her life and health. The Lord encourages an atmosphere of faith and hope to foster faith and manifest God's power.

Mk 5:38 (Mt 9:23; Lk 8:51–54). *“he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.”* Mark and Luke mention that Jesus sent the howling mourners outside before His healing. At the time of death, Jews had a custom of hiring “wailing women,” or professional mourners, and “minstrels,” or flute players.¹⁰ The noise was offensive to the Lord.

Mk 5:41. *“he took the damsel by the hand, . . . Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.”* Mark includes Jesus's words in Aramaic, which was the mother tongue of most Palestinian Jews. (Jews learned Aramaic in Babylon during their captivity.)

Jesus heals two blind men—Mt 9:27–31

Matthew next turned to fulfill another Old Testament prophesy of the promised Messiah—He alone will heal the blind (Isa 35:5–6). Matthew's record of the healing of two blind men is repeated in Mt 20:30–34 in a similar setting. The healing of the blind marks the fourth Isaiah prophecy fulfilled in Mt 8–9.

Jesus heals a mute man—Mt 9:32–34

The word for “dumb” (*kophos*) is also translated “deaf” at times (see Mk 7:37), so the man may have been both or either. (Elisabeth's husband, Zacharias, couldn't speak, but it appears that he was also deaf in Lk 1:20, 62.) Ancient traditions and theology often blamed illnesses and disabilities on sin or a devil. In this case, it sounds like Jesus cast out a devil—suggesting that the man was not always dumb.

Matthew's bookends: Repeat and summary—Mt 4:23; 9:35

Mt 9:35 repeats nearly verbatim the same summary found in Mt 4:23. It summarizes Jesus's travels around Galilee while teaching, preaching, and healing. These two verses act as bookends to this section on Jesus speaking and acting with authority.

Matthew 10

Jesus sends the Twelve on missions—Mt 10:1–26; Mk 3:13–19; 6:7–11; Lk 6:12–16; 9:1–4

In Mt 10, Jesus prepares the Twelve for their missions. His commission included teaching, examples of healings, new Sabbath laws, and inviting all disciples who hear and follow Him to become His family. Matthew, Mark, and Luke share much of the same source material, but they present it differently.

Mk 3:14. *“he ordained twelve.”* The Gospel of Mark gives us the most details on the call of the Apostles. This is consistent with the claim that Mark recorded Peter's memories. Only Matthew lists the Apostles names at the time they were sent out on a mission; Mark and Luke list the names of the Twelve earlier.

Mt 10:1 (Mk 3:6:7; Lk 9:1). “*he had called unto him his twelve disciples.*” The New Testament distinguishes the Twelve as Jesus’s closest disciples, those who received priesthood keys and authority as special witnesses.

Mt 10:2 (Mk 3:13–19; Lk 6:14–16). “*the twelve apostles.*” In Greek, the word *apostolos* (“apostle”) means “one sent, a messenger, ambassador of the gospel; officially a commissioner of Christ.” Matthew and Mark use the word *apostle* only once each (and not in the singular). These two authors refer to the Apostles as “the twelve disciples” or just Jesus’s disciples. (We find the same pattern in the Book of Mormon in 3 Ne 15:11). The Gospel of John never uses the word *apostle*. It is not until Acts, the Epistles, and the book of Revelation that we find it used regularly. Perhaps this is because Luke was a native Greek speaker, or perhaps this is evidence that the apostolic Christians used it more as the Church spread to Greek converts. Looking at the New Testament as a whole, *apostle* and *disciple* are used for many believers, both men and women.¹¹

Mt 10:2. “the names . . . are these.” Three times the Gospels list twelve Apostles with only a few name changes. Judas the brother of James appears to overlap with Lebbaeus/Thaddaeus.

Except Judas Iscariot, the Apostles carried on Jesus’s work in the early Church. In Act 1:20–26, God directed the calling of Matthias to complete the Quorum of the Twelve.¹²

Lk 9:1 (Mk 3:15). “*power and authority.*” While Matthew and Mark explain that Jesus conferred power, *exousia*, on the Twelve, only Lk 9:1 adds the double power *and authority* for emphasis

Table 2. List of Apostles in the Gospels

Mt 10:2–4	Mk 3:13–19	Lk 6:14–16
Simon, called Peter	Simon, surnamed Peter	Simon, whom he also named Peter
Andrew his brother	James and	Andrew his brother
James the son of Zebedee	John, the sons of Zebedee surnamed “The sons of thunder”	James and
John his brother	Andrew	John
Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew
Matthew the publican	Thomas	Thomas
James the son of Alphaeus	James the son of Alphaeus	James the son of Alphaeus
Lebbaeus surnamed Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon called Zelotes
Simon the Canaanite	Simon the Canaanite	Judas the brother of James
Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him	Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him	Judas Iscariot, the traitor

and clarity. All righteous disciples may receive God's power through the gifts and fruits of the Spirit. Yet, *authority* comes with priesthood keys.¹³ Restored scripture explains that Jesus organized His Quorum of the Twelve after the Holy Order of God, which we refer to as the Melchizedek Priesthood (D&C 84; 107).

Mk 6:7. “to send them forth two by two.” Companionship fulfills the law of two witnesses and provides physical safety and support.

Mt 10:5. “These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying.” Jesus instructs the Apostles to preach the kingdom of God and heal and cast out devils and “all manner of sickness.”¹⁴ Though the Creator knew the difference between devils and sicknesses, the New Testament authors confused evil spirits for many illnesses, including emotional and mental challenges (for example, deaf and dumb in Mk 9:25; epileptic in Mt 17:15; and so forth).

Mt 10:5–10. “lost sheep of the house of Israel.” The first apostolic mission was just to the flocks of Israel. Only Matthew includes Jesus's prohibition against teaching Gentiles and Samaritans on this first assignment. This seems to be limited to this mission only, as one of the Apostles is referred to as Simon the Canaanite. Matthew's earlier example showed Jesus healing the gentile centurion's servant (8:6–13). In the Gospel of John, Jesus preaches to the Samaritan woman at the well, which was followed by the conversion of many Samaritans from the town of Sychar (4:7–42). These Samaritans become, possibly, the first branch of Christianity.¹⁵ The authors included these accounts to show Jesus's example of Christianity extending to Gentiles.

Mt 10:9–10 (Mk 6:8–9; Lk 9:3). “Provide neither gold, nor . . . scrip.” The NIV helps us understand these old English words: “Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts—no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff.” The KJV “scrip” was a knapsack or satchel. It was not needed because the Apostles were not to bring anything extra. A “coat” referred to something worn next to the skin, like a tunic or undergarment. The missionaries were to pack lightly, without even two pairs of sandals.

Mt 10:10. “nor yet staves.” Matthew and Luke mention no need to bring a walking stick, a staff, or a stave or weapon to protect against robbery. Mark includes a similar list of exclusions, with one exception: “Take nothing for their journey *except a staff*” (NAE; emphasis added). Interestingly, the Mishnah (written later than the New Testament by rabbis) includes a list of things that were left outside of the temple before entering: a staff, sandals, wallet, and dust.¹⁶ In sacred space and in sacred callings, Jesus asks His servants to leave behind these things (and other things of the world) to focus on the things of God.

Mt 10:10. “for the workman is worthy of his meat.” When Jesus sends the Twelve out as God's servants, they are *ergates*, “laborers, workmen,” not dignitaries or religious rulers. So too are modern disciples—all work.

Ministry rules for entering a home—Mt 10:12–13; Mk 6:10; Lk 9:4

Mt 10:12–13. “*when ye come into an house, . . . if the house be worthy, let your peace come.*” Jesus advises the first missionaries to greet or salute each household. If the missionaries find it worthy or suitable, they may stay there. Jesus’s instructions to sleep in those homes where they teach was also the cultural practice of the Essenes and others in the ancient world.

Mt 12:13. “*peace.*” When the Apostles are invited into someone’s home to preach the word of God, Jesus tells them to share His peace. In Hebrew “peace,” or *shalom*, is also a greeting. Yet, here I think Jesus meant more. Peace is also the language and witness of the Spirit (see D&C 6:23).

Mt 10:14; Mk 6:8–11; Lk 9:5. “*shake off the dust.*” The Lord also gave instructions on what to do if (or when) the Apostles were rejected. If they shook the dust off their feet, it became a sign or testimony against the community (which we see in action with Paul and Barnabas in Act 13:51). Joseph Smith received a similar commandment as part of the restoration of all things. This is an ordinance against those who refuse to accept the gospel.¹⁷ Joseph Fielding Smith explained, “The cleansing of their feet, either by washing or wiping off the dust, would be recorded in heaven as a testimony against the wicked. This act, however, was not to be performed in the presence of the offenders, ‘lest thou provoke them, but in secret, and wash thy feet, as a testimony against them in the Day of Judgment.’”¹⁸

Mt 10:15. “*judgment.*” If missionaries are doing God’s work, they do not need to fear rejection, as God will judge their efforts and reward them accordingly. Matthew adds that those who reject them will receive a harsher judgment than the people of Gomorrah. This message parallels the teaching that “unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required” (Lk 12:48).

Facing persecution—Mt 10:16–25; Lk 10:3

Mt 10:16. “*I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.*” Under the direction of the Good Shepherd, the Apostles are told to be careful of Satan’s deceptive efforts to attack God’s message. The JST adds, “Be ye therefore wise *servants*, and *as* harmless as doves.” The Prophet Joseph Smith felt inspired to change the KJV advice to be “wise as serpents.” That emblem of cunning was changed to being meek and humble. This change encourages servants to be wise by following their master, Jesus.

Mt 10:17. “*councils . . . scourge you.*” Councils were tribunals who acted as judges in each town (they were not allowed to issue a capital sentence, which was saved for the Sanhedrin, with Roman validation). Scourging or flogging was a form of punishment mentioned in Deu 25:2–3. If people broke certain laws, they could be whipped a certain number of times depending on the crime, but never as many as forty lashes (so as not to reach the number representing purification). The whip was braided grass or leather, sometimes with bones and rocks tied into the ends.

Mt 10:19. “*no thought*” means not to be “anxious, or seek to promote one’s interests.” In the face of persecution, Saints are not to worry about what to say. However, this does not mean that missionaries

and members should not prepare for preaching and teaching opportunities. While we do so, the Lord promises that His Spirit can guide His servants in their times of need (see Lk 12:11–12).

Mt 10:20. *“the Spirit of your Father . . . speaketh in you.”* When the Apostles speak as directed by the Spirit, God guides their thoughts to speak truth and can lead their ministry.

Mt 10:22 (JST). *“Ye shall be hated of all the world for my name’s sake.”* The JST change clarifies that those who are of the world, but not all humanity, will be opposed to God’s servants. The Lord’s prophecies of dysfunctional families applied to many generations. In addition, in the last days, ravishing wars will again fill the earth.

Mt 10:26. *“Fear them not.”* To help those who will suffer such persecution, Jesus promises that He will bring justice on all evil.

The value of soul over body—Mt 10:27–33; Lk 12:2–9

Mt 10:27 (JST; also Lk 12:2–3). *“Preach ye in the light . . . preach ye upon the housetops.”* The JST changes “speak” to “preach,” and this in addition with Luke’s “proclaim” are all consistent with the Greek. Sadly, nowadays, what is done in private is now proclaimed from the housetops in our Internet communications, which are made possible through satellite dishes and digital clouds.

Mt 10:28 (Lk 12:4–5). *“fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”* Jesus’s warning has not lost its pertinence over time. The Lord asks us to be more worried about our spiritual condition than about our physical condition. Our spiritual safety is at stake when counterfeits and falsehoods filter into our minds and hearts. Unlike our cultural norm says, physical harm is not as dangerous as spiritual harm.

Mt 10:29–31; Lk 12:6–7. *“sparrows . . . hairs.”* Jesus used these examples of things that come and go almost imperceptibly. Their minor value is used to contrast the great worth of humanity.

Mt 10:32–33 (Lk 12:8–9). *“Whosoever . . . confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father.”* Christ will stand by those at the judgment bar who stand up for Him day by day. This is terrific comfort for those enduring persecution. At the time the Gospels were written, many Christians were persecuted and even suffered martyrdom for their testimonies.

Conditions of discipleship, including divisions—Mt 10:34–42; Lk 12:51–53

Mt 10:34 (Lk 12:51). *“I came not to send peace, but a sword.”* Although following God’s plan of happiness can bring true joy, the cost of discipleship can also bring painful separations. Jesus asks His disciples to stand up for their beliefs, even at the cost of their lives. This was what the early Christians faced as the Gospels were being written—life and death decisions and separations from family members were endured for Jesus’s sake. This message had very real personal application for these early Saints.

Mt 10:34. *“peace”* also means (1) “a state of national tranquility; exemption from the rage and havoc of war”; (2) “peace between individuals, i.e., harmony”; (3) “security, safety, prosperity, felicity.” Jesus

taught that discipleship can bring *peace of mind and heart* and eternal rest (meaning exaltation). But in this life, discipleship also requires real sacrifice and brings great challenges.

Mt 10:37 (Lk 14:25–26). “**he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.**” Jesus asks disciples to let nothing in life, including one’s family, create detours for us on the covenant path. Everything the world has to offer is not worth what Jesus has to offer.

Mt 10:38; Lk 14:27. “cross.” This Roman symbol of extreme suffering, crucifixion, was well known before the Lord’s death. We must be willing to die (and live) in the service of God. Elder James E. Talmage wrote, “Figuratively, *to take, take up, or bear one’s cross* is *to endure suffering, affliction, or shame*, like a criminal on his way to the place of crucifixion.”¹⁹ These verses require the reader to ask, “Am I willing to pay a similar cost?” As we do not know what our personal sacrifices or costs will be, we must walk humbly before God, submitting our will to His. Obedient disciples seeking the spirit of inspiration are in training to heed God at any cost. The Lord gives most disciples an Abrahamic sacrifice that is tailor-made for them to prove and refine them. God’s requires wholeheartedness from disciples, and the consequences of sacrifice are real.

Rewards of discipleship

Mt 10:39 (JST). “**He who seeketh to save his life.**” With the JST change from “find” to “seek,” the meaning is augmented to include our righteous desires. When we give up our personal desires or will to do the Lord’s will, God can save us.

Mt 10:40–41 (Jn 12:44–45; 13:20). “**He that receiveth a prophet . . . shall receive a prophet’s reward.**” Jesus promised that those who follow the Lord’s servants—apostles, prophets, righteous teachers—will receive the same reward. This is an amazing consequence! The KJV “righteous man” in Greek is a “righteous person” (NIV). The workings of the Spirit of God are passed on from one disciple to another.

Mt 10:42. “**give to drink unto one of these little ones.**” Those hands who lovingly serve and feed children are very sacred to God and will be rewarded. Perhaps giving the cup of water in this verse also may refer to teaching children about Christ’s living water.

Notes

1 *Encyclopedia of Jewish Medical Ethics*, ed. Avraham Stienberg (Jerusalem, Israel: Feldheim, 2003), 34: “Any illness may result from sin.” See also pages 106–107.

2 James Tan, *Power and Public Finance at Rome, 246–49 BCE* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), 40–50.

3 Pyung-soo Seo, *Luke’s Jesus in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, UK: James Clarke, 2015), 65.

4 Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 470.

5 Fredric William Farrar, *The Life of Christ* (New York, NY: Dutton, 1874), 188.

6 Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1969), 154, 363–364.

7 Lev 15:19–28; Deu 24:1; Ezk 36:17–18.

8 After the time of the New Testament, rabbis counted 613 laws in the five books of Moses (the Torah or Pentateuch). There are 365 negative commandments (“thou shalt not”) and 248 positive commandments (“thou shalt”). The knots in the hems of men’s robes also correspond to the sacred name of God, Yahweh, which was not spoken.

9 Deu 22:12; Num 15:38; see also Mt 23:5.

10 *Mishnah, Ketuboth* 4.4: “Even the poorest funerals called for two flutes and one wailing woman.” An earlier source on mourning also describes: “And Mattathias and his sons tore their garments, and they covered themselves with haircloth, and they lamented greatly. . . . And they fasted on that day, and they clothed themselves with haircloth, and they placed ashes on their heads, and they tore their garments” (1 Mac 2:14, 3:47). Similar mourning during repentance is found in Jonah 3:6–8 and Mt 11:21.

11 In Romans 16:7, Paul mentions a female disciple named Junia who was “well known to the apostles” (ESV) or “prominent among the apostles” (CEB, RSV, NRSV) or “outstanding among the apostles” (NIV) or “leaders among the apostles” (NIRV). As the various translations show, the verse can be read in many ways.

12 History adds to the biblical accounts of the Apostles’ missions in the early apostolic Church (particularly adding details of where each Apostle’s ministry took place):

Apostle	Destination
Simon Peter	Parthia (Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia), Britain
Andrew (Peter’s brother)	Cappadocia, Galatia, Bithynia, Scythia
Simon the Zealot	North Africa (Egypt, Cyrene, Mauritania, Lybia), Britain
James son of Alphaeus	Spain (and possibly Britain and Ireland)
Thomas	Parthia, Media, Persia (Carman, Hyrcani, Bactria—or Iran and Afghanistan today), Northwest India
Bartholomew	Parthia, Media, Persia, northwest India
Judas (Libbaeus Thaddaeus)	Assyria, Mesopotamia
Philip	Scythia, upper (northern) Asia Minor
Matthew	Parthia, Asiatic Aethiopia (Hindu Kush)
John	Ephesus (Modern day Turkey) Gaul? (modern France)
James (brother of John)	None—he was beheaded with a sword by Herod (Act 12)
Matthias (replaced Judas Iscariot)	Dacia (Romania), upper Macedonia (Greece)

13 My dissertation explored Joseph Smith’s understanding of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. After searching everything recorded that the prophet wrote or said on the subject, I am convinced that Joseph believed the power of God is available to all covenant members of God’s kingdom regardless of gender or calling. The keys he saw differently, however. See Lynne Hilton Wilson, “Joseph Smith’s Doctrine of the Holy Spirit Contrasted with Cartwright, Campbell, Hodge, and Finney” (PhD diss., Marquette University, 2010), appendixes 4–5. For an abbreviated version,

see Lynne H. Wilson, “A New Pneumatology: Comparing Joseph Smith’s Doctrine of the Spirit with His Contemporaries and the Bible,” in *BYU Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (2012), 1–34.

14 Mt 10:1, 7–8; Lk 9:1–2; Mk 6:7.

15 The name Christian is not used until Paul preaches in Antioch with Barnabas. Earlier names of the movement were “the way” (Act 9:2) and the “sect of the Nazarene” (Act 24:5).

16 Mishnah, Zeriam: Berakoth 7:5.

17 D&C 60:15–17; 75:20; 84:92; 99:4.

18 *Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual: Religion 324 and 325* (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001), 131, citing Joseph Fielding Smith, *Seek Ye Earnestly* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1970).

19 James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret News, 1916), 667n4.