

Christ's Disciples Were Commanded to Go Forth With a Staff and Sandals

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Christ's Disciples Were Commanded to Go Forth with a Staff and Sandals (Mk. 6:8, 9).

Christ's Disciples Were Commanded to Go Forth with neither Staffs nor Sandals (Mt. 10:9-10).

This study will provide proof that Christ gave his disciples two separate commissions and his instructions were different for each one,

He (Christ) commanded them (his disciples) to **take** nothing for the journey except **a staff** – no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts –⁹ but to **wear sandals**, and not to put on two tunics (Mk. 6:8-9; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

When Christ gave these instructions to his disciples, John the Baptizer had already been executed by Herod,

Now King Herod heard of him (Christ), for his name had become well known. And he (Herod) said, 'John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him (Christ) (Mk. 6:14; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In Matthew's account of Christ giving his disciples a commission, John the Baptizer was still alive,

Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money-belts, 10 nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, **nor sandals, nor staffs**; for a worker is worthy of his food (Mt. 10:9-10; emphasis added).

Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding his twelve disciples that he departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.² And when John (the Baptizer) had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples³ and said to him (Christ), 'Are you the Coming One, or do we look for another?' (Mt. 11:1-3; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Therefore, the commission that Christ gave his disciples, as recorded by Mark, occurred after John's execution while the commission that Christ gave his disciples, as recorded by Matthew, occurred prior to John's execution. So these were two different commissions and Christ's instructions to his disciples were not the same for both. One reason that Christ's instructions were different is that Matthew's account was prophetic and not meant to occur immediately. Instead, it was describing the work that Christ's servants would be doing progressively from the time of his first appearance, as the Son

of Man, to his second coming as 'King of kings' and 'Lord of lords' (cf. Mt. 24:46; Lk. 12:43; Rev. 19:11-16),

But beware of men, for they will deliver you (Christ's servants) up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.¹⁸ And you will be brought before governors and kings for my (Christ's) sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles (Mt. 10:17-18; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The events that Matthew recorded in these last two scriptures did not commence until after Christ's death and resurrection. This theme continues and Christ revealed that these activities would not end until his second coming,

Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death.²² And you (Christ's servants) will be hated by all for my name's sake. **But he who endures to the end will be saved** (Mt. 10:21-22; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The thirteenth chapter of Mark confirms Matthews's account that Christ's commission to his servants was meant to continue until his second coming,

And you (Christ's servants) will be hated by all men for my (Christ's) sake. **But he who endures to the end shall be saved** (Mk. 13:13; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

But of that day and hour (time of Christ's second coming) no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father (Almighty God).³³ Take heed, watch and pray; for you (Christ's servants) do not know when the time is (Mk. 13:32-33; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In Matthew's account of the commission that Christ gave to his servants, there was no need to have a staff or sandals because Christ was not asking them to go out immediately. Instead, he was describing the future work that all his servants would be doing following his death and resurrection. On the other hand, Mark records the work that Christ's disciples would start doing while he was still alive. This is why Mark mentioned the following,

So they (Christ's disciples) went out and preached that people should repent.¹³ And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them (Mk. 6:12-13; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The tenth chapter of Matthew does not record any work done by Christ's disciples because they were not sent out at that time. However, they were dispatched following the death of John the Baptizer, which is mentioned in Mark 6:8-9. Therefore, there is no contradiction in scripture. It is important to note that Christ's disciples could not fulfill the main goal of preaching to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, as recorded by Matthew, because these descendants of Jacob were removed from Samaria and scattered to the north, having been taken captive by the Assyrians around 740 BCE (2Kgs. 17:5-18; 1Chr. 5:26),

These twelve Jesus sent out (SGD 649; dismissed) and commanded them saying; 'Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.⁶ But **go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel** (Mt. 10:5-6; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Other servants, that would be called in future generations, would be involved in preaching to the descendants of the ten tribes, or families, of Jacob (including those of spiritual Israel; cf. Rom. 11:17-24). If Christ's twelve disciples journeyed into Europe during the time of his ministry, they would have been unavailable to receive all the instruction they needed from him. Christ's reference to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" does not refer to the Jews, or family of Judah, or the Levites from the tribe of Levi. Descendants of these two families resided mainly in Judea during the time of Christ's ministry and were not scattered throughout Europe at that time (see study: Messiah's Message to the Jewish People).

In conclusion, the two sections of scripture, that appear to be contradictory, are in fact describing separate commissions that Christ gave to his servants. One was immediate while the other was prophetic and would commence progressively following Christ's death and resurrection.

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor.11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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