

Sending Out the Twelve

Key Verse: “When he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.”

—Matthew 10:1

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 10:1-15

of people being ready, even anxious, for the establishment of God’s kingdom. However, the Bible record shows that while many were excited about the miracles, very few at that time became devoted followers of Jesus.

Jesus instructed the apostles not only to perform such miracles, but also to preach that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt. 10:7) Mark’s gospel account records that the apostles were sent out in groups of two, and “they proclaimed that men should reform.”—Mark 6:7,12,13, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*

God’s covenant and promises at that time were

AFTER GOING UP INTO A mountain and praying all night to God, when it became day Jesus called together those who had been following him, his disciples. Out of these he chose “twelve, whom also he named apostles.” (Luke 6:12,13) The word apostle means “one sent forth.”

Jesus gave the apostles power to cast out unclean spirits, as well as healing various sicknesses and diseases. These miraculous works attracted the attention of many Israelites. Such miracles should have resulted in a great number

restricted to the nation of Israel. Daniel's prophecy proclaimed that there would be "seventy weeks" of exclusive favor to "thy people," Israel. Interpreting the prophecy and its fulfillment, we understand that the last "week" of this period of favor included the period of Jesus' earthly ministry and crucifixion. (Dan. 9:24-27) Thus, at the time of Jesus' First Advent, it was the "harvest" or end of the Jewish Age of special favor only to Israel.—Matt. 9:35-38

We are now living in the harvest or end of the Gospel Age. Just as Jesus sent forth his apostles during his First Advent, his words to us today are similar: "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2) The more we proclaim the Gospel message to others during this harvest time, and also seek to personally apply it in our life, the more we will grow in faith, knowledge, and appreciation of spiritual things. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself."—Prov. 11:25

The methods of the Jewish Age and Gospel Age harvest work are somewhat different, but the desired results are the same. The blessings going forth during the present harvest time are not healings of physical diseases. Rather, they are the opening of the eyes and ears of mankind's understanding concerning God's character, plans and promises.

It is our privilege to go forth as laborers in the harvest work to spread the message of "the gospel of the kingdom." (Matt. 24:14) As we do so, let us remember Jesus' words, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." (Matt. 10:20) We do not expect to have miraculous powers of speech granted us. Instead, we should strive to be filled with the Truth and its spirit. Then it will be true that it is not our own wisdom that we shall speak, nor our own plan that we shall declare, but the wisdom which cometh from above, and the plan of God. ■