

Questions for Matthew 10:23-42

For Logan Shaw

1. How does this verse coincide with the coming of Christ? (Verse 23)

Logan Shaw: "There are several different interpretations of what this verse is exactly referring to. One possible answer is that it is referring to Jesus coming and establishing his church among men. Another likely interpretation is that this is referring to the judgement that will come to pass on Jerusalem in AD 70, regarding the Roman siege of Jerusalem."

Bart Shaw: "There are different interpretations of this verse. (1) The liberal might say that Jesus believed the end of time would happen in His life and that He was wrong in His prediction. This is obviously not correct and we should reject it. (2) The Preterists believe a bizarre notion that Christ literally "came" in A.D. 70, at which point occurred the resurrection of the dead, the judgment day, and the end of the world. In Matthew 24:36, however, Jesus says that He did not know the time of His Second Coming, which contradicts this interpretation. So, the Preterist position is false. (3) A third interpretation is that Jesus is referring to the establishment of the Kingdom, the church, on the day of Pentecost. In fact, in Matt 16:28 Jesus says: ²⁸ Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." So, this answer is plausible. (4) However, the best answer is the position that Jesus is referring to His coming of judgement on the city of Jerusalem in AD70. There are several reasons for this, for example divine punishment in scripture are often referred to as a "coming." (See Isa 13:2-5 and Rev 2:5 and other places.) The strongest argument for this being the correct interpretation is a comparison of Matt 10 with Luke 21. They are very similar and Luke 21 obviously is dealing with the AD70 event. Thus, here in Matt 10:23 we can conclude in context that the Lord is discussing the destruction of Jerusalem as one of His "comings." "See Doug Edwards sermon on this subject on the Christian Landmark "The Many Comings of Christ")."

Loren Gorrell: "It is not a reference to the second coming of Christ to earth, but a reference to the arrival of Christ's kingdom, the church. The disciple would not teach about Jesus to all Israel before His death, and the formation of the church on the subsequent Pentecost. Coffman makes

this point. Smith speculates it is either the formation of the church or the destruction of Jerusalem. Barnes supports the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of the Jewish economy.”

Bill Smith: “One writer suggested that Jesus was telling His apostles to NOT run toward persecution. Martyrdom was not to be a desired outcome.

Some consider this a very difficult verse or phrase to understand. Most writers believe that this is a prophecy of Christ's judgment upon Judea with the Roman army in AD70 or so, destroying Jerusalem. Some bible students look back to 10:15 when Jesus mentions a day of judgment would be coming.

So, not that Jesus comes again to the earth, but that his judgment will be coming BEFORE these men get through every city in Israel.”

For Wes Bonifay

2. Is persecution and even death for proclaiming the gospel a foregone conclusion or does it depend on circumstances such as culture and time period? (Verses 24-28)

Wes Bonifay: “The commentary by Jamieson, Fawcett, and Brown notes, “Three relations in which Christ stands to His people are here mentioned: He is their Teacher-they His disciples; He is their Lord-they His servants; He is the Master of the household-they its inmates. In all these relations, He says here, He and they are so bound up together that they cannot look to fare better than He, and should think it enough if they are no worse.” If they call the master Beelzebub – that is, “Lord of the Flies” – then what worse names would they have for the servants?

Thus, these verses tell us that if a leader is persecuted, then his followers should expect to be persecuted as well (and maybe even to a greater degree). As Jesus said in verse 22, “You will be hated by all for My name’s sake.” While there certainly have been historical contexts and/or cultures in which Christians were more or less persecuted, I believe that this principle holds across time and culture. We are lucky today to live in a time and place in which there is not currently any violent opposition to Christianity, though that has not been the case throughout history (we are thankfully far removed from the likes of Nero forcing Christians to be mauled by dogs...) or even in many areas of today’s world (as

several countries have banned the practice of Christianity by penalty of death). However, while the degree of persecution may differ across times and cultures, these verses teach that devout followers of Christ will always be maligned just as He was.”

Bart Shaw: “Yes. Persecution is inevitable. However, the level of persecution is variable. All will face opposition for speaking and living the truth. Paul settles this argument in 2 Tim 3:12, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” If you live the standard Christ gives for His disciples, you WILL face the judgement of others. It may be from society as a whole, or your family, or your spouse, or your brethren, but it will come. No one lives godly in Christ without resistance. Jesus wants His servants to be ready for this persecution that even He, the Son of God, had to face.”

Loren Gorrell: “The primary application of these verses is to the disciples / apostles. They like many early Christians would face severe persecution. They proclaimed a new religion that was harmful to the Jewish bureaucracy and the power structure with in it. The same threat applied to the Gentiles. The practice of Christianity forbids the worship of idols and would severely damage the economy based on the worship of false gods. (Acts 19:27) Hence, the apostles were extremely opposed by some entrenched in their old ways.

Christians today in Muslim and communist countries face similar persecution, threats to their life. Not so much in areas friendly to the gospel, such as the southern United States. The Baptist down south may verbally oppose us, as in verse 25 but likely won't behead us. So the severity of persecution certainly depends on the culture and time period.”

Austin Maddox: “Christians are going to suffer persecution of some sort. But there are some different thoughts to consider. Not all Christians will suffer death for the name of Christ, and therefore not every Christian will suffer equally. There are also those that claim Christianity that purposefully do not put themselves in difficult situations. This brand of Christianity is not what Jesus here is endorsing. To do what Jesus was asking these disciples to do is the same thing that he asks us to do today, which is to stand in the face of those that disagree with what God has revealed and preach it anyway in love and humility. To be prepared in our minds that this is something that can and will happen eventually. To say

that there is no persecution for Christians is as if one would say that there is no one that disagrees anymore. Wherever there is disagreement, there is always the possibility for persecution. The Christian is the one that does not go looking for a fight but is ready to stand in the face of opposition and accept the consequences. This is true all throughout all time and cultures.”

Landon Shaw: “Well the two analogies used in these verses are pretty clear. By virtue of their relationship they cannot expect to be treated and differently than their teacher/master was. The same is true for us. We must be expecting to face the same struggles that Jesus went through.”

For Austin Maddox

3. What is the meaning of verses 29-31? What lessons should we draw from them? (Verses 29-31)

Austin Maddox: “Will the sparrow live its life and be bought and sold without God noticing? Will a sparrow die, and God not know even as the world feels no difference? Does God notice that as we might run our hand through our hair and one hair fall off that our head is not that much lighter? So much more then, God knows and is keeping track of His people because we are much more valuable to him than sparrows and hair! How does this relate with persecution? The subject is fear. He tells them in verses 26 and 27 to not be afraid or persecution, not to be afraid of those that would harm and kill them. Jesus uses these analogies to show exactly why they should not be afraid! It is because God is in control and God knows all things. A normal human would be afraid, afraid to the point that they would never make such a stand but having faith in an omnipotent God can cause someone to rethink such things and be filled with boldness.”

Bill Smith: “Matt.6:26 had previously used birds to illustrate how God knows about and takes care of his creation even the birds of the air. These sparrows were so insignificant to the Jews that they had to be sold in pairs. Didn't know that some believe the phrase, "falls to the ground" doesn't mean dying and might actually mean lands, hopping, etc. Our God knows even that !!

#1) We are worth more than sparrow, we are worth more than sparrows, we are worth more than sparrows.

#2) Trust the Lord, trust the Lord, trust the Lord. Jesus is telling his followers that the Father will know what trials, tribulations, and persecution each one endures.”

Bart Shaw: “The chief teaching of these verses is that God’s providence extends to the very most common and unremarkable of His creations. Even the sparrow gets lavish attention and by comparison, humankind is the crown jewel of His marvelous cosmos. How much more then, does He watch over and shepherd our existence? If God knows how many hairs there are on your head, is He going to make an oversight and allow your death when it is not time? No! Jesus makes an argument here that the godly Christian should not be anxious. Why? Nothing untoward will happen to you without God’s assent. God writes the number of our days in His book (Psalm 139). Our lives are in His hands and we can trust our Heavenly Father to do right.”

Landon Shaw: “This is to finish the illustration of God’s care and concern or the disciples. Out of all the birds that were used for food, the sparrow is considered the cheapest, yet God was concerned with the fate of the least of his creatures. The thought here is that nothing trivial, no matter how small, goes unnoticed by God. The same thing goes for the number of hairs on someones head, and is intended to emphasize nothing escapes God’s notice. So what is being said here is not that God will protect you from all harm, but in your trials he is aware and his divine will is being worked out.”

For Bill Smith

4. Why is confession so important? Why is it presented in the context of persecution? (Verses 32-33)

Bill Smith: “In the previous 5 verses, 3X Jesus exhorts His followers to not be afraid.

#1) Because of the promise found in vs32. Jesus the Christ promises to confess the names of those before the heavenly Father, who will confess Jesus unto men.

#2) After reminding His followers, vs25, that He was called Satan, vs26, that the truth cannot be stopped, vs28, God not man is to be feared, vs29, God cares for birds, He'll certainly care for you. Now Jesus gives His men a promise and encouragement vs32 the promise of confession.

Note: there is another important promise in vs33, and it isn't a positive promise. Deny Me before men and I'll deny you before the Father. How can we confess Christ, the Lord's church, and God? #1) Verbally professing Jesus as the Son of God and Baptism, #2) By our Christian example, #3) By verbally professing Christ to others.”

Austin Maddox: “Verbal confession is so very vital to what it takes to be a Christian and continue to be one! Confession is a Christian’s mission statement. Why do we do what we do? Because we believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God! It is the reason behind everything we do. If you don’t believe that Jesus is the Son of God enough to say it front of everyone and in front of people that don’t believe the same thing, how can you expect to be able to stand up for persecution? If you are ashamed of that fact, if you aren’t willing to proclaim it no matter the situation, then you have no business being a Christian.”

Bart Shaw: “I couldn’t say it any better than Coffman does: Confession of faith in Jesus Christ as God's only begotten Son is a basic requirement of the Christian religion ([Romans 10:10](#)). Paul called it "the good confession" twice in a single utterance ([1 Timothy 6:12,13](#)); and the following reasons may be cited for calling it the "good" confession: (1) Jesus made it under oath and was condemned to death for doing so ([John 19:7](#); [Mark 14:62](#)); (2) God made it from heaven on three different occasions ([Matthew 3:17](#); [17:5](#); [John 12:2:8](#)); (3) all people must make it eventually ([Philippians 2:11](#)); (4) it is "unto salvation" ([Romans 10:10](#)), being made thereby a part of the plan of salvation; (5) Christ will confess those who make it ([Matthew 10:32](#)); (6) it has been made by the saints of all ages; and (7) it constitutes, actually a concise summary of all Christian doctrine, namely, that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God!”

Loren Gorrell: “Confession is essential to salvation.

Romans 10:9 – That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead you will be saved.

Confession in some circumstances is difficult, the disciples were going to find it difficult to confession Jesus in the persecution they were about to face. We see other examples

Stephen Acts 7:56 Peter and John Acts 3:26.

Barnes points out Jesus can be confessed or denied by our personal conduct.”

Levi Shaw: “ It's important because Christianity isn't a hidden religion. You must not be embarrassed about your religion. It mentioned in the context of persecution because you shouldn't be afraid to state your religion even in persecution”

For Hunter Smith

5. Why is the gospel something that divides even the closest of relationships? Is Jesus saying that we shouldn't care about ourselves or our other relationships? (Verses 34-39)

Hunter Smith: “a) Hebrews 4:12 is a nice adjunct to this question. There it says,

“For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the divisions of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

As seen in this verse, the gospel is something that divides even the closest of relationships due to its power. This is not a power that somehow breeds contempt or division- it's actually quite the contrary. What it does divide, though, is the carnal man from the spiritual man and when this happens, it's bound to cause issues between those in the world (or even in our families or immediate circle) who are still clinging to the carnal man. Consider the Jews of Jesus' day (who this verse might also be referring to). They expected carnal blessings from the Messiah, i.e. a restored Israel, military dominance, abundant riches, etc. Actually, they still expect this!

Now, that's not to say that we all don't struggle with the temptations of the carnal man to a degree. But it's the transformative power of the gospel causes us to live, think, and act differently from those around us and these differences (and the world's hatred of them), will lead to division. Jesus was, after all, the Prince of Peace (Isiah 9:9, 11:6). Sinful man's hatred of this peace is what causes division. Christians should never be seeking division, rather unification through the Gospel of Christ.

b) Jesus is not saying that we shouldn't care about ourselves or our other relationships. What he is saying is that we should care about him more than ourselves or our other relationships. As seen in verse

37, Jesus is referring to where we place our love and importance. Are our friends more important than Christ? Our family, even? While often times, especially in today's world, these things are able to coexist in relative harmony, there may come a time in our lives when we have to choose between one or the other. When a time or situation like this comes, we then have to be able to choose Christ over these earthly things, even if they are of great importance to us. Coffman provides a great summary of this concept/notion when he writes the following:

This is one of the "hard sayings" of Christ. Luke's account phrases it even more bluntly: "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). Actually, these accounts (Matthew's and Luke's) have identical meanings; and, by comparison, it is learned that "hate" as used in this context actually means "to love less," and does not imply malice or vicious hatred in the ordinary meaning of the word "hate." An Old Testament example is Jacob's "hatred" of Leah (Genesis 29:31), which can only mean that he loved her less than Rachel. The teaching in this place is simply that Christ must be FIRST in the lives of those who would truly follow him.

Also, I found this bit (also by Coffman) quite interesting regarding the "sword" to which Jesus refers:

The sword of Christ is: (1) a sword of separation, (2) the word of God (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12), (3) the sword of authority (Romans 13:1-8), (4) the sword of judgment (Genesis 3:24), (5) the sword of correction (Revelation 2:16), and (6) the sword of victory (Revelation 19:13). Even Mary, the mother of Jesus, was acquainted with that sword. "Yea, and a sword shall pierce thine own soul

Dennis Nilson: "The peace Jesus is talking about here is a worldly peace that glosses over deep, fundamental differences (in how one should live the life given to him by God) for the sake of superficial harmony. HE said HE did not come to bring that kind of peace. Conflict and disagreement will arise between those who choose to follow Christ,...and those who don't. One's commitment to Christ will separate friends and loved ones. As we (Christians) take up our 'cross' and follow HIM we are publicly

identifying with HIM and are proclaiming HE is the most important thing in our life and also we are “all in” even if it means suffering, opposition, or even death for HIS sake. Our different values, morals, goals, and purpose set us apart from others. Most everyone strongly desires acceptance and validation for their lifestyles, thoughts, and philosophies,..when they come up against the truth about God, Christ, and HIS gospel,..they cannot accept it or anyone who represents it because in doing so,..they are pronouncing judgment on themselves,..just like the Pharisees did long ago. Jesus isn't advocating neglecting our families here but is reminding us that our commitment to HIM and to our FATHER is even more important than they are,..God has got to be our first priority.”

Logan Shaw: “The gospel separates the wheat from the chaff. It segregates those who want truth and salvation from those who let other ideologies interfere with their world view and reality. We should care about our relationships with others, but as Jesus says in these verses, “anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”

Landon Shaw: “Because the message of the kingdom causes people to make a decision, either for it or against it. There is no neutral option and because of that if one person accepts it in a family and the rest do not, then they become enemies. Households of light and darkness cannot coexist. Of course Jesus isn't saying that we shouldn't care about our relationships. But believing in God takes a knife to some of our friendships, and we must know when to cut ties.”

Levi Shaw: “ It divides because some see it as the problem with this world. (Imagine - John Lennon) They see it as a cult, full of rude and idiotic people. No. Jesus wants us to care about family relationships, but if family relationships get in the way of your soul, you must sever where you need to sever.”

For Dennis Nilson

6. Does every deed have a unique reward? (Verses 40-42)

Dennis Nilson: “From my understanding of scripture,..every action has results. Gal. 6:7 tells us, “God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh, will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting

life." The very next statement AFTER THIS is "And let us not grow weary while doing GOOD, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." While eternal life is a gift extended 'free of charge' on the basis of God's grace (Eph. 2: 8&9) each of us will be judged by Christ (or by His Word John 12:48). This judgment will reward us for how we have lived. God's gracious gift of salvation does not free us from the requirement for faithful obedience. Matt. 16:27, "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then reward each according to his works." The uniqueness of any rewards we're not told specifically about in scripture. Whether each good action will correlate to a particular reward,..I do not know."

Austin Maddox: "Not every deed receives a unique reward. This actually goes deeper than just this initial thought of reward, but also to that of punishment. In our finite view of what it means to be fair and just, many people think that eternal punishment in hell is unjust, is something that makes God a horrible wicked monster. Is one deed as bad as another? Is one deed better than another? Righteousness is righteous and wickedness is wickedness! There aren't degrees of either, they are absolutes. That is at the heart of what Jesus says in verse 40. The point, similar to the analogies used in verses 29-31 is that God takes notice. Even if there is no recognition of the things that are done, God knows and the reward of the righteous will not go undone."

Bart Shaw: "No, I don't think that is point Jesus is making. Instead what the Lord is teaching as He sends out the 12 apostles, is that it is crucial for men to listen to them. When one receives the Apostle Paul, for example, and accepts his writings in the scripture as authentic and Divinely inspired, then it is equivalent to receiving Christ and thus receiving God the Father. However, rejecting Paul as a "woman-hater" or "misogynist" is interchangeable and parallel to rejecting God. You can't have Jesus without His apostles and prophets. Jesus teaches something similar in Matthew 16:19 when He teaches the doctrine of "binding and loosing."