

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

## TO THE JEW FIRST FOR CHRIST

**SCRIPTURE** Matthew 10:1–15

**SYNOPSIS** Matthew brings us to a new chapter in redemptive history. We are met with a limited and localized mission uniquely transitional in essence and transcendent in effect. Though often overlooked, an important new link in the chain of providence that gave us the gospel is here revealed. It was most relevant to Matthew's audience and though in a different hue it remains most relevant to us. The unfolding of the Father's plan to glorify the Son through redemption is essential to a right understanding of this passage. The Messiah was promised to Israel and now through His commission of His delegates, He manifests Himself as the Messiah. Jesus demonstrates that God is faithful to His promises and our salvation depends on it. This important link has a surprising plot twist. Because Jesus went to the Jews first, God is glorified and man's everlasting joy is made possible.

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. **APPROACH TO SCRIPTURE** — Read Matthew 10:5 and 28:19. Discuss how Matthew 10:5 can prohibit what Matthew 28:19 commands without contradiction. What is the key to this harmony? How does this help you to read your Bibles? How does it help you in your meditation and application of Scripture? How does it help to sharpen your discernment? What difference does it make in your love and devotion to Christ? What difference does it make in your daily walk?

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2. **JESUS IS LORD** — Jesus gave divine authority to His apostles. Yet, nowhere in the gospels is *their* testimony emphasized. It is all about Christ. He called, He gave, He commanded, He sent—He is Lord. Discuss the point of the following statement: those who turn the spotlight are not supposed to be in it. Do you turn the spotlight on Christ in your life?

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

3. **MEASURE OF GOD'S GOODNESS** — Does it bother you that Jesus says, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles" (Matthew 10:5)? This is certainly contrary to the pluralistic standards of our day. Proud humanity often judges God's goodness according to a man-centered standard. Discuss the following statements: "We tend to measure God by His utility to man. God's goodness is seen by most to rise or fall in proportion to the benefits humanity receives from Him." Is man the measure of God's goodness? Can God be good even if man doesn't benefit? Is God good to be perfectly just? Is God obligated to show mercy to anyone? What does the following statement mean: "Grace is not obligatory, justice is." In light of all of this, and in the context of our passage, read Matthew 20:1-16. How do these thoughts impact you? What place do these thoughts have in the discipline of your mind? What difference do these things have in the way you see yourself? In the way you see other believers? In the way you see non-believers? In the way you see Christ? Are you marked by the principle of grace? Does it change your appetites, fears, and hopes in this world? How do you apply these gospel principles in the practical outworking of your day? In your relationships?

4. **THE JEW FIRST?** — Read Matthew 10:5 and Romans 1:16. The three primary reasons given as to why Jesus had to come to the Jews first were: (1) Faithfulness (2) Rejection (3) Redemption.
- a. **Faithfulness** — Read Genesis 12:2-3 and 2 Samuel 7:12-13. Now read Matthew 1:1 and discuss how it connects. What is a basic capture of Matthew's thesis? Jesus demonstrates that God is faithful to His promises. When Jesus said He came to **fulfill** God's Word, we need to understand that He had to fulfill the promises made to Abraham and David. Discuss how our salvation depends on God's faithfulness to the Jews first? Does this help to make sense of John 4:22? How does God's faithfulness to Israel affect you? Does it impact your view of His Word? His promises and trustworthiness? Would it have practical relevance to your hope and security—to the gospel itself—if God didn't keep His promises to Israel?

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

- b. **Rejection** — Read Matthew 16:21 and John 1:11. How is Israel's rejection of Jesus essential to the gospel? Read and discuss Luke 24:26, 44, 46; Acts 17:3; and 1 Corinthians 15:3. Could the kingdom have been given to Israel if she accepted Jesus as her Messiah at His first coming? Was this rejection of Jesus a surprise to Him? Read and discuss Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, and John 10:16. How does Israel's rejection of Jesus impact you? What relevance does it have to the way you think about the gospel? How does it inform your view of Christ, faithfully coming to His own people fully knowing that they will reject Him?

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- c. **Redemption** — Read and meditate on Acts 13:46. Discuss how this reflects the plan of God in the gospel. Now read Romans 15:7-13 and discuss the effect this reality should have on us. Now read and discuss Ephesians 2:11-13. How do you respond to this plan? What feelings do these things produce within you? Read and meditate on Acts 13:47-48. Now read Romans 11:11, 18, 22, 25. With these things in mind, read and discuss Romans 11:30-32. Now answer the main question: How is God glorified in going to the Jews? Close with a prayerful meditation on Romans 11:33-36 in light of all discussed here.

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