

**10** Having called his twelve disciples, he gave them authority to cast out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. <sup>2</sup>These are the names of the twelve emissaries:

First, Shimon (who is called Keifa) and his brother Andrew; Yaaqov son of Zavdai, and his brother Yohanán; <sup>3</sup>Philipos and Bar-Tholmai; Thoma and Mattai – the tax collector; Yaaqov Bar-Halphai, and Levi, who is called Taddai; <sup>4</sup>Shimon the Zealot and Yehudah Iscariot, who betrayed him.

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—textual variants—

**10:4 Shimon the Zealot** – The Aramaic term “Qnai” קנאי, zealot, appears alternatively in some manuscripts as “Qnanaia” קנניא, zealot, but it could also be read as merchant (cf. *DuTillet's הכנעני*).

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—commentary—

**10:1 His twelve disciples** – Or his twelve students, in Hebrew ‘talmidim’. This is the most common name used for them. The phrase “having called” implies a selection process. There were many who followed Yeshua, but he only chose twelve to train them in his teachings, and of these twelve, he would keep three of them in his inner circle, revealing deeper secrets only to them: Keifa, and the sons of Zavdai: Yaaqov and his brother Yohanán (cf. *Matt. 17:2*).

Why twelve? It is written that the sons of Israel would become “like the stars in the sky” (*Genesis 26:4*), and although there are millions of stars, there are twelve basic constellations, which are quite meaningful in Jewish mysticism, for they are the spiritual influx of divine providence that mark the nations’ mazal and also mark the “boundaries of this world” (cf. *Gen. 49:26; Deut. 33:15*). They represent the twelve elemental letters of the Hebrew alphabet through which God created the world (*Yetzirah 5:2*). Although the twelve constellations are different, they all collide and hang together in the 13<sup>th</sup> constellation of Draco, the Holy serpent. 13 is the numerical value of both “love”, ahava אהבה and “one” ekhad אחד. This 13<sup>th</sup> constellation that draws everyone into the oneness of the Creator represents the Tzaddiq, the sage, the Messiah. This is why Israel had twelve sons, each one representing a constellation in the sky. This is clearly seen in their blessings, for each one is blessed according to the constellation he represents (cf. *Genesis 49*). Avraham’s brother Nahor also had twelve children (*Genesis 22:20-24; cf. Bereshit Rabbah 57:3*). Ishmael also had “twelve princes according to their nations” (*Genesis 25:16*). Afterwards the tribes of Israel also became twelve, according to the sons of Israel. Based on the verse: “And he appointed judges” (*2Chr. 19:5*), the Qumran texts speak of the councils of the community, consisting of “a court of twelve” (*4QOrd 2-4:3-4*), “twelve men and three priests” (*1QS 8:1*), and “twelve priests” (*1QM 2:1*). The Gemara says that Rabbi Aqiva sat for twelve years in the study hall and returned to his home with twelve thousand disciples תרי סרי אלפי תלמידי (Ketuvot 62b).

**10:2 twelve emissaries** – Emissaries – in Hebrew Shlikhim – is the name the disciples receive when they are sent on a mission in representation of their Rebbe. The word shaliakh שליח literally means: ‘a sent one’; which can be translated as emissary, agent, deputy or sometimes apostle. In Judaism, a ‘shaliakh’ can be an agent who is sent as a mediator, like the one who hands divorce letters between a husband and a wife (cf. *Qiddushin 41a*) or a person who is sent to promulgate Torah and Judaism, which is the meaning here. “[In the Genesis 19 passage] before they carried out their shelikhut שליחות – i.e., their message – the [bedouines] are called anashim, men; afterwards they are called malakhim, messengers” (*Bereshit Rabbah 50:2*). Similar to what Yeshua does here, the Hassidim sent emissaries around the world to spread Hassidut, mostly to bring Jews back to Israel and to make gentiles walk on the laws of Noah in preparation for the messianic era (cf. *Sikha of Simkhat Torah, 5690; Liqutei Diburim II: Heb. p.572, Eng. P. 227*). That is, because the father of modern Hassidut, the Baal Shem Tov, was told by Messiah himself that redemption would come when his teachings “are disseminated far afield” (*Sefer haMaamarim 5711, p. 136*). When the Luvabitcher Rebbe sent Rabbi Garelick to Milan, he told him: “You will be Rabbi of a shul, or headmaster of a school... but none of it will truly define what you will do in Milan. It will be above and beyond all of it. You will be a Shaliakh”.<sup>a</sup>

**10:2 Shimon** – That was his true name. He was later called Keifa by Yeshua. In English he is often called Peter, from the Greek ‘Petros’. Both Petros and Keifa mean “stone”.

**10:3 Mattai – the tax collector** – This is according to this gospel. In the other gospels the tax collector’s name is Levi. Perhaps this is why in some manuscripts it is omitted the fact that Taddai’s original name is Levi (*verse 3*).

**10:4 Shimon the Zealot** – A zealot is depicted as a man who burns in passion for the Torah, and violently acts in the face of injustice or immorality (cf. *Sanhedrin 81a; 82b*). Yeshua’s zealotry is shown when he cleanses the Temple from thieves. Hence, they apply on him the verse “the zeal of your house consumes me” (*Psalms 69:10; John 2:17*). However, in the first century, the zealots – Qanaim קנים – were a political branch in Judea who wanted to get rid of Rome by force (cf. *Antiquities 18:11,6; Gittin 56b*), and while Yeshua is clearly depicted as a nationalist who loves Israel and rejects the oppression of foreign forces, his entire message in the Gospels is antithetical to establishing the kingdom by the use of

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<sup>a</sup> Shliach to South Carolina, retold on a Merkoz Shlichus excursion.

<sup>5</sup>These twelve Yeshua sent out, and charged them and said: Do not go among the gentiles or enter the towns of the Samaritans. <sup>6</sup>Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup>As you go, proclaim this message: The kingdom of heaven has come near. <sup>8</sup>Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have tzaraat, cast out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

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commentary

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brutal force, and that is why his disciple is labelled “a zealot” but not Yeshua. Many of his disciples expected the Messiah to come and redeem Israel from Roman occupation. This was the most common messianic expectation in the Judea of the 1<sup>st</sup> century. In the book of Acts, the disciples ask Yeshua if it was now the time to restore the kingdom of Israel (*Acts 1:4*), and when Shimon Bar Kokhva began to win battles against the Roman Empire (*Yerushalmi Taanit 4:5*), Rabbi Aqiva thought he was the Messiah (*ibid. 24:1*). But for Yeshua, the restoration of the kingdom had more to do with freeing souls from sin, as it is seeing in the beginning of this chapter. Healing the sick, helping the needy, bringing people to repentance, that was his mission. Yeshua was a Galilean Hassid, and so his movement was Hassidic. Later on, the name of the movement was given its Greek equivalent name, as it is written “the disciples were first called ‘pious’, ‘Khrestianos’ at Antioch” (*Acts 11:26*). Although the majority of Byzantine manuscripts read Χριστιανός, Cristianos, i.e., Christians, the earliest manuscripts read Χρηστιανός, Khrestianos, i.e., pious people, a direct Greek translation of the term Hassidim (cf. *Acts 11:26 on Codex Sinaiticus, intended reading of Codex Bezae and Vaticanus, minuscule 1243. See the change in Tacitus, Annals 15:44*). Though the difference for the variant is small, it changes the pronunciation and meaning of the word. The Aramaic Peshitta, too, uses כְּרִיסְטִינָא, Krestina, as a transliteration of the Greek Khestianos, pious people (cf. *Acts 15:26 on Khabouris Codex*).

**10:4 Iscariot** – Transliterated in Aramaic as “Scaryotah” סַכְרִיּוֹתָא, probably from the Hebrew “Ish Qeriyot”, איש קריות, a man from Keriyoth (cf. *Josh. 15:25; Amos 2:2*).

**10:5 These twelve** – The version retold in the book of Luke separates this passage into four different portions: The calling of the twelve happens in Luke 6 (6:12-16); in Luke 9 Yeshua sends his twelve to preach, in Luke 12 he says not to be afraid of those who kill the body, and in Luke 10 he sends them out like lambs among wolves, but instead of twelve they are seventy. Although some manuscripts say seventy-two, the most likely reading is seventy. The reason is obviously theological, for the goals of Luke and Mattai are completely different. In Mattai Yeshua’s Judaism remains in Israel, for he wants to save his own people first, who would be “a testimony among the nations” later, therefore, he sends twelve disciples, symbol of the constellations and the sons of Israel. Luke was written in times of Roman persecution, when the original Judaism of Yeshua was compromised and Paul had spread his message among the nations. Therefore, Yeshua expands his calling to seventy disciples, one for each original nation in the world and, of course, does not warn them about going to the gentiles. The twelve are the original light which becomes one and expands towards the entire world. This is the secret concealed in the verse: “They came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees” (*Exod. 15:27*). Just like water gives life to the trees, the twelve springs of Torah give life to the soul of everybody in the world.

**10:6 to the lost sheep of the house of Israel** – Like the Targum says, “He will come to Tzion as a redeemer, to return the rebels of Yaaqov’s house to the Torah” (*Targum on Isaiah 59:20*).

**10:8 proclaim this message** – Like heralds who enter a town on behalf of a king and interact with the citizens.

**10:8 the kingdom is at hand** – Same message as Yohanan. They are clearing the way, as it is written: “Behold, I send my messenger before me and he will clear a way” (*Malachi 3:1*). Because the soul of the spiritual force called Messiah ben Yosef, which Yeshua represents, comes from the soul root of Eliyahu, as it is written (*ibid. 3:24*): “the heart of the fathers upon the sons” לב אבות על בנים, which in Gematria equals: “Edut Yehosef” – testimony of Yosef (*Qol haTor 2:71*).

**10:8 heal the sick** – Mark’s version has an addendum: “they will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick and they will recover” (*Mark 16:18*). This reflects the incident with Hanina ben Dosa, who was bitten by a poisonous reptile but was not harmed (*Yeru. Berakhot 5:1*).

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relevant quotes

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“In the beginning, why did the Torah count twelve sons of Yaaqov, yet afterwards they were seventy, as is written (*Gen. 46:27*): All the souls of the house of Yaaqov who came into Egypt were seventy? And what is the reason that they were seventy and not more? He said to him: It corresponds to the seventy nations in the world. They were one nation equal to them all... ..The branches are set in their travels, that emanate from twelve engravings and knots that surround them in their travels striking against the four directions of the world”. (*Zohar II:5b*)

<sup>9</sup>Do not get any gold or silver or copper in your purses: <sup>10</sup>nor bag for the journey, neither two tunics or sandals or a staff, for worthy is the worker of his livelihood. <sup>11</sup>Whatever town or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and stay at their house until you depart. <sup>12</sup>As you enter the home, greet it with Shalom. <sup>13</sup>If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. <sup>14</sup>If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. <sup>15</sup>Amen I say to you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

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commentary

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**10:8 Freely you have received; freely give** – One cannot receive payment for guiding a person towards God and the path of the Torah. As Moses says (*Deut. 4:14*), “For Hashem commanded me at that time to teach you”. God had told Moses: “Just as I have taught you freely, so too freely you must teach” (*Nedarim 37a*). Later the Gemara discusses situations in which one can receive payment in the process of teaching Torah. For example, if you are teaching to a group of kids, you may get paid for taking care of them, or for teaching them Hebrew accentuation, which are indirect components of teaching them Torah, “for a worker is worthy of his livelihood”, but the light of God has been given gratuitously to mankind, and it must be shared gratuitously too. It is not only about learning Torah, but also about healing people for the sake of Heaven. Healing through faith is done to establish the kingdom of God on earth, so a person cannot receive economic remuneration for it, since it is God’s doing. “There is no law about loading a burden for free, but there is a mitzvah to unload the burden for free” (*Bava Metziah 32a*), that is: the burden of sin and spiritual oppression. “Just as I teach for free, so must you teach for free, for one must not receive remuneration for the performance of a religious duty” (*Shulkhan Arukh, Yoreh Deah 336:2*).

**10:10 nor bag for the journey... or a staff** – “And he [David] took his staff in his hand... and kept [the peddles] in the shepherd’s bag which he had, and in the sack” (*1Sam. 17:40*). “For the journey” refers only to the bag. It means do not add more than what you already have. The bag was used to keep food, so it is similar to the saying, “do not worry about what you are going to eat”.

**10:10 Neither two tunics** – That is, in case one breaks, or perhaps one for the weekday and another for Shabbat, as it is taught, “one should have special clothing for Shabbat” (*Shulkhan Arukh, Orakh Hayim 262:2-3*). Nevertheless, it is not imperatively necessary, for perhaps someone may be poor or it would be impossible for him for any other reason, such as having to travel light. It is sufficient to change the way in which you wear your weekly tallit in a respectful manner (*ibid. 262:2*).

**10:10 or a staff** – It is implied that he means not to have an extra staff besides the one they already had. Mark’s version says: “Take nothing for the journey but a staff” (*Mark 6:8*).

**10:10 worthy is the worker of his livelihood** – In other words, God will provide, including the people and the circumstances, as he did with Elisha the prophet (cf. *Berakhot 10b*). Because “Is it right for a worker to toil all day and not receive his reward in the evening?” (*Avot d’Rabbi Nathan 5:2*).

**10:12 greet it with Shalom** – It is customary for observant Israelites to greet with שלום עליכם “Shalom aleikhem”; peace be upon you all (*Yerushalmi Sheviit 11a*), or in singular, Shalom aleikha (cf. *Taanit 20b, Avot d’Rabbi Nathan 41:1*). One who is aware of this custom is obliged to return the greeting and even to greet first, as it says: “Seek shalom and pursue it” (*Psalms 34:15*). The way to see a person’s worth is when a poor observant Israelite greets them with Shalom. “If the other did not respond, he is called a robber, as it written (*Isaiah 3:14*), It is you who have eaten up the vineyard, the spoils of the poor is in your houses” (*Berakhot 6b*). Meaning, one can only steal from a pauper his dignity by refusing to greet him back with Shalom. On the contrary, if you find a worthy person who greets you back with Shalom and offers his hospitality, then stay with them until you move to the next town, do not go from house to house. Rav said that hospitality towards guests is greater than receiving the Divine Presence, for it is written about Avraham that he said: “Lord, if now I have found favour in your eyes, please pass not from your servant” (*Gen. 18:3*), implying that Avraham requested the Divine Presence to wait for him while he took care of the guests (cf. *Shabbat 127a*).

**10:14 shake the dust off your feet** – Similarly it is written: “Shake off the dust, arise” (*Isaiah 52:2*) a symbol of rejecting and putting an end to oppression and exile.

**10:15 It will be more bearable for Sodom** – For even in the wicked city of Sodom there was a family righteous enough to practice hospitality to the messengers of God (cf. *Genesis 19:1-2*).

<sup>16</sup>Behold, I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be wise like serpents and pure like doves. <sup>17</sup>Beware of the sons of men: you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. <sup>18</sup>On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the gentiles. <sup>19</sup>But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it, for it will be given to you at that very hour what to say, <sup>20</sup>for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. <sup>21</sup>Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rise up against their parents and cause them to die.

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—textual variants—

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**10:16 pure like doves** – most Greek manuscripts use “innocent” or “pure”, ἀκεραίοι. Codex Bezae uses the word “simple” ἀπλουστατοῖ. The variation derives from a preference in the translation of the Aramaic word tamimeî תַּמִּימַיָּא, from the root “tamim” תָּמַם, pure, whole, simple, upright, innocent.

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—commentary—

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**10:16 like sheep among wolves** – Great is the shepherd who protects his flock. Israel in the exile is “like a solitary sheep surrounded by seventy wolves” (*Tanhuma Toldot 5*; cf. *Esther Rabbah 10:11*). They find you weak and want to devour you, therefore, although the purity in your soul must not change – i.e., you must remain innocent or pure like a dove – you must also be smart, knowing they are ready to take advantage from you and sweep you off the face of the earth. This is true for every single one of us; we are, like Avraham said, “a stranger” in this world, a world covered in darkness.

**10:16 be wise like serpents and pure like doves** – Be pure, for it is written, “Assembly of Israel, who resemble a dove in purity” (*Targum Shir haShirim 2:14*). But also be wise, because when a sheep’s life is in danger, if she offers the other cheek to the wolf, the wolf devours her. Hence, be smart like a serpent, as it says “the serpent was shrewd” (*Gen. 3:1*), for it is written (*2Sam. 22:27*): “With the pure you act in purity, and with the perverse you deal crookedly”, like Yaaqov dealt with Esav and like David dealt with king Shaul. In these cases it is permissible for a righteous person to act deceptively (cf. *Megillah 13b*).

**10:17 Beware of the sons of men** – One who is wise like a serpent must know when to be shrewd and when to avoid conflict, as it is written, “The shrewd man sees trouble and takes cover” (*Prov. 22:3*).

**10:18 On my account you will be brought before governors** – i.e., On account of obeying my teachings.

**10:18 as witnesses to them and to the gentiles** – “Rabbi Elazar said: The Blessed Holy One exiles Israel among the nations only so that geirim [righteous gentiles] will join them, as it says (*Hosea 2:25*), I will sow her for me in the land” (*Pesakhim 87b*). The verse continues, “And I will say to those who are not my people, You are my people, and they will respond, You are my God” (*Hosea 2:25*).

**10:20 the Spirit of your Father** – The Galileans tend to use “my Father” or “your Father” more often than others, showing this father-son relationship with the Creator. Even Yeshua’s prayer begins with “Our Father in Heaven”. All these expressions are used several times in Seder Eliyahu, one of the few Hassidic texts that remain from the early rabbinic period. When Honi, a Galilean Hassid, prayed for rain, he used the words: “Your sons turned to me” (*Taanit 23a*).

**10:20 speaking through you** – The spirit of God refers to the ruakh haQodesh, holy spirit or Divine Inspiration. “In ruakh haQodesh a spirit of wisdom rises from the bones, from the breathe of the bones to be exact” (*Arizal, Shaar Ruakh haQodesh 1*). This is according to what is written: “Now go; I will help you speak and teach you what to say” (*Exodus 4:12*). One attains ruakh haQodesh by cleaving to the Creator and studying Torah, for it is written: “With the loyal you deal loyally” (*1Sam. 22:26*). In Aramaic Rukha d’Qudsha can be read as the spirit or inspiration of holiness. It is written in a Baraita that once Rabbi Eliezer was arrested with the charge of heresy and the governor asked him: “Should an elder like you engage in those things? He answered: I consider the Judge trustworthy. The governor thought he referred to him – though in truth he referred to his Father in Heaven” (*Tosefta Hullin 2:24*), and so with these simple words he found favour and was dismissed from the court.

**10:21 Brother will betray brother** – This portion is talking about the future development of his movement. “Brother will betray brother”: This refers to the first stage, when the followers of Yeshua would be persecuted by his own brothers, that is: by other Jews, like the Herodians, the Sadducees and even by Pharisees like Paul. “A Father his child”: this is the second stage, when the Roman empire would persecute Christians. “Children will rise up against their parents”: this is the third stage, when Christianity would persecute Israel and then Ishmael would persecute both. All of it because Yeshua’s message would be spread all around the world, for the sake of bringing the world into the knowledge of Torah, one true God and Messiah (cf. *Mishneh Torah, Shoftim, Melakhim uMilkhamot 11:4*).

<sup>22</sup>You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will have life. <sup>23</sup>When they persecute you in one place, flee to another. Amen I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the son of man comes. <sup>24</sup>The disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. <sup>25</sup>It is enough for disciples to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the master of the house has been called Baal-zebul, how much more the members of his household! <sup>26</sup>So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.

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—commentary—

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**10:22 You will be hated by everyone** – for the children of Israel are always being hated by the nations, and the authentic disciples of Yeshua are considered as Christians or Messianics – that is: foreigners – by mainstream Judaism. One cannot compromise truth, for if someone wants to have a comfortable position in a congregation, know that he will have to compromise truth, “for the son of man has no place to lay his head”.

**10:22 one who stands firm to the end will have life** – or “will be saved”. The final stage will be redemption. Israel will understand that Yeshua was one of them, not their enemy, and Esav will make peace with Yaaqov. A righteous will be rewarded for his loyalty, as it is written: “the righteous will live by his emunah” (*Habakkuk 2:4*).

**10:23 they persecute you in one place, flee to another** – It is written (*Genesis 8:9*): “and the dove found no rest”, and it says, “As a bird wandering for its nest, a man will wander from his place” (*Prov. 27:8*), for “the righteous must leave the Divine Presence and wander” (*Tiqunei Zohar 4*). “Through their wandering they will merit her presence and she will rest upon them” (*Hessed L’Avraham 4:28*).

**10:23 before the son of man comes** – One may interpret: before you complete travelling to all the towns of Israel, redemption will come. Perhaps Yeshua was convinced the messianic redemption would happen right after his death, for he says in another place that some among his disciples would not taste death before the coming of the son of man in his kingdom (cf. *Mattai 16:28*). And so it was similar with Paul of Tarsus, who thought the redemption would happen in his generation (cf. *Rom. 13:12; 1Co. 10:11; 1The. 4:17*). Instead, the Temple was destroyed, Israel exiled, and the world has been in war for two millennia without redemption. But we are always to expect the redemption in our days. Already in the book of Tobit there is a prayer that says “Bring in our days salvation and redemption by the coming of the redeemer” (*Tobit 13:2*) and so when we speak about redemption, we always say “speedily in our days” (cf. *Qedushat Levi, Ki Tisha 6; Siddur Sefard, Simkhat Torah, Hakafot 74*). However, the final redemption is dependent on Israel, and so the prophet writes about it as if two possibilities were equally true: “In its time” and “I will hasten it” (*Isaiah 60:22*); meaning, “if Israel were worthy I would hasten it” (*Sanhedrin 98b; Yerushalmi Taanit 81:1*). Even when a prophecy has a fixed time, God can change its timing due to the people being worthy or unworthy. When the prophet Yonah was sent to prophesize imminent destruction on Nineveh, one of his concerns was that the people would repent and God would not send the destruction in his days, which would make him look like a false prophet, since he had been sent to announce the destruction of Jerusalem prior to that and God had repented and did not destroy it (*Pirqei D’Rabbi Eliezer 10:1*). Had Israel been worthy in Yeshua’s days, redemption would have taken place back then, because the two thousand years of Messiah began with the destruction of the second temple (*Yerushalmi Berakhot 4:2; cf. Sanhedrin 97a*)<sup>b</sup>. Keep in mind that later on, when Yeshua sees that the nation will not repent (cf. *Matt. 23:37*) and his disciples ask him about the day of the redemption, he says “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and seasons, and they are not for you to know” (*Acts 1:7*), and “no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the son himself. Only the Father knows” (*Mattai 24:36*).

**10:23 before the son of man comes** – My interpretation: As we have said in the previous chapter, the son of man is not necessarily the man destined to be the Messiah, but according to the angel’s own explanation in the book of Daniel, it represents the messianic awakening in the people. Amen I tell you, that before you finish going through all the towns in Israel, you will awaken somebody’s messianic spark, even among your persecutors. For they will see that you are righteous and holy, only trying to bring peace and the kingdom of Heaven on earth, and they will repent.

**10:25 The disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master** – Similarly said Rabbi Nahman of Breslev: “The entire world needs me... also the nations of the world need me. But it is enough that a servant be like his master” (*Hayei Moharan, Im hashmatot 264*). The sages taught that since the Temple was destroyed and the Shekhina was left with

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<sup>b</sup> *Yerushalmi Berakhot (4:9 [25b])* narrates a story whose moral is that the hope for Messianic redemption began as soon as the Temple fell. Also, the Gemara says that our current world lasts 6000 years: 2000 years of desolation, 2000 years of Torah and 2000 years of Messiah. Rashi calculates that the two thousand years of Messiah began in the year 240 of our current era. Rashi makes use of the calendar in Seder Olam, which according to some sources skips nearly 160 years of the second temple era. But even if we take Rashi’s calculation as correct, the days of Torah began with Avraham, 448 years before the official giving of the Torah at Sinai, so under this premise, we could argue that the Messianic era could have taken place at any given time before or after the year that Rashi says, and if it did not happen, it was merely because Israel was not found worthy of it.

<sup>27</sup>What I tell you in the dark, you speak in the light; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. <sup>28</sup>Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. <sup>29</sup>Are not two sparrows sold for an assarius? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father. <sup>30</sup>And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup>So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

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commentary

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no home, so too the righteous are left wandering, “for it is enough that a servant be like his master” (cf. *Berakhot* 58b). If a rebbe is persecuted and despised, those who follow his teachings will not be considered better.

**10:25 Baal-Zebub** – The local pagan idol of Ebron in charge of healing (cf. *2Kings* 1:2-6). In Ugaritic, Baal-Zebul, Lord of the highest place, turned by the Jews into Baal-Zebub, the lord of the flies (cf. *Manfred Lurker, The Routledge dictionary of gods and goddesses, devils and demons*).

**10:27 What I tell you in the dark, you speak in the light** – Luke’s version of this saying says: “What you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the ear will be heard from the roofs” (*Luke* 12:3). A master teaches to his students and his students are heard by new students and so the words are disseminated far afield. Moshe received the Torah in secret, then he gave it to Israel, and Israel spread it around the world. Yeshua taught through parables, and of the esoteric things, Yeshua taught only those things his disciples were able to bear (cf. *John* 16:12). In Thomas, Yeshua teaches Thomas three sayings that only him was able to bear, as he says: “If I say to you only one of the things he said to me, you will take stones and lapidate me, but then fire would come out of the stones and burn you up” (*Thomas* #13). “Our sages have taught that the mystical teachings of Maaseh Bereshit should not be expounded in public, but should be taught to an individual privately... because not everybody has the breadth of intellect requisite for obtaining an accurate grasp of the meaning” (*Mishneh Torah, Yesodei haTorah* 4:10; *m. Hagiga* 2:1). However, in the days of redemption even the mystical teachings will be disclosed, because they teach a person how to direct their soul, and only through the learning (and practice) of these teachings wars will cease and peace will come upon the world (cf. *Zohar Naso* 124b; *Vilna Gaon, Even Shlema* 11:3; *Hesed l’Avraham*). Spreading Yeshua’s Hassidut results in inner peace, in performance of mitzvot and the revelation of God’s oneness on earth. The fact that there were so many wars and idolatry in his name show these people were not practitioners of his teachings. We must spread his way of life, even to the point of giving up our lives for the sake of Qiddush Hashem (sanctification of God’s honor).

**10:28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body** – “Should a pagan arise and force an Israelite to violate one of the Torah’s commandments at the pain of death, he can violate the commandment, because it is stated concerning the mitzvot (*Lev.* 18:5): which a man will perform and live by them. It says: live by them and not: die because of them... However, if one is ordered to worship other gods, to have forbidden sexual relations, or to murder someone, and he is told: Transgress one of them or be killed, one should sacrifice his life rather than transgress” (*Mishneh Torah, Yesodei haTorah* 5:1-2). Jewish tradition talks about ten sages who were tortured and executed by the Roman emperor Hadrian for publicly teaching Torah (cf. *Midrash Eleh Ezkera; Avoda Zara* 17b). Among these martyrs was the great Rabbi Aqiva, whose skin was ranked with iron combs while he recited the Shema. Also, the book of Acts tells about Yeshua’s disciples being persecuted, stoned and incarcerated. But our executioners cannot kill the soul, and about this it is written that the righteous are called “alive” even in their graves (*Ohr haHayim on Shemot* 21:4) and the wicked are called “dead” even during their life-time (*Berakhot* 18b).

**10:29 sold for an assarius** – “Assarius” or “as”, in Aramaic “asar” אַסַּר; the lowest valued coin during the Roman Empire.

**10:29 not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father** – Every single grass or herb has appointed a constellation in the sky that smacks it and tells it to grow” (*Bereshit Rabbah* 10:6). Not even the leaf of a tree will fall without Divine intervention, and even “if it is the winds that causes the leaf to fall, the wind did not blow by chance; it is God that caused it to move” (*Rambam, Moreh Nevukhim* 3:17:4). “Even when a leaf falls from a tree or when a spider catches a fly, it is the result of a Divine decree... for everything happens according to Divine Providence” (*Shaar haEmunah veYesod haHasidut, introduction to Beit Yaaqov* 16:2).

**10:30 even the very hairs** – God is the one who made men, both “seeing and blind” (*Exodus* 4:11). God said to Iyov: “I have created many hairs on a person, each one with its own follicle... and if I do not confuse one follicle with another, would I confuse Iyov with Oiyev?” (*Bava Bathra* 16b).

**10:31 you are worth more than many sparrows** – Divine Providence only gives a man as much as he is prepared to receive; if little, he receives little and much if it is much (*Kuzari* 2:24). So do not worry.

<sup>32</sup>Therefore, whoever confesses me before others, I will also confess him before my Father in heaven. <sup>33</sup>But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven. <sup>34</sup>Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup>For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law— <sup>36</sup>a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.

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—commentary—

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**10:32 Therefore** – Because you are going to suffer for the sake of my teachings.

**10:32 Therefore, whoever confesses me** – (In Greek: Πᾶς οὗν ὅστις ὁμολογήσει ἐν ἐμοί; In Aram.: כל אנש הכיל דנודא בי); literally: “Therefore, whoever makes his confession in me”. Luke renders this saying as: “Whoever publicly acknowledges me before men I will also acknowledge him before the angels of God” (*Luke 12:8*). The meaning in Mattai is contextually evident: Since you are going to be persecuted and tortured, if you confess the oneness of God and acknowledge me before these men, I will also acknowledge you in the heavenly court, for as the Hassidim have taught, the heavenly court pays attention to the words of a perfectly righteous person, as Rebbe Nahman said: the tzaddiq, through his word, can sentence a man to Gan Eden and another to Gehinom” (*Sefer haMiddot, Tzaddiq 1:54*). And the judgment is similar to the words of the sages: “He who judges favorably will be judged favorably” (*Shabbat 128b*). This is a secret in the verse: “Hashem is witness for you and his anointed is witness today” (*1Sam 12:5*).

**10:33 But whoever disowns me before others** – If they deny that he is their Rebbe or that he has taught them Torah and mitzvot, or if they judge him negatively and accuse him of following Baal-Zebub, they will be judged negatively by the heavenly court, as Moshe said in the Torah: “they will not believe me” (*Exodus 4:1*), to which Reish Laqish explains: “He who suspects the innocent is afflicted in his body” (*Shabbat 97a*). Similarly, it is written: “Let them bring their witnesses that they may be justified” (*Isaiah 43:9*), and Rabbi Yehoshua explains: “All the good deeds performed by Israel will come and bear witness in the World to Come” (*Avoda Zara 2a*).

**10:34 I have not come to bring peace but a sword** – Peace, shalom, is the unification and harmonization of oppositions, and it is the job of Aharon. Peace will be found in the future era. But Yeshua, representing Messiah ben Yosef, is bringing the war against the forces of impurity, which is the battle against Amaleq. Hashem has a war against Amaleq in every generation (*Qol haTor 1:44*). The sword of Yehoshua (*Exodus 17:13*) refers to the force called “Messiah ben Yosef, who fights Amaleq” (*Qol haTor 2:47*). The calling for repentance and the fight against the evil inclination are both part of this war against the impure forces of Amaleq, so opposition is expected. Those who refuse changing and do not want to repent will receive severe judgment, as the sages taught: “Those who refuse engaging in Torah will be pierced by sword” (*Sanhedrin 94b*). It is the battle between those who receive light and those who embrace darkness, between the pure and the impure. One who is in darkness feels comfortable not seeing his flaws, but once the light hits his eyes, he feels uncomfortable and fights against the light.

**10:35 For I have come to turn a father against his son** – Yeshua is paraphrasing the prophet (*Micah 7:6*): “For a son disgraces his father, a daughter rises up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are those of his own household”. In the original context Micah is condemning his generation because “the Hassid has perished from the land and there is no upright among men” (*ibid. 7:2*). Yeshua is using these words as a peshet, to tell that, because of the war against the forces of impurity, there is going to be division. Because if two in a house are unbelievers and one of them comes to the belief in Hashem and the other does not, there is going to be dispute. If a community believes in the teachings of Yeshua and another community believes that he is a sorcerer, there is going to be division. But since the sword is Messiah ben Yosef, all these disputes are part of the chain of events that must take place in preparation for the final redemption. “Every dispute that is for the sake of heaven will endure. But if it is not for the sake of heaven, it will not endure. Which dispute was for the sake of heaven? The controversy between Hillel and Shammai. And which was not for the sake of heaven? The dispute of Qorah and all of his followers [against Moshe and Aharon]” (*Pirquei Avot 5:17*).

<sup>37</sup>Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. <sup>38</sup>Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. <sup>39</sup>Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it. <sup>40</sup>Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. <sup>41</sup>Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. <sup>42</sup>And if anyone gives even a cold drink to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.

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—commentary—

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**10:37 anyone who loves their father or mother more than me** – The love for a Torah teacher outweighs love for family, as the Mishna teaches: “If a man ... found the lost property of his father and that of his rabbi, his rabbi's takes priority, because his father brought him into this world, but his rabbi, who taught him wisdom, brings him into the World to Come. But if his father was a sage, his father's takes priority” (*m. Bava Metzia 2:11*). If your family goes against you and does not want you to obey the mitzvot, for example, they do not want you to obey Shabbat, then obedience to the mitzvot takes precedence over the love for the family, as the sages taught: “Perhaps one may think that obedience to parents takes precedence over Shabbat, but the verse (*Lev. 19:3*) says: Every man must fear his mother and his father and keep my Shabbatot, and it is implied here that all of you (parents and children) must honor Hashem” (*Yevamot 5b*). The gospel of Thomas renders this passage: “Whoever does not hate his father and his mother as I do cannot become a disciple to me. And whoever does not love his father and his mother as I do cannot become a disciple to me. For my mother of this world [...], but my true mother gave me life [in the World to Come]” (*Thomas #101*). The missing part of the passage seems to point out to the mishna above mentioned, although in a more esoteric form. This version may perhaps be the source for Luke's rendering, who also prefers “hates his father” rather than Mattai's “loves his father... more than me”. Both expressions are synonymous, though, as we read in Bereshit that Leah was hated by Yaaqov, but the meaning is that he preferred Rachel over Leah, not that he necessarily had hatred towards Leah (*Genesis 29:30-31*).

**10:37 is not worthy of me** – Similarly it is recorded that the Luvabitcher Rebbe taught: If you love your father, mother, sister, brother, more than me, you are not worthy of being mine” (*Schneerson, Igrot Qodesh 17, p.52*).

**10:38 Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me** – He who takes up his cross is ready to be executed.

**10:39 whoever loses his life for my sake will find it** – The Gemara narrates the story of Rabbi Aqiva's wife, the daughter of Ben Kalva Savua, a very wealthy man. She lost her share in the family and was kicked out from her father's property because she married Aqiva and sent him to study Torah. She lost everything and lived in poverty for twelve years, but in the end Rabbi Aqiva came out of the study hall as a sage with thousands of disciples and honored her (cf. *Ketuvot 62b*). Alexander of Macedon asked the sages of Negev: “What must a man do in order to live? They answered: He must kill himself – that is, to the pleasures of this world – And what must a man do in order to die? They answered: He must keep himself alive – that is, lead an indulgent life in the pleasures of this world” (*Tamid 32a*). For certainly, “there is a path that is short but is long, and there is a path that is long but is short” (*Eiruvin 53b*).

**10:40 Anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me** – With these words Yeshua closes his speech for sending his disciples to the towns. It is written: “If you obey his voice, and do everything that I speak” (*Exodus 23:22*). It does not say “that he speaks”, but “that I speak”; which means, if you receive him, it is all one as if you received me, because “a person's agent is as himself” (*Qidushin 41b*).

**10:41 will receive a righteous person's reward** – “One who welcomes a wise disciple into his house and lets him enjoy his possessions, the scriptures account him as if he had offered the daily burnt offering” (*Berakhot 10b*). Because “Hospitality is greater virtue than welcoming the Shekhina (*Shabbat 127a*), as mentioned above. It is written: My Lord, if now I have found favour in your eyes, I pray you will not pass from me” (*Gen. 18:3*). Avraham practiced hospitality as if he was receiving the Shekhina. And because he received three angels of God, three blessings from the Creator were bestowed upon him.