

# Matthew 10:21-22

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/matt/matt-10/matthew-1021-22/>

*Jesus puts the disciples on notice that there is a high cost to following Him but there is great reward for those who endure it to the end.*

The parallel Gospel accounts of this teaching are Mark 13:12-13, Luke 12:49-53, and Luke 21:16-17.

Jesus lets the twelve know that the cost of following Him will not only result in physical pain. It will also cost them their families and their lives. *Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.* Jesus is telling them that if they are to follow Him their commitment will lead to some hard choices. And it is better for them to decide now before those difficulties come to continue down this path. Christ is functionally asking them: Are you willing to be betrayed by your own *brother, father, or child* for My sake? And if they are not willing to endure these hardships, including *death* at the betrayal from their own family, then they should not follow Him. Jesus selected zealots who would die for the cause, but is making it clear to them the cost of following Him.

He continues, *You will be hated by all because of My name.* God's kingdom is at total odds with the world's kingdom. As Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, "No one can serve two masters" (Matthew 20:24). Christ calls us to love God by obeying His commands, seeking His righteousness and harmony with Him, and using our time and talents to generously serve other people's needs and interests without expectation of their reward, but seeking reward from God. The kingdom's time horizon is eternal, and its focus is spiritual.

The world is the opposite. It demands that we love it by slavishly following its patterns, seeking its version of righteousness and harmony with its twisted standards. The world says to exploit; to take advantage of people through manipulation and force to get what you want at the expense of others. Rejecting the world to live in Christ's name will bring *hatred* from *all* who are in the world. When the light of truth shines on darkness, the darkness returns hate. The world's time horizon is now, and its focus is on satisfying physical appetites.

But Jesus promises that *the one who has endured* this hatred and persecution *to the end* of their lives *will be saved*. This is only the fifth time that "sozo" (G4982), the Greek word translated "saved," has been used in Matthew's gospel. When we see "sozo" it is best to ask "what is being delivered from what?"

The first occurrence of "sozo" was in Matthew 1:21 where the Angel told Joseph that Mary's Son would "save His people from their sins." The second occurrence was when the disciples' boat was caught in a storm and they cried out to Jesus "Save us Lord; we are perishing!" (Matthew 8:25). In that case the disciples wanted to be delivered from drowning. The third and fourth occurrences were from the hemorrhaging woman who wished for Jesus to "sozo" her from

her condition (Matthew 9:21, 22). In that passage the woman is being delivered from sickness. Most translations honor this context by translating “sozo” as “healed.”

Here in Matthew 10:22, *saved* clearly does not mean from physical pain or death, as with the disciples and the boat. Similarly, it does not fit the type of being *saved* from eternal damnation in the Lake of Fire into the everlasting life with God in Heaven. That *saved* is not dependent upon our endurance of persecutions until we are martyred. Were that the case, John 3:14-16 would be nonsense. Our eternal salvation is bought by the blood of Jesus. It has already been accomplished and is offered by the endurance and mercy of Christ (John 19:28-30, Titus 3:5-7). That type of being *saved*, being delivered from the Lake of Fire to the joy of heaven, is spoken of in Ephesians 2:8-9. Those passages make clear that being eternally *saved* to heaven and from eternal damnation comes by grace through faith in the person of Jesus apart from works or our endurance of persecution.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

What then does this usage of *saved* mean? To correctly interpret what *the one who has endured to the end will be saved* means, we must consider three questions: what will be saved, or delivered? what will it be saved or delivered from? And what will it be saved to?

What *will be saved* is the reward of the faithful witness. This includes the ultimate fulfillment of the inner life or soul of *the one who has endured to the end*. We were created to rule and reign over the earth in harmony with Jesus, and those who endure will gain this reward. This one who endures might well have their physical life ended. It is possible they will be put to death by being turned in by a family member. But physical death will not overcome the spiritual reward. The spiritual reward can be robbed from us by giving in to the world. Jesus clarifies that it is in fact this person’s “psuche” (inner life) that *will be saved* from loss of reward later in His speech: first in Matthew 10:28 and again in Matthew 10:39.

It is important to bear in mind that the twelve disciples were not only zealous for the cause of restoring the kingdom to Israel, but also were ambitious to be great in that kingdom. Jesus is making it clear that if they want to be saved from the futility of this world, then they must die to the world. The book of Revelation makes clear that God invites each of His servants to be faithful witnesses, and not fear loss, rejection, or death. It is to these, who overcome, or endure to the end, who will be great in the kingdom (Revelation 3:21).

What will *the-one-who-has-endured*’s “psuche” (inner life) *be saved to*; and *what will it be saved from*? It appears it *will be saved into* a fulfilling participation into God’s kingdom and will be saved from being excluded from participating in it. This interpretation is consistent with what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount.

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.” (Matthew 7:21)

It is also consistent with what Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 8, when He made it clear that there would be many sons of the kingdom who would be shut out of receiving honor and rewards in the kingdom, because they lacked faith during their walk on earth.

“...but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 8:12)

It is also consistent with what Paul will later tell his disciple Timothy, just prior to his martyrdom at the hands of Nero:

A) “For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him;

B) If we endure, we will also reign with Him;

B’) If we deny Him, He also will deny us;

A’) If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.”  
(2 Timothy 2:11-13)

This passage is a chiasm, where the center, in this case B and B’, is the main point. The A and A’ phrases make it clear that becoming part of God’s family is solely a matter of faith, apart from works. If we die in Christ, we will live with Him in eternity, irrespective of how we live. As A’ states, even if we are faithless in our walk, God will remain faithful to us. If God rejected us, He would be rejecting Jesus, who died for all who believe. And in doing so He would be rejecting Himself, because Jesus is God.

But the main point Paul is making is in the B and B’ section. That is, that unlike being accepted by God into His family, being born again, which is a free gift, in order to gain the reward of sitting on Jesus’ throne with Him requires that we endure. If we do not endure, and deny Jesus, then He will deny us the reward. Jesus is only going to have servant kings in His kingdom who are relentless in serving, so relentless they lay their lives down to serve.

### **Biblical Text**

**Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.**