

Matthew 10:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

Analysis

Jesus declares 'He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me'—establishing a profound chain of representation and authority. The verb 'receiveth' (δεχόμενος/dechomenos) means to welcome, accept, take in—not mere tolerance but genuine reception. Christ identifies so completely with His disciples that response to them is response to Him. This isn't automatic for all religious teachers but specifically for those He sends bearing His message. The double identification (disciples→Christ→Father) roots apostolic authority in divine authority itself. This provides theological grounding for why rejecting apostolic testimony constitutes rejecting God (1 Thessalonians 4:8). It also encourages missionaries: when faithful to Christ's message, they speak with His authority.

Historical Context

Jesus spoke this while commissioning the Twelve for their first independent mission (Matthew 10:5-42). In ancient Near Eastern culture, an apostle or sent-one (שליח/shaliach in Hebrew, ἀπόστολος/apostolos in Greek) functioned as the sender's legal representative—their words carried the sender's authority. The saying 'a man's agent is as himself' was proverbial in Jewish law. Jesus applies this principle to spiritual mission: His disciples represent Him, who represents the Father. This verse shaped the early church's understanding of apostolic authority (Acts 2:42, Ephesians 2:20). During the first century, itinerant prophets and

teachers moved between churches, raising questions about which messengers deserved reception.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do you respond to faithful preaching of God's Word—do you recognize Christ speaking through His messengers?
2. What safeguards prevent this principle from being abused by false teachers claiming divine authority?
3. How does this verse elevate the significance of evangelism and gospel ministry?

Interlinear Text

Ὁ	δέχεται	ὕμᾱς	ἐμὲ	δέχεται	καὶ	ὁ	ἐμὲ
G3588	He that receiveth	you	me	He that receiveth	and	G3588	me
	G1209	G5209	G1691	G1209	G2532		G1691
δέχεται	δέχεται	τὸν	ἀποστείλαντά	με			
He that receiveth	He that receiveth	G3588	him that sent	me			
G1209	G1209		G649	G3165			

Additional Cross-References

John 13:20 (Parallel theme): Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

Luke 9:48 (Parallel theme): And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

Matthew 18:5 (Parallel theme): And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

Luke 10:16 (Parallel theme): He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

Matthew 25:40 (Parallel theme): And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

John 20:21 (Parallel theme): Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

Galatians 4:14 (Parallel theme): And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

Mark 9:37 (Parallel theme): Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

Matthew 25:45 (Parallel theme): Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

John 5:23 (Parallel theme): That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.