

The Church of the Servant King
Survey of the Bible Series
The Gospel of Luke

SB_LK10_The Seventy Disciples and the Parable of the Good Samaritan

The Seventy Are Sent (10:1-12)

The account of Jesus calling the 70 disciples is unique to Luke.¹ Perhaps the most interesting point of note is that the command that Jesus gave these disciples is very similar to the command He gave the Twelve in 9:1-6. They are given power to heal (10:9 cf. 9:1-2). They are told to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom, i.e. that the kingdom of God is near (10:9, 11 cf. 9:1-2). They are commanded to make no provision for themselves (10:4 cf. 9:3). If their message is not received, they are to shake the dust from their feet (10:10-11 cf. 9:5).

The 70 (or 72) were to be supported by those who accepted their message (v. 7). Through their hospitality, people would show whether or not they believed the message of the kingdom. I believe the only way that a believer in this portion of the Age of Israel would have manifested such receptivity to the message of the gospel of the kingdom is if they had been steeped in a knowledge of Hebrew Scripture (i.e. the Old Testament). The believer who was intimate with Hebrew Scripture would have manifested an understanding of Yahweh's purpose for the nation Israel and for the Jewish race. This believer would have understood Yahweh's essence to include the attributes of sovereignty, omniscience, immutability, and veracity to name a few. This believer would have had an understanding of Israel's future based upon such passages as Daniel 9 that would have indicated that the Messiah would be coming in their generation (e.g. the story of Simeon in Luke 2:25-35). This believer would have a lot in common spiritually with Zecharias, Elizabeth, and Mary (Luke 1) based upon what we know from Scripture regarding the spiritual perspective and faith of Zecharias, Elizabeth, and Mary.² Such a believer would prove to be a very rare individual indeed within Israel.

Principle: The spiritual believer who has discernment and humility is extremely rare in any generation. Therefore, as you grow towards spiritual maturity in knowledge and application, expect to find yourself at odds (in mental thought pattern) with the thinking of the main stream.

Woe to the Impenitent Cities (10:13-16)

Jesus must have mentioned these cities because of their rejection of the message of those whom Jesus sent. Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum were towns that had already rejected Him. The Gentile cities of Sodom, Tyre and Sidon would not come under as harsh a treatment in the day of judgment as these cities because they had rejected greater revelation than was ever given to Sodom, Tyre, and Sidon.³

Chorazin was a village about two and a half miles north of Capernaum and Bethsaida was about three miles east. Both of these towns were in Galilee and both had seen Jesus' ministry firsthand. They both rejected Him and not repented in regard to their attitude toward Him as the Messiah. Tyre and Sidon were large Phoenician cities on the Mediterranean about 35 and 60

¹ Some Greek manuscripts indicate that there were 72 disciples in verses 1 and 17. Both sets of Greek readings have strong support. See John A. Martin, "Luke," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, John Walvoord and Roy Zuck, editors (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1983), 233.

² See the notes from our prior study of Luke 1.

³ J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 297.

miles, respectively from the Sea of Galilee. These two cities were often the subject of warnings from the prophets because of their worship of Baal (Isa 23; Ezek 26-28; Joel 3:4; Amos 1:9-10; Zech 9:2-4).

We draw an important principle from these verses. Punishment on the Day of Judgment takes into account the opportunities one has had (cf. Lu 12:47-48; Matt 12:41; 23:13).

Jesus describes Capernaum as being brought down to Hades. This is a clear allusion to Isaiah 14:15 and the description of the fall of Satan. Hades is the Greek word for hell and has two compartments: torments (the abode of the unbelieving until the GWTJ) and paradise or Abraham's bosom (the abode of believers of the Old Testament until paradise was transferred to heaven with Christ – Lu 16:19-31; 23:43; Ac 2:27, 31; 2 Cor 12:1-4; Eph 4:8-10). Obviously, Jesus is referring to torments here.

Jesus consoled the men whom He was sending out by revealing that the rejection they would experience was not a rejection of them but of Him. The failure that these men would experience could have easily discouraged them. Jesus knew that the rejection that He had experienced would be experienced by them also. Even though the harvest was plentiful, the response to their ministry was small. Nevertheless, they were expected to be faithful in the execution of their calling.

The Seventy Return Joyfully (10:17-20)

After they completed their mission, the 70 (or 72) returned with reports that reflect a pre-occupation with the miracles they had performed. They did not report on the response of the people to their ministry; however, they reported on the response of the demons (v. 17) to the exercise of the authority that Christ had entrusted to them. Jesus found it necessary to give them a mild rebuke. He reminded them that the authority was not theirs, but His and He had just entrusted it to them (v. 19). This authority belonged to Him because He had expelled Satan from heaven at the time of his original fall (v. 18 cf. Ezek 28:12-15 and Isa 14:12-15). They were not to rejoice in the fact that the demons had been made subject to them, rather they were to rejoice in the fact that they had a heavenly home (v. 20).

Jesus Rejoices in the Spirit (10:21-24)

The 70 (or 72) must have reported on the harvest for Jesus offers a prayer of thanksgiving to the Father (v. 21). In His prayer, Jesus acknowledges that the wise and learned (i.e. the religious leaders in Judaism) chose to be blinded to spiritual Truth whereas the "babes" (i.e. the simple and unlearned) had accepted the gospel of the kingdom. Jesus also acknowledged the expectation of generations of kings had been fulfilled in Him.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37)

While this is a rather well-known parable, there are just a few points I'd like to cover. First, notice that the lawyer was testing Jesus. It was really a challenge from a self-righteous man. Implicit in this man's question to Jesus is an understanding of the resurrection of the believing Jew as evidenced by Daniel 12:2. Second, the lawyer's response to Jesus was a quotation of Deuteronomy 6:5 – a text that was recited twice a day by every faithful Jew. Third, Jesus is not advocating a system of works for salvation in His response in verse 28. Rather, Jesus is teaching this man the same principle that He taught Peter in Matthew 19:27-30, i.e. "many who are first will be last."

Jesus averts the lawyer's attempt to find a loophole in the requirement of the law by using the parable to teach the lawyer the same principle found in Hosea 6:6 – "For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." In other words, God is more interested in the believer understanding and executing the intent of the law rather than the letter of

the law. The irony of the parable is that the despised Samaritan, who had nothing to do with the fact that he was born into a despised race, knows how to show his neighbor unconditional love whereas the respected and educated priest did not.

Note in verse 37 that the lawyer could not even bring himself to say “Samaritan.” He had to say “he who showed mercy.” Most likely, he didn’t want to acknowledge the reversal of images that Jesus used.

Mary and Martha Serve (10:38-42)

This pericope illustrates the need for us to focus upon spiritual priorities. Too many times we are like Martha – all consumed with the need to be constantly doing and providing rather than quietly meditating on the Word so that we may have long term focus. “To be occupied with the Person of Christ is more important than to be occupied for Christ. To devote oneself to the word of Christ, so as to be taught by Him, is more important than to be busy for Him...Those who would later minister for Him needed to learn that the ‘better part’ was to be preoccupied with Him and to be taught not to neglect Him in their ministry.”⁴

⁴ J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Christ* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 303.