

## Encountering the enemy & evil

### a. The Seventy sent out (10:1-12)

**10:1,2 Is there significance in the number of workers sent into the 'great harvest'? (Reflect on the possible significance of this episode unique to Luke - cf. John 4:35, 10:10,16)**

[1] [10:1] One of the most difficult textual problems in the New Testament is that of the number of people Jesus sent out on this mission. Many good MSS read *seventy*, as RSV, but there are many also which read 'seventy-two' as mg. With the evidence at our disposal certainty is impossible (though I think 'seventy-two' is slightly more likely). The number appears to be symbolic of the nations of the world, a view the Jews based on Genesis 10, where there are seventy names in the Hebrew text, and seventy-two in LXX. The gospel is for the whole world. Others, however, associate the number with that of the elders appointed by Moses (Nu. 11:16f., 24f.; seventy-two with the two who remained in the camp). They see Jesus as the second Moses. Others again think of the seventy members of the Sanhedrin, the religious leaders who should have been preparing for the coming of the Messiah. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p.181

[2] [10:1-16] So far as we can tell, the Seventy were sent out about the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. The number of bullocks offered during the Feast was seventy in all, decreasing from thirteen on the first day to seven on the last: and, according to the Talmud, "There were seventy bullocks to correspond to the number of the seventy nations of the world" (Edersheim *The Temple*, p. 240; Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebr.* on Jn. 7:37). It was about this time that Jesus had declared, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must lead, and they shall hear My voice" (Jn. 10:16). **A. Plummer** p.269

[3] [10:1] Though Jesus proceeded slowly from city to city, and from village to village, He had but little time to devote to each place. It was therefore of great moment that He should everywhere find His arrival prepared for, minds awakened, hearts expectant of His visit. This precaution was the more important, because this first visit was to be His last. Accordingly, as He had sent the Twelve into the northern parts of Galilee at the period when He was visiting them for the last time, He

now summons a more numerous body of His adherents to execute a similar mission in the southern regions of the province. They thus serve under His eyes, in a manner, the apprenticeship of their future calling. **Frederic Godet** *Luke* p. 292

### 10:3,4 Why the seeming severity?

[4] [10:3] **lambs**; i.e. helpless and dependent upon the protection of the Great Shepherd ... **E. Earle Ellis** *Luke* p. 156

[5] The Talmud enjoins that no one is to go on the Temple Mount with staff, shoes, scrip, or money tied to him in his purse. Christ's messengers are to go out in the same spirit as they would go to the services of the temple, avoiding all distractions. **A. Plummer** p.273

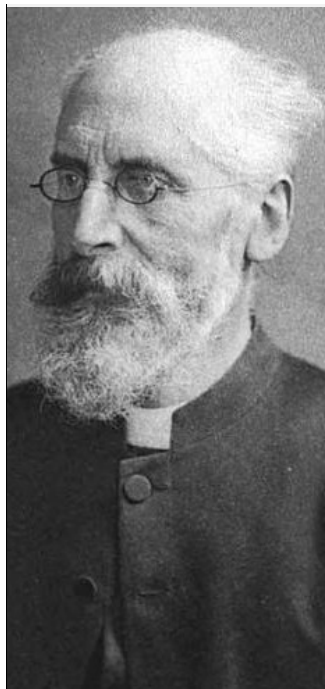
[6] They are to set out just as they are, weak and utterly unprovided. **F. Godet** p. 294

[7] *Salute no one on the road* is not an exhortation to impoliteness: it is a reminder that their business is urgent and that they are not to delay it by dallying with wayside acquaintances. Eastern salutations can be elaborate and time-consuming. **L. Morris** *Luke* p.182

[8] [10:1-7] These remarkable words must doubtless be interpreted with some qualification. The time came when our Lord Himself, at the end of His ministry, said to the disciples, "He that hath a purse let him take it, and likewise his scrip." (Luke 22:36) The apostle Paul was not ashamed to use salutations. The apostle Peter expressly commands us to "be courteous." (1 Pet. 3:8.) But still, after every deduction and qualification, there remains a deep lesson beneath these words of our Lord, which ought not to be overlooked. They teach us that ministers and teachers of the Gospel should beware of allowing the world to eat up their time and thoughts, and to hinder them in their spiritual work. **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 1 pp. 347

### 10:5-12 In what way has the kingdom of God come near?

[9] [10:7] This expression is a proverbial one. It is



**Alfred Edersheim**

What's the significance of the number 70 (72) in the 1<sup>st</sup> century?

(see quote 2)

## Show them we have 'no time for their mode of living'

[12] Let us strive to show the men of the world that we have no time for their mode of living. Let us show them that we find life too precious to be spent in perpetual feasting, and visiting, and calling, and the like, as if there were no death, or judgment, or life to come. By all means let us be courteous. But let us not make the courtesies of life an idol, before which everything else must bow down. Let us declare plainly that we seek a country beyond

the grave, and that we have no time for that incessant round of eating, and drinking, and dressing, and civility, and exchange of compliments, in which so many try to find their happiness, but evidently try in vain. Let our principle be that of Nehemiah, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down." (Neh. 6:3.) **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 1 pp. 348

remarkable as being the only expression in the Gospels, which is quoted in the Epistles. St. Paul uses it in writing to Timothy, in connection with the expression "The Scripture saith." (1 Tim. 5:18) This has led many to conclude with much probability that St. Luke's Gospel was finished, and regarded as part of Holy Scripture, at the time when St. Paul wrote to Timothy. **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 1 pp. 351

[10] [10:8,9] In the area beyond Jordan to which they were

apparently going there were many Gentiles. Food might not always satisfy the rigorist for ceremonial purity. They were not to be sidetracked into fussiness about food. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p.182

[11] [10:12] **Sodom** and **Tyre** represent the most wicked Gentile cities. Israel's rejection of Jesus' message implies a greater hardness and therefore forecasts a severe judgment. **E. Earle Ellis** *Luke* p. 156

## **b. Only woe awaits those ignoring Christ's 'blessed' (10:13-24)**

### **10:13-16 What awful judgment awaits those who ignore the ones sent forth by Christ? (Matt.10:40-42; John 13:20)**

[13] [10:13] Excepting here and the similar Woe in Mt. 11:21, Chorazin is not mentioned in N.T. This shows us how much of Christ's work is left unrecorded (Jn. 21:25). **A. Plummer** p.276

[14] [10:8-16] Let us lay these things to heart, and beware of unbelief. It is not open sin and flagrant profligacy alone which ruin souls. We have only to sit still and do nothing, when the Gospel is pressed on our acceptance, and we shall find ourselves one day in the pit. We need not run into any excess of riot. We need not openly oppose true religion. We have only to remain cold, careless, indifferent, unmoved, and unaffected, and our end will be in hell. This was the ruin of Chorazin and Bethsaida. And this, it may be feared, will be the ruin of thousands, as long as the world stands. No sin makes less noise, but none so surely damns the soul, as unbelief. **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 1 pp. 355

[15] [10:15] The desolation of the whole neighbourhood, and the difficulty of identifying even the sites of these flourishing towns, is part of the fulfilment of this prophecy. **A. Plummer** p.277

### **10:17-21 How do these words give perspective to the relative worth of God's gifts? (Rom.1:16,17; 1 Cor.1:18-25)**

[16] [10:1-20] The lordship of Satan and of death yields to the in-breaking powers of the new age. Yet, as King Belshazzar's guests continued to feast unaware that his kingdom had fallen and his doom had been sealed, so the present age is unaware that Satan's reign is broken. It sees only a writing on the wall, and it cannot read what it sees. For Luke the mission of the Seventy is the continuing task of the Church. **E. Earle Ellis** *Luke* p. 155

"We need not run into any excess of riot. We need not openly oppose true religion. We have only to remain cold, careless, indifferent, unmoved, and unaffected, and our end will be in hell."

– **J.C. Ryle**

[17] [10:18] Hence we infer, that our deliverance from the bondage of Satan is effected in no other way than through the Gospel; and that those only make actual proficiency in the Gospel; in whom Satan loses his power, so that sin is destroyed, and they begin to live to the righteousness of God. We ought also to attend to the comparison which he employs, that the thunder of the Gospel makes *Satan fall like lightning*; for it expresses the divine and astonishing power of the doctrine, which throws down, in a manner so sudden and violent, the prince of the world armed with such abundant forces. **John Calvin** *Luke* Vol 2 p. 33

[18] [10:19] In the midst of all those diabolical instruments, the faithful servant walks clothed with invulnerable armour; not that he is not sometimes subjected to their attacks, but the wounds which he receives cannot hurt him so long as the Lord has need of his ministry (the viper at Malta, Peter's imprisonment by Herod, the messenger of Satan which buffets Paul). The same thought, with a slight difference of expression, is found Mark 16:18; comp. also Ps. 91:13. **Frederic L. Godet** *Luke* p. 298

[19] 3 times we are told in the Gospels that our Lord Jesus Christ wept. Once only we are told that He rejoiced. **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 1 pp. 363

### **10:22 How are these words significant to those who note a sharp contrast in the 'Christ of the gospels'?**

[20] [10:21-24] The section is so much like much in John that it has been called 'a Johannine thunderbolt from the Synoptic blue'. It is a reminder that the style in John is not as alien from that of the Synoptists as some have maintained. ... Jesus calls Himself *the Son* in the Synoptic Gospels only here (together with the Matthean parallel) and in Mark 13:32, though the expression is common in John. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p.186

## **Spectacular 'power' gifts versus the power of grace!**

[24] [10:17-20] We learn, for another thing, from these verses, that *gifts, and power of working miracles, are very inferior to grace*. ... It was doubtless an honour and a privilege to be allowed to cast out devils. The disciples were right to be thankful. But it was a far higher privilege to be converted and pardoned men, and to have their names written in the register of saved souls. The distinction here drawn between grace and gifts is one of deep importance, and often and sadly overlooked in the present day. Gifts such as mental vigour, vast memory, striking eloquence, ability in argument, power in reasoning, are often unduly valued

by those who possess them, and unduly admired by those possess them not. These things ought not so to be. Men forget that gifts without grace save no one's soul, and are the characteristic of Satan himself. Grace, on the contrary, is an everlasting inheritance, and, lowly and despised as its possessor may be, will land him safe in glory. He that has gifts without grace is dead in sins, however splendid his gifts may be. But he that has grace with gifts is alive to God, however unlearned and ignorant he may appear to man. **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 1 pp. 360

[21] [10:22] Jesus' teaching is received not from the fathers but from the Father (Grundmann). Having his teaching, the apostles also are independent of the traditions of the elders. **E. Earle Ellis** *Luke* p. 158

[22] [10:21-24] The return of the seventy is the occasion for an inspired and exultant utterance by Jesus, which contains a succinct summary of most of his teaching. The prayer of thanksgiving, here as in the psalter, is the strongest possible form of credal asseveration. Jesus thanks the Father that his disciples have been allowed to experience the presence and power of the kingdom and to discover for themselves what it means to be a Son of God, even though the learned leaders of the nation have turned their backs on this privilege. This has happened in accordance with God's eternal purpose of grace: the only conditions God has established for entry into the kingdom are sincerity, humility, and faith, and those who insist on erecting other standards of intellectual or moral achievement only blind themselves to the simplicity and universality of God's plan. **G.B. Caird** *Luke* p. 145

### **10:23,24 How does Christ emphasize the privileges of the gospel? (1 Cor.2:1-16)**

[23] [10:22-24] "The education of souls," Gess rightly observes, "is the greatest of the works of Omnipotence." Everything in the universe, accordingly, should be subordinate to it. There is a strong resemblance between this saying of Jesus and that of John the Baptist (John 3:35): "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand" – declaration which is immediately connected with the other relative to the teaching of Jesus: "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God." ... The future conquest of the world by Jesus and His disciples rests on the relation which He sustains to God, and with which He identifies His people. The perfect knowledge of God is, in the end, the sceptre of the universe. **Frederic L. Godet** *Luke* p. 301