

### The Seventy Disciples Sent Out with the Gospel of the Kingdom

#### Luke 10:1-24

*Luke 10:1-16: After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. 2 Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 3 Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. 4 Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road. 5 But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' 6 And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. 7 And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house. 8 Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. 9 And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' 10 But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 11 'The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.' 12 But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city. 13 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. 15 And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades. 16 He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."*

#### Background Notes

At the end of Luke 9 there were three would-be disciples who didn't qualify to be sent out on preaching missions for the Lord because their priorities were not right. In contrast, at the beginning of chapter 10 there were seventy (or seventy-two) disciples who did qualify to be sent out by the Lord to preach the gospel of the Kingdom. Some translations have seventy disciples, and some have seventy-two, because of manuscript variations.

The sending of the seventy disciples is recorded only in the Gospel of Luke. It is obviously a different event than the sending of twelve disciples in Luke 9:1-6: *Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. 2 He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. 3 And He said to them, "Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece. 4 "Whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. 5 And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them." 6 So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.*

So the sending of twelve disciples in Luke 9 and the sending of seventy disciples in Luke 10 are different occasions, but there are some similarities when we compare the two commissions. In both cases, they were told to “travel light” - they were not take a lot of money and clothing. In both cases, they were to stay in the same house and not move from house to house in any one town. Thus they could concentrate on their mission and not on their accommodations. We also see that in both cases, they were to shake off the dust from their sandals whenever they were not welcomed and wherever their message was not received. This meant that the possibility of fellowship had ended.

The Lord sent the seventy disciples ahead of Him into the cities and villages that He Himself would visit. These were different cities than the twelve disciples visited in the Galilee area, because the Lord was now making His way slowly toward Jerusalem. Luke 9:51 - *“He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.”* So the villages that the seventy visited were primarily in the area of Judea, and across the Jordan in Perea.

The job of the seventy would not be easy. They would be as “lambs in the midst of wolves” (v3.) However, they would be given power for healing to validate their message (v9) and they would be given protection from harm and satanic power (v19). The fact that the Lord said to pray for laborers (v2), indicates that the need of the mission field was, and is, always wide open for more workers.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. The Kingdom of God has drawn near.

Verses 9 and 11 tell us that the message of the seventy was that “the Kingdom of God has come near.” This was the same message that the twelve disciples preached in chapter 9. This was the same message that John the Baptist preached with his baptism of repentance. This was the same message that our Lord Himself preached: the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, or near. In this context, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven are synonymous.

What did “the Kingdom of God had drawn near” mean? The Old Testament prophecies predicted that the Messiah was coming. The Messiah was the promised King who would set up the worldwide Kingdom of peace on this earth. That time had now arrived. The King was here. The Messiah had come and He was offering the promised Kingdom to his people.

The Kingdom was at hand - but the Kingdom had to be received. Would the nation receive Him? Already the King and His offer of the Kingdom had been rejected by a number of towns in the Galilee area: Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. In verse 13 the Lord said that if the miracles that He had done in Chorazin and Bethsaida had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented – so on the Day of Judgment it would be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for those cities in Galilee. Would the cities of Judea receive the King and the offer of the Kingdom that was at hand? We know the rest of the story. The King was rejected and His offer of the Kingdom was refused. In fact, the nation of Israel crucified her promised Messiah.

The good news is that the King is coming again, and when He returns His Kingdom will be established on this earth. But the Kingdom was clearly offered when He came the first time, so in that sense, the Kingdom of God had come near.

## **2. The power of Satan has been broken.**

*Verses 17-20: Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."*

**18** *And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. **19** Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. **20** Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."*

The seventy returned with joy, not because everyone believed their message, but because they were experiencing the joy of being involved in the Lord's service. Let me ask you - have you experienced that joy? The Lord taught them (and He teaches us, too) that the real focus of a disciple's rejoicing should not be in our power and protection, but in our *salvation* – that our names are written in Heaven! Verses 19-20: *"Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."*

What did the Lord mean when He said, *"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven?"* (v18). Was He referring to the fall of Satan from his high position as a holy angel? Most likely the Lord was speaking of Satan's current humiliation because the demons, Satan's agents, were subject to seventy ordinary men. Furthermore, this fall, or humiliation of Satan, certainly anticipates his fall from the heavenly realms in the future. In Revelation 12 we learn that Satan and his fallen angels will lose a war that will be fought with Michael the archangel, and the other holy angels, and Satan and his cohorts will be thrown down to this earth. This event will take place in the Tribulation period of the Last Days, but it is anticipated here. The power of Satan has been broken.

## **Practical Application**

### **Don't confuse IQ with insight.**

*Verses 21-24: In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. **22** All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." **23** Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; **24** for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it."*

As a Christian, which would you rather have? A very high IQ? Or very good insight into the things of God? And you can't say "both"! In these verses we see that God is pleased to hide truth from worldly-wise intellectuals and intelligent skeptics, and to reveal His truth to believers - even to baby believers, as the disciples were at this point.

Isn't it amazing how even the simplest believers who study their Bibles have more insight into world affairs and what the future holds than all the world's "think tanks" put together? Truth about God is only gained and gleaned from insight into God's revealed Word - not from a high IQ (v22)! Don't confuse IQ with insight.