

Advance (Luke 10:1-11)

1. The Direction to the Seventy-two (v.1-5)

- Jesus has sent out the Twelve to preach the gospel and heal the sick (9:1-6) in Galilee. He also sent messengers into a Samaritan village who were subsequently rejected (v.51-53).
- Jesus focuses much of His energy on discipleship, evident in the Gospel of Luke, as he devoted ten chapters (Lk. 9-19) to it. Luke intentionally arranges his account thematically, not primarily chronologically.
- The Judean and Perea ministry (Lk. 9:51-19:1) is between Jesus' final departure from Galilee and the last week before His death. Perea is east of the Jordan in Herod's jurisdiction.

Jesus sends out the Seventy (two): Scholars disagree whether Jesus sent out seventy or seventy-two (unique to Luke's narrative). A summary of both positions:

- A. The number "70" or the word "seventy" has a theme in Scripture: (1) There are seventy Gentile nations listed in Genesis 10. (2) Seventy of Jacob's household went down to Egypt (Ex. 1:5), Moses appointed seventy elders (Num. 11:16-30), and God prophesied that He would return the Israelites to their land following the Babylon captivity after seventy years (Jer. 25:9-13). (3) There are seventy members of the Sanhedrin.
- Jesus, therefore, intentionally appoints seventy other disciples (Lk. 6:13-17?) to thematically tie Israel with the church (not to replace her). There are scribal errors on some manuscripts, which add an extra two.
- B. The number "72" or "seventy-two" appears in many manuscripts. The Masoretic texts have "seventy" while the Septuagint has "seventy-two." While Moses appointed seventy elders, it doesn't include Eldad and Medad. As a result, it should be seventy-two (Num. 11:26-27).

Summary: there is no consensus on whether it is 70 or 72.

What directions were given by Jesus to the Seventy-two?

- A. Go two-by-two (v.1-3): Jesus knows there is mutual encouragement and help when two or more are committed to a task (Prov. 27:17; Eccl. 4:9-10).
- The Deuteronomic principle is that upon the evidence of two or three witnesses, a matter will be confirmed (Deut. 17:6). Jesus takes this up concerning church discipline (Matt. 18:20).
 - Pairs of like-minded men and women pervade Scripture:
 - Moses was paired with Aaron (Num. 33:1), Joshua and Caleb (Num. 14:6), Eldad and Medad (Num. 11:26), Naomi and Ruth (Ruth 1-2), and Elisha and Elijah (2 Kgs. 1-2). We see this in the missionary pairs of Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13:2), Judas and Silas (Acts 15:27), Barnabas and Mark (Acts 15:39-40), and Timothy and Erastus (Acts 19:22). There will be two witnesses at the end of the age (Rev. 11:3).
- B. Pray to the Lord of the Harvest (v.2):
- Prayer is the recalibration of the heart to God's will, the affirmation of the character of God to one's soul, and the petitioning and supplication for God to do what man, in his strength, cannot do.
 - The prayer is to the Lord of the Harvest (God) to do what no eloquence or persuasive speech can do: to bring someone from spiritual death to spiritual life.
 - Harvesters have a short time to collect the ripened grain/fruit. They are to go, yet remember that God alone sends the harvesters and gives them growth (1 Cor. 3:7).
 - The harvest is a symbol of God's eschatological judgment in the OT (Isa. 27:11-12; Joel 3:1-13) and future one (Matt. 13:24-30, 39; Lk. 10:12-15; Rev. 14:15-16), yet here signifies the proclamation of God's kingdom and harvest (Jn. 4:35).

C. Travel lightly (v.4):

- They are not to "pack" anything extra, but instead go as they are, relying on God's provisions (this is unique to the time of Jesus' ministry).
- Additionally, their poverty would force the recipient of the message of peace (v.5) to either welcome or reject them. If there were enough physical provisions, it would have no spiritual implication for them and the people to whom they brought the message.

D. Be urgent, and don't waste time on frivolous matters (v.4): Jesus warns them not to "greet anyone on the road." Oriental and Eastern greeting customs were one of many formalities and casual discussions, often resulting in a "delayed" arrival. The Seventy (two) are not to be distracted by frivolous matters, as instructed. They needed intentional and calculated urgency to bring the message of peace to the households in Perea.

E. Be content where you are (v.7): they should not move from house to house for better accommodations. They are to stay in the house that opens its doors and eat what is given to them. The meal table was a sacred place reserved for those whom the host would associate with.

F. Heal the sick: this confirms the inauguration of the kingdom of God (Lk. 4: 18-19).

2. The Expectation of the Seventy-two (v.6-11)

What can the Seventy (two) expect, as they are on a mission?

- A. They will be in danger (v.3): Jesus warns His disciples that a student is not above his master (Jn. 15:20), Paul informs the Thessalonians that they were destined for afflictions (1 Thess. 3:3) as well as Timothy that those who live godly lives will be persecuted (2 Tim. 3:12). Peter encourages us not to be surprised when trials come (1 Pet. 4:12).
- In Palestine, wolves were the common enemy of sheep. They roamed the hills and valleys in search of straying sheep. However, Jesus does not use "sheep," but "lambs" as the metaphor for these seventy (two). Lambs are the most vulnerable to wolves as they have no natural defenses. Additionally, Israelites sacrificed lambs on the altar as a token of worship to God.
 - Jesus calls the false teachers and hypocrites wolves (Matt. 7:15; 10:16; Jn. 10:12; Acts 20:20). Even Paul "ravished" the church (Acts 8:3).
 - The wolves and lambs will eat together in Christ's future kingdom (Isa. 11:6-10; 65:25). The prelude to this is when God will change those who persecute His church into those who belong to it, which then turns the persecutors of the helpers into the helpers of the persecuted.
- B. Some will receive their message of "peace" (v.5-9): Peace is portrayed not merely as wishing good tidings upon someone else but as something that can be transmitted, possessed, and reciprocated. Peace is a gift of Yahweh (Num. 6:26; Isa. 26:12; 45:7; Lk. 2:14) and would include the message prophesied in the OT (Isa. 54:7-10; Ezek. 34:25).
- Peace is acquired when both parties agree, as God extends peace to sinners. The messenger relays that peace, and then the recipient of the message of peace hears it. In welcoming the ambassador, the recipient agrees with the message of peace which has transformed the household and, by extension, will also affect the community.
 - The kingdom of God is the realm in which Jesus rules those who trust and belong to Him (6:20; 11:20; 17:20-21). A well-instructed Israelite would understand the announcement that the time of the Messiah had come and that the long-awaited Savior was being revealed (Hagg. 2:7).
- C. Some will reject the message of peace and reject them (v.10-11)
- To reject the messenger is to reject the One who sent him. If the evangelists were not welcome, despite the announcement of the arrival of the kingdom of God, they were to wipe the dust from their feet, which was a public demonstration that those who rejected them had severed all bonds of communion and companionship.