

As Jesus begins His final journey to Jerusalem before His crucifixion, He sends out 70 disciples ahead of Him to the locations that He would visit along the way from Galilee to Judea. These 70 disciples were to proclaim the gospel and prepare the people to accept the Messiah and His coming kingdom. Jesus also stated that there would be serious consequences for those who rejected these 70 and their message.

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1 After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

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**“After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also”** – These men did not include the 12 disciples that Jesus had specifically chosen to be His apostles (Luke 6:13). These 70, chosen from out of the multitude that followed Jesus, were to be given a special task to perform. **“and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come”** – Much like He sent the 12 apostles out previously in Luke 9:1-6, Jesus now sends 70 other men to prepare the way for Him in the cities/villages that He would visit on His way to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51).

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2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

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**“Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few”** – Sending 70 men in pairs meant that there were 35 teams going to each location. Even this number of teams was insufficient to cover the entirety of Samaria and Judea (the territory that He would be passing through on the way to Jerusalem). Many people needed to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and more workers were needed. **“pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send [to thrust forth with urgency] forth labourers into his harvest”** – Whether the “Lord of the harvest” refers to God the Father or Jesus Christ, it is evident that harvesting souls is a work of God. Only He can bring people to Himself for salvation, although He chooses to use human instruments to do so. Not only did Jesus urge the 70 to pray that God would send out more laborers into the work of the ministry, but He also wanted the 70 to understand the importance of this mission.

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3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. 4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

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**“Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves”** – Sheep are helpless by nature and lambs would be even more so. Jesus was sending these 70 out as harmless lambs into a world that would be hostile toward the gospel. The expression “lambs among wolves” implies that they would be the targets of a hostile world but that they should depend on God for their protection rather than themselves. **“Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes”** – As Jesus had instructed the twelve, these 70 are not to take any supplies for their journey, but to trust that God would supply their needs (Luke 9:3). **“and salute [greet] no man by the way”** – Jesus was not advocating that they be rude and ignore people but is stressing the urgency of their mission. In that day a greeting often involved an elaborate and formal ceremony, potentially including a meal. Jesus did not want these 70 disciples to get entangled in anything that would delay the accomplishment of their mission.

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5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. 6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

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**“And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house”** – Whenever they have entered a city, town or village and someone has offered them the hospitality of lodging at their house, they are to enter the house with a greeting of peace. **“And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it”** – In Hebrew thought, the “son of” anything meant that it shared the characteristics of their father. Thus, Jesus being the “Son of God” meant that He shared the characteristics of God. In the OT, the “sons of Belial” (the word “Belial” means “worthless” or “wicked”) meant that such a person was as worthless and wicked as their “father” Belial. Here, Jesus is saying that if the house that the disciples entered had a “son of peace” (someone who expressed peace toward them and their message) then that house would benefit from the disciples’ blessing of peace. **“if not, it shall turn to you again”** – If the people in the house rejected their message, then they would not benefit from the disciples’ blessing of peace and it would return to the disciples.

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7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

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**“And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give”** – The disciples were not to insult their hosts by not eating what they provided. They should be grateful for what God provided through their hosts. **“for the labourer is worthy of his hire”** – God would provide the food that would enable them to do the work that Jesus sent them to do. **“Go not from house to house”** – Going to another house in the same city/town/village implied that they were not satisfied with what their hosts had provided. It also wasted time that was better spent in preaching. These are the same instructions Jesus had given to the twelve when He had sent them out (Luke 9:4).

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8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: 9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

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**“And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you”** – This repeats the instruction of v. 7. If they are welcomed by their hosts in a city, they should show gratitude for the food that is provided. **“And heal the sick that are therein”** – They are to exhibit the evidence that their message was from God by healing the sick in the city. The contrasting instructions in v. 10 concerning a city that does not welcome them in their message implies that the healing was only to be done where their gospel message was welcomed. Jesus had apparently given these 70 the power to heal and cast out demons (v. 17). **“and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you”** – The miracles and preaching that they did were signs that the kingdom of God was approaching, particularly since Christ, the Son of God, was coming to their city.

10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, 11 Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

**“But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not”** – In contrast to the instructions to bless the city that receives the disciples and their message (v. 8-9), Jesus now gives instructions concerning cities that reject the disciples and the gospel message they brought.

**“go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say”** – They are to make public proclamations so that all could hear and understand the consequences of their rejection of Christ.

**“Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you”** – Shaking or wiping the dust off of one’s feet was a symbolic declaration that the disciples no longer wanted anything to do with the city. They did not even want the dust from the city streets to cling to their feet. Jesus had given similar instructions to the twelve (Luke 9:5).

**“notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you”** – The kingdom of God had come near to their city and they had rejected it. The blame for the consequences of their rejection would be on them alone.

12 But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

Jesus had made the same statement to the twelve when He had sent them out, and Matthew’s quotation of Jesus reveals what the expression “that day” refers to: (**Matt. 10:15** “*Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city*”). Sodom did not have the gospel presented to them before their destruction and so their sin will not be judged quite as harshly as those who had the kingdom of God so close to them and they still rejected it. It will amplify their guilt and make their punishment on the day of judgment more severe. This is the principle that Jesus used in a parable of a servant not preparing for his master’s anticipated arrival (Luke 12:42-48). An increase in knowledge also increases responsibility (**Luke 12:48b** “*For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more*”).

13 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

**“Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida!”** – Chorazin and Bethsaida were towns in the same area of Galilee as Capernaum. Each being only a few miles from Capernaum, the town that Jesus treated as His home base, He no doubt visited both many times, teaching and performing miracles. With such exposure to Jesus and His teaching, these towns should have celebrated and accepted His presence. It appears that most of their citizens were indifferent to Jesus’ ministry.

**“for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you”** – The frequent healing and other miracles that Jesus had done in these towns had made them more responsible for their lack of repentance. Tyre and Sidon were Phoenician cities known for their pride and wickedness. OT prophecies had pronounced God’s judgment upon them in passages such as Isa. 23 and Ezek. 28.

**“they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes”** – Jesus declares that if Tyre and Sidon had witnessed the power of God the way that Chorazin and Bethsaida had then they would have mourned over their sin in sackcloth and ashes and repented many years ago.

**“But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you”** – Chorazin and Bethsaida will be held more responsible for their sin than Tyre and Sidon since they had the greater opportunity to repent. They had seen and heard the Christ.

15 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.

Capernaum was “exalted to heaven” in the sense that Jesus spent so much time there. This city was likely exposed to more of His teaching and had witnessed more of His miracles than any other town. Yet, their judgment will be more severe than other towns because they did not respond to Jesus’ presence in their city and repent.

16 He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

Jesus was sending the 70 and so they represented Him. Therefore, acceptance or rejection of their message was acceptance or rejection of Him. Additionally, rejection of Him was a rejection of His Father, the One Who had sent Him.

17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

When the 70 return, they seem to be more obsessed with the fact that they had the authority to command demonic spirits than anything else.

18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Jesus had witnessed Satan’s fall from grace and likely participated in casting him out of heaven. Having authority over Satan, Jesus had the ability to give some of that authority to the 70 disciples so that they could command the demonic spirits that served Satan, who was a defeated foe.

20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Being able to command demonic spirits could easily become a source of pride, the same sin that caused Satan’s downfall. Jesus cautions the 70 to not become prideful of the fact that they had authority over demonic spirits. Instead, their source of joy should come from gratitude for the salvation that God had given them through faith.