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Luke Chapter 10

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Abstract: A commentary on the events of Luke 10, accompanied by parallel columns of the King James translation of the chapter alongside a new rendition.



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Luke Chapter 10

INTRODUCTION

Gentiles—outsiders—stoke the first fires of this chapter. The number seventy itself points in this direction because, of course, it alludes to the gentile nations of Genesis 10. This theme flows through the parable of the Good Samaritan—the Samaritan is not Jewish, at least not in his mind, and the message about neighbors is universal. This concern for outsiders reaches back to prior gentile touches such as Jesus’ pointer to Naaman the Syrian and his healing of the demoniac among the Gergesenes (see 4:27; 8:26–40). And sayings of Jesus in the following chapter will highlight Gentiles such as the queen of Sheba and the people of Nineveh (see 11:29–32).

Apart from setting out Jesus’ interest in Gentiles by reporting his sending of the Seventy disciples among them (see D&C 107:25), Luke repeats teachings of Jesus that emphasize the need to grasp correctly our relationship to the world and to God. To be sure, many of these teachings show up in different contexts in the other Gospels, most notably in the Sermon on the Mount. But Luke’s arrangement, which he receives in part from others, underscores the observation that Jesus likely makes the same—or similar—point at different times throughout his ministry.¹

Another ingredient stands out in this chapter. It has to do with the questions, “Who is in charge?” and “Who possesses real power and authority?” In one scene, Jesus sends out the Seventy “as lambs among wolves” (10:3). But it soon becomes evident that these authorized representatives possess the genuine power conferred on them by Jesus. They may appear as lambs, but they are much more formidable. For example, they heal (see 10:9), they confer peace (see 10:5–6), they curse cities (see 10:10–11), they cast out

1. Plummer, *Luke*, 437; *TDNT*, 2:631, n. 29; 4:326; Jeremias, *Parables*, 202; Marshall, *Luke*, 701; Morris, *Luke*, 245–46, 299; Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 286.

devils and bring down Satan (see 10:17–18, 20), and they tread down serpents, scorpions, and “the enemy” (likely Satan) without sustaining hurt (see 10:19). Even so, although the Seventy possess genuine power from Jesus, they are not to rejoice in that power but that their “names are written in heaven” (10:20).

A further dimension of power and authority arises in this chapter. It concerns those who receive authority but who, by refusing to aid those in need, such as the man who falls among thieves, lose it, a gaffe of major proportions because the good that they can do for others dries up (see 10:30–32). In this case, both the priest and Levite see their moral authority evaporate, even though Jesus does not comment directly on this aspect of his story. Nonetheless, the loss is real. Their nonresponse to the injured, needy man drains their integrity and pulls down their authority.

In this way, the world begins to turn upside down. Satan, who has long had his way on the earth, is undercut by the acts and words of the Seventy—common and ordinary men whom Jesus empowers. Similarly, Jesus portrays those who hold authority conferred on them by birth—the priest and Levite—as diminished in moral authority, whereas the despised one, the Samaritan, dramatically wins such authority through his actions even though his station in life, as a detested Samaritan, relegates him to the dregs of society. Jesus’ coming has begun to upset the old order.

His discomfiting of long-held customs further emerges in bright hues when he paints his high value of women, and their education, on the canvas of his conversation with Martha and her sister Mary (see 10:38–42). In effect, Martha represents the traditional, honored place of women as skilled, compassionate providers of the necessities of life, of food and drink and an orderly place of comfort and refuge. In mild contrast, Mary stands for the persistent natural curiosity and the deep spiritual folds of character that drape women’s personalities. And she seems completely comfortable in the presence of a man, a prominent one at that. Against all norms in their society,² Jesus overtly encourages her growing curiosity, her burgeoning spiritual yearnings.

2. Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 359–76.

COMMISSIONING THE SEVENTY (10:1–12)

King James Translation

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. 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. 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.

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. 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.

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

New Rendition

1 And after these things, the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them two by two before him into every city and place where he intended to come. 2 And he said to them, “The harvest is great, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray the lord of the harvest that he will send out laborers into his harvest. 3 Go! Behold, I send you out as lambs into the middle of wolves. 4 Do not carry a money purse, nor a traveler’s bag, nor sandals, and do not greet anyone on the road.

5 “And whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this household.’ 6 And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him; but if not, it will return to you. 7 And remain in that house, eating and drinking whatever comes from them, for the laborer is worthy of his pay. Do not go from house to house.

8 “And whatever city you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you. 9 And heal the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ 10 And into whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, when you have gone out into its streets say, 11 ‘Even the dust of your city that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. But know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ 12 I say to you that it will be more tolerable for Sodom in that day than for that city.”

Notes

10:1 *the Lord*: This title (Greek *kyrios*) shows Luke's lofty view of Jesus, for it applies to the God of Israel (see 1:6, 9, 11, 15; etc.).³ Although this term appears regularly for Jesus on the lips of others (see 2:11; 5:8; 7:6; etc.), Luke himself occasionally refers to Jesus by this title, demonstrating that his Christology is high (see 7:31; 11:39; 12:42; 13:15; 17:6; 18:6; 22:31, 61; 24:3; the Notes on 7:13 and 10:2).

***appointed*:** This verb (Greek *anadeiknymi*), with the general meaning here "to appoint" or "to ordain," underscores the divine commissioning of these disciples. In its only other occurrence in the New Testament, it bears the sense "to disclose" or "to reveal" (Acts 1:24).⁴ We should see in the story of the Seventy a connection with the empowering and sending out of the Twelve in 9:1–2 and the ordaining of the Twelve in JST 8:1. In essence, Jesus gives to the Seventy the same charge that he does to the Twelve, that is, to heal and to preach (see 10:9) as well as to cast out devils, a dimension that Luke records later and that becomes visible in the disturbance that shakes Satan's kingdom (see 10:17–19).

***seventy*:** Some early manuscripts of this verse record the number seventy-two, though the earliest, \mathfrak{P}^{75} , reads seventy. This number derives from the list of names in the table of gentile nations in Genesis 10.⁵ Variant numbers occur in the Septuagint. For instance, the Septuagint version of Genesis 10 repeats seventy-two names rather than the seventy of the Hebrew text, adding names in Genesis 10:2 and 10:22. The number seventy-five, replacing seventy in two passages of the Hebrew version, appears in LXX Genesis 46:27 and Exodus 1:5, a number that Stephen repeats in his speech (see Acts 7:14). But the number seventy is original. The role of these disciples is "to be especial witnesses unto the Gentiles and in all the world" (D&C 107:25).⁶

***sent them two and two*:** The verb (Greek *apostellō*) is repeated when Jesus sends forth the Twelve as his authorized representatives (see 9:2; also 10:3; the Notes on 4:18; 9:2, 52). The Seventy may have been sent during the Feast of Tabernacles when seventy bullocks are offered in Jerusalem.⁷ Not

3. *TDNT*, 3:1058–62, 1086–93; 5:273; *TLNT*, 2:341–52.

4. *BAGD*, 53; *TDNT*, 2:30.

5. Plummer, *Luke*, 269.

6. Plummer, *Luke*, 269–71; Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 340–42; Brown, "Seventy in Scripture," 1:25–45.

7. Plummer, *Luke*, 269.

surprisingly, in this light, “They are called to an apostolic calling.” In effect, “they are apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, subject to the direction of the Twelve.”⁸ In a different vein, Jesus here establishes the proper pattern for service: sent by the Savior and going two by two. According to Mark, Jesus also sends the Twelve “by two and two,” though Luke does not report this detail (Mark 6:7). Other accounts reflect this pattern that extends even to the heavenly sphere of activity (see 19:29; 24:4; D&C 52:10).

before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come: The word for “face” (Greek *prosōpon*) connects with Luke’s note that Jesus “set his face to go to Jerusalem” (9:51). Hence, the itinerary for the Seventy’s efforts, though it will be at least partly among Gentiles, will reflect the broader intentions of the Savior to reach out to all as he moves toward the capital city. They prepare the way for his message, fulfilling in a measure the prophecy of Isaiah, as does the Baptist: “Prepare ye the way of the Lord” (3:4). However, Luke offers no further account that Jesus interacts with Gentiles before his death. It is possible that the tradition that comes down to Luke has the Seventy going, among other places, to Perea, on the east side of the Jordan River in advance of the Savior, where the gentile populations are larger (see Matt. 19:1; Mark 10:1).⁹

10:2 *The harvest truly is great:* These words, and the rest of the saying, also appear in Matthew’s record (see Matt. 9:37–38). There Jesus speaks these words in response to the spiritual malaise that he observes. In Luke, they are part of Jesus’ organizing charge to the Seventy before they go out to lift people out of their spiritual doldrums. In the Old Testament, reference to the harvest often concerns God’s judgment on the nations of the earth as he redeems his people (see Isa. 27:11–13; Joel 3:1–21; also Matt. 13:39; Rev. 14:14–19). Some of this sense may lie in Jesus’ words, especially his pointer to “the Lord of the harvest” (see below). But the primary thrust pushes Jesus’ agenda of gathering souls into his kingdom (see D&C 33:3–7).¹⁰

the labourers are few: One of the enduring challenges has to do with adequate numbers of those who will advance the Savior’s work. This point connects to Jesus’ lesson to the Twelve about his inviting and commissioning of fellow laborers in an effort to buttress his missionary force (see the Notes on 9:50 and 9:60; 12:42; the Analysis on 9:49–50).¹¹

8. McConkie, *DNTC*, 1:431–32, quoting Joseph Fielding Smith.

9. Aharoni and others, *Carta Bible Atlas*, map 237.

10. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:846.

11. *TDNT*, 4:445.

pray . . . that he would send forth labourers: This instruction to pray illustrates an important principle. The divine world can be persuaded, perhaps even enriched, by the prayer of the righteous person (see James 5:16; the Note on 22:46). Such appears to be the case when Jesus instructs followers in the New World to pray even though he is in their midst (see 3 Ne. 19:17–18, 22–26, 30; 20:1). In the case of the prophet Jeremiah, God instructs him not to pray so that he does not have to listen to a persuasive voice (see Jer. 7:16).

the Lord of the harvest: This unusual title, a clear reference to God that appears only here and in Matthew 9:38, repeats the title “Lord” that often applies to Jehovah (Greek *kyrios*; see the Note on 10:1). Because the Lord orchestrates the judgment of the nations and the redemption of his people at his harvest (see Isa. 27:12; Joel 3:13–17), Jesus’ phrase points in part to the final judgment and in part to the urgency of missionary work, thus binding the concepts together (see D&C 101:63–66).¹²

10:3 I send you forth: If there were a question from the one occurrence of this verb in 10:1 (Greek *apostellō*) about whether the Seventy carry the authority of Jesus, Luke settles it by quoting Jesus’ words directly, clearly establishing the Seventy as his representatives. As do the Twelve, the Seventy depart immediately.

lambs among wolves: The balance of strength may seem to be in favor of the wolves, and in one sense it is. Hence, these words frame a warning to the departing disciples. But the expression is more than a warning because the lambs represent the seventy persons who bear real celestial power. Such a view is partially verified in Jesus’ experience with the wild animals in the wilderness (see Mark 1:13) and offers a basis for interpreting Isaiah 11:6–9, a prophecy about the animal kingdom resting fully at peace in the days of the Messiah. Of course, some ancient sources call Jesus a “lamb.” Just as he must deal with “wolves,” so must his followers.

10:4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: These same items appear in a reminiscence of the sending of the Twelve (see 22:35), although the reported instruction to the Twelve differs a bit: “Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money” (9:3). In both cases, the message is, “Go as you are” (see the Note on 9:3).¹³

nor scrip: A repeat of the same term in 9:3 (Greek *pēra*), it can mean a beggar’s bag. But it instead likely points to a traveler’s bag in light of

12. TDNT, 3:133.

13. Plummer, *Luke*, 239; Morris, *Luke*, 179.

22:35–36.¹⁴ If Jesus means a beggar’s bag, then he does not want the Seventy begging to fill their needs (see the Note on 22:35).

salute no man by the way: We might see this odd instruction as setting out the comparative unimportance of individuals in contrast to the importance of households and cities (see 9:4, 8). But the proper sense seems to rest on the urgency of the message that the Seventy will carry (compare 2 Kgs. 4:29). They are to be about the work of the kingdom and are not to stop and leisurely make or remake acquaintances.¹⁵

10:5 first say: Jesus is coaching the Seventy about the exact words that they are to speak when they first enter a home. We can see this effort as a lesson in etiquette. But it seems to be more. These words, perhaps unexpectedly, will reveal whether a “son of peace be” in that home and will establish whether or not the disciples let their “peace . . . rest upon” the home and its inhabitants (10:6).

Peace: The word that Jesus speaks is probably *shalom*. But the sense is broader than a simple greeting or a hope for another’s well being. From the Savior, it carries the meaning of heavenly peace, “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Philip. 4:7).¹⁶

10:6 the son of peace: Properly, the expression is “a son of peace.” Similar expressions, such as “children of light” (16:8) and “children of the resurrection” (20:36), appear to point mainly to the future. So it may be with “son of peace,” a term that evidently shows the eventual or immediate elevation of the person into a select group. If this understanding is accurate, the designation “son of peace” refers to an acquired or conferred status in the eyes of God, not a quality that a person already possesses.¹⁷

your peace: Jesus, of course, stands as the ultimate source of this peace and he entrusts these disciples with its proper dispersal. It is as though they possess it after he confers it upon them (see D&C 84:88; 109:39).

it shall turn to you: The peace that the Seventy carry can be bestowed by them, and withdrawn, disclosing an extraordinary quality of this peace that comes only from the divine world.

10:7 in the same house remain: As with the Twelve, Jesus requires that the Seventy remain in the home where they first find lodging, effectively saying: “Go not from house to house.” They are not to shop around for

14. BAGD, 662; TDNT, 6:119–21.

15. McConkie, DNTC, 1:433; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:847.

16. TDNT, 2:411–17; TLNT, 1:424–38.

17. TDNT, 8:345–46, 351–53, 358–60, 365, 389–91.

better accommodations (see the Note on 9:4). The Joseph Smith Translation supports this view, changing the opening expression of this verse to read, “in whatsoever house they receive you, remain” (JST 10:7).

eating and drinking such things as they give: With these words, and those in the next verse, by his authority Jesus suspends Jewish food laws for the Seventy, a dimension of his ministry that shows him standing above dietary requirements that have come to sprinkle his society (see the Notes on 5:13 and 7:6; the Analysis on 5:12–16). Jesus’ repetition of this suspension (see 10:8) appears to emphasize a point that food laws are not to be a test of a believer’s devotion either in the eyes of the believer or in the eyes of those who observe the believer. Jesus thus opens the door for gentile converts to enter his kingdom without observing Jewish customs, leading to interesting consequences for Christians in later generations.

Go not from house to house: This repetition, phrased differently from “in the same house remain,” underscores Jesus’ sharp desire that the Seventy not seek for better lodging, thus potentially offending the original hosts.

10:8 *whatsoever city:* As in the instructions to the Twelve (see 9:5), Jesus shows his interest in entire communities, here gentile cities, as well as individuals in homes. Plainly, his message about the kingdom of God bids all people to embrace his message (see 10:9; D&C 84:93–97; 109:39, 41).

they receive you: Jesus’ earlier promise applies here: those who receive a representative of Jesus, whether child or disciple, receives him and ultimately his Father (see 10:10; the Note on 9:48).

eat such things as are set before you: Perhaps because Jesus knows that his disciples will naturally resist foods that do not accord with Jewish laws, he repeats the suspension of those laws so that the Seventy can accept the hospitality of gentile hosts (see 10:7).¹⁸

10:9 *heal the sick:* Jesus’ authorization includes the power to heal. Because Jesus mentions healing before preaching, he may be stressing that the disciples are to see to the physical needs of hearers along with their spiritual needs, as he will do among hearers in the New World (see 3 Ne. 18:1–14; 20:3–9).¹⁹ His instructions and ordination assume that these seventy individuals have been traveling with him and witnessing his activities, as do the Twelve before their commissioning.

and say: Besides the power to heal, the Seventy’s authorization includes preaching the kingdom of God, the theme of Jesus’ own preaching (see

18. Morris, *Luke*, 200.

19. Brown, *Voices from the Dust*, 163–65.

4:43; 8:1; 9:11; 13:18, 20; 16:16). Effectively, by repeating his words, which carry eternal dimensions, they stand in his place as if he were present among their gentile hearers.

The kingdom of God is come nigh: This seemingly mysterious expression, that forms the heart of the Seventy’s message (see 10:11), often brings interpreters to question whether the kingdom is already present or whether it is yet approaching (also 10:11).²⁰ In spatial contexts, the verb in this passage (Greek *engizō*) conveys the sense of approaching or drawing near (see 7:12; 12:33; 15:1; 18:35; etc.; see the Note on 19:41).²¹ On the metaphorical or spiritual level, however, Jesus is the chief representative of the kingdom and thus his presence guarantees the kingdom’s presence among humankind. In calling the Twelve and the Seventy, he begins to organize that kingdom into a visible earthly institution.

10:10 *into whatsoever city ye enter:* Jesus now shifts his focus from individuals and households to entire communities. It seems plain that his plans call for conversions on a grand scale as well as on an individual level (see D&C 84:88–97; 109:39, 41).

they receive you not: The rejection by communities becomes a trigger for the disciples’ act of wiping “the very dust of your city” from themselves, as if the dust possesses staining power (10:11; see Acts 13:51). In the case of gentile towns and territory, some Jews view their ground as unclean (see the Notes on 2:42 and 23:26).²²

into the streets: Unlike the private withdrawal from cities and towns that Jesus earlier requires of the Twelve, and that he asks of his modern representatives (see Acts 13:51; D&C 60:15; 84:92–93), here he instructs the Seventy to make their departure a public matter so that citizens will see their actions (see the Note on 9:5).

10:11 *Even the very dust of your city:* Jesus hands to the Seventy the very words that he wants them to repeat, apparently without variation. The first part of the saying will draw attention to their action; the second part will consist of their testimony.

cleaveth: The verb (Greek *kollaō*), in the passive voice, means “to cling to” or “to adhere to,” with the sense that the dust has to be wiped or washed off.²³

20. Marshall, *Luke*, 422.

21. BAGD, 212; *TDNT*, 2:330–32.

22. Morris, *Luke*, 180; *TDOT*, 5:339; Hayes, “Purity and Impurity, Ritual,” 16:752–53.

23. BAGD, 442; *TDNT*, 3:822.

be ye sure of this: These words introduce the testimonies of the Seventy which they are to repeat, no matter who their audience is.

the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you: This expression forms the content, both general and specific, of the testimony that the Seventy are to bear on their missions (also 10:9).

10:12 in that day: This expression frequently draws up the prospect of the judgment or the day of final rewards (see 6:23; 17:31; 21:34; Acts 2:20; Rev. 16:14). The Joseph Smith Translation strengthens this sense by changing this expression to read: “in the day of judgment” (JST 10:12).

Sodom: The destruction of this city, which lies near the Dead Sea (see Gen. 19:24–25), becomes a symbol for the fate of communities who turn away from God (see Deut. 29:23; Isa. 13:19; Jer. 50:40; 2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 1:7).²⁴

that city: Jesus’ prior words, and this expression especially, set out a doctrine of a broad communal guilt that goes beyond the responsibility of individuals for personal actions (see D&C 109:41). Such a sense applies to the almost wholesale rejection of Jesus by “this generation” (17:25) that will lead to the destruction of Jerusalem within forty years (see 21:6, 20–24). A similar blanketing responsibility lies in his words through Joseph Smith: “wo unto that house, or that village or city that rejecteth you, or your words . . . concerning me” (D&C 84:94).

Analysis

The calling of the Seventy disciples stands as the first prime proof that the Savior is now organizing his followers into more than a loosely gathered group of followers overseen by the Twelve. His organization will be more than a symbol; it will be more than a very few governing the many; it will be more than a loose mirroring of the twelve tribes as seen in the Twelve Apostles. In reality, the empowering of the Seventy makes firm and real and concrete the emerging outline of a purposeful church administration. Plainly, by organizing his followers into a structured congregation—a church—Jesus draws down the kingdom of God to settle on the earth. In his own words, “the kingdom of God is come nigh” (10:9, 11).

The Seventy, whose number mirrors the names of the Gentiles’ progenitors listed in Genesis chapter 10, already enjoy a long and rich tradition. For “seventy of the elders of Israel” ascend the holy mount with Moses and, in a covenant meal accompanied by a stunning vision of Jehovah, ratify the

24. Morris, *Luke*, 200.

covenant that Moses receives (Ex. 24:9–11). This event hints strongly that the Seventy are already a part of the organizational fabric of the Israelite tribes. A second event confirms this conclusion. For, when Moses desperately needs help to deal with the practical challenges that he and his people face, the Lord authorizes the invitation of “seventy men of the elders of Israel” to share the burden, and demonstrates their authorization by allowing his spirit to rest “upon them,” and “they prophesied, and did not cease” (Num. 11:16, 24–25). Further, in an apostate development of the ancient office of the Seventy, the young Ezekiel sees in vision “seventy men of the ancients [elders] of the house of Israel” worshiping in a darkened chamber of the temple that features paintings “of creeping things, and abominable beasts,” an act that God condemns (Ezek. 8:7–12). These notices in the Old Testament, therefore, underscore the existence of the Seventy as an ancient institution.²⁵

In a related vein, the contemporary Sanhedrin organizations mirror that of the Seventy of ancient Israel. In fact, Jesus’ Seventy can be seen as a replacement of the Sanhedrins.²⁶ But their functions differ. According to the Mishnah, the number in the “greater Sanhedrin” of Jerusalem is to consist of seventy or seventy-one members, while the number in other settlements is to be twenty-three. In Jewish cities and communities, the Sanhedrin serves in judicial and legislative roles, deciding questions on the interpretation of Mosaic law, ruling on disputes, and enacting local laws, thus reflecting in a measure the function of the Seventy who assist Moses in a judging capacity (see Num. 11:16–17). But their interaction with Gentiles is minimal.²⁷

Under the hands of Jesus, these Seventy bear his power, his authority. And he turns them toward the Gentiles, suspending Jewish food laws so that they can accept hospitality from their hosts. We assume that a few of them make their way into the town where the Gergesene demoniac resides, perched among the hills that overlook the east shore of the Sea of Galilee (see 8:26–39). Though no record exists of such a visit, we can safely infer that, in the intervening weeks and months, the man is energetically tilling the gospel soil among family and acquaintances so that any of the Seventy

25. Brown, “Seventy in Scripture,” 1:25–45; Plummer, *Luke*, 269–71; McConkie, *DNTC*, 1:432.

26. Plummer, *Luke*, 269.

27. Schürer, *History*, 2:184–85; 200–26; *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 1:6.

who reach that region find a people willing to receive them and their message (see the Note on 8:39 and the Analysis on 8:26–40).

In concert with the Seventy as Jesus’ ministers to Gentiles,²⁸ the Seventy in the modern church are “called to preach the gospel, and to be especial witnesses unto the Gentiles and in all the world—thus differing from other officers in the church in the duties of their calling.” Moreover, they serve as “traveling ministers, unto the Gentiles first and also unto the Jews” (D&C 107:25, 97). In a note about their relationship to the Twelve and their modern duties, the Lord reveals that “The Seventy are to act in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the Twelve . . . in building up the church and regulating all the affairs of the same in all nations” (D&C 107:34). In a conference in 1907, Joseph F. Smith affirms that “The seventies are called to be assistants to the twelve apostles; indeed they are apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, subject to the direction of the Twelve.”²⁹

Because of the similarities between Jesus’ commissioning of the Twelve (see 9:1–5) and the Seventy, some scholars urge that the two acts really go back to the same event and that Jesus does not send two groups of missionaries.³⁰ But the weight of evidence falls on the side of Jesus commissioning this second group of seventy, agreeing in large measure with his newly instituted practice of sending “messengers” other than the Twelve “before his face” as he turns his focus more on Jerusalem (9:52).³¹

As already noted, the call of the Seventy links Jesus to Moses, who also works with seventy. In fact, it appears that Luke is underlining that Jesus is indeed the expected prophet “like unto” Moses. To him, people are to “hearken,” with devastating consequences for those who “will not hearken” to the words that God “will put . . . in his mouth” (Deut. 18:15, 18–19).³² Specifically, for those who will not hearken to Jesus and his authorized representatives, “it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for” those persons and “that city” (10:12). In fact, some towns in northern Galilee, Chorazin and Bethsaida,³³ where Jesus has spent time during past months, have already earned God’s crippling wrath because of their rejection of Jesus’ “mighty works” (10:13).

28. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 426.

29. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1963), 183.

30. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:842–43.

31. Plummer, *Luke*, 270; Marshall, *Luke*, 412–13.

32. Johnson, *Luke*, 167.

33. Aharoni and others, *Carta Bible Atlas*, maps 230, 233.

WOES ON GALILEE (10:13–16)

(Compare Matt. 10:40; 11:20–24; John 13:20)

King James Translation

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

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

New Rendition

13 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles which have been done among 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 in the judgment than for you. 15 And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to heaven? No, You will be brought down to Hades.

16 “He who hears you, hears me, and he who rejects you, rejects me. And he who rejects me, rejects the one who sent me.”

Notes

10:13 *Woe:* Jesus levels his cursing against Jewish towns and cities, not against gentile settlements where the Seventy are going (see 10:13–14). The Joseph Smith Translation adds a full statement before the word “woe” and frames a context for Jesus’ harsh words: “Then he began to upbraid the people in every city wherein his mighty works were done, who received him not” (JST 10:13).

Chorazin: Only Matthew reports explicitly that Jesus visits this town whose ruins perch on a hill above Capernaum, north of the Sea of Galilee (see Matt. 11:21).³⁴ But Luke’s mention of Chorazin and Bethsaida, along with Capernaum (see 10:15), shows that Jesus has preached in these towns and that the townspeople have rejected him, a point that Matthew makes certain: “the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, . . . [and] they repented not” (Matt. 11:20).

34. Robert W. Smith, “Chorazin,” in *ABD*, 1:911–12; Aharoni and others, *Carta Bible Atlas*, maps 230, 232–33.

Bethsaida: This town, whose remains currently lie just inland from the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee,³⁵ is home to Peter, Andrew, and Philip (see John 1:44; 12:21).

the mighty works: These are Jesus' mighty works, not those of the Twelve, as Matthew clarifies: "his [Jesus'] mighty works" (Matt. 11:20).

Tyre: The name of this city appears here and in the next verse wherein Jesus points to a judgment hovering over its citizens. Apparently, Jesus' mention of Tyre ties back to Isaiah 23, where Tyre and her sister city Sidon receive God's devastating curse. However, Luke writes earlier that people from Tyre are in Jesus' audience for his sermon on the plain (see the Note on 6:17). Does their presence point to a turning, to a spiritual coming of age? Perhaps. But Jesus' words "it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon" look forward to a rough experience for their citizens in the judgment.

they had a great while ago repented: Jesus' saying cuts two ways. First, it embodies his complaint against the Jewish towns—few or none repent. Second, the Gentiles of the two cities would repent, an observation that dulls the severity of the looming judgment hinted at in 10:14.

10:14 at the judgment: This phrase underlines the ultimate, everlasting results of our response to the Savior's message. We are not simply embracing or turning away from a good idea or a helpful plan for living; we are not merely choosing or rejecting a style or attitude; we are not just deciding whether to pattern our lives after a respected teacher. Our response to Jesus carries consequences far beyond mortal life.

10:15 Capernaum: The citizens of this prosperous city on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee have evidently seen Jesus' earliest miracles and witnessed his preaching efforts (see 4:23; also 4:14–15, 31–41). In addition, he has virtually set up a headquarters there, returning to the city after traveling to other parts of Galilee (see 7:1; 8:40–41). But his miracles and teachings and presence are not enough to entice all citizens to his cause. In fact, the angry tone of Jesus' words points to an outright rejection of him rather than mere indifference.

exalted to heaven: Irony drips from Jesus' words. Capernaum sits in a geological depression more than 600 feet below sea level and far below the surrounding hills. Moreover, large numbers in the town apparently behold themselves as standing above any need to respond to Jesus' message.

35. James F. Strange, "Beth-saida," in *ABD*, 1:692–93; Aharoni and others, *Carta Bible Atlas*, maps 230, 233–35.

shalt be thrust down to hell: In accord with Jesus’ observation that entire communities will reject his representatives (see 10:10–12), his words aimed at Capernaum as a collective settlement illustrate its ultimate fate “at the judgment” (10:14). The term *Hades* is translated “hell” in this passage and points to a temporary, not permanent abode (see the note on 16:23).

10:16 *He that heareth you:* This saying, and those that follow in this verse, are addressed to the Seventy rather than to the citizens of the cities whom he curses, as the Joseph Smith Translation makes clear: “he said unto his disciples” (JST 10:17; see 10:13–15). Jesus’ words highlight the binding connections between himself, his disciples and his Father, connections that he underscores in modern times: “he that receiveth my servants receiveth me; And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father” (D&C 84:36–37). In a different vein, this verse shows affinities to sayings in John’s gospel (see John 13:20) as does the so-called “Johannine thunderbolt” in 10:21–22, which exhibits ties to the style of Jesus’ sayings in John (see John 10:15; 7:28–29; 13:3; 14:9–10; 17:25; the Notes on 9:48; 10:21–22). It is not clear why such sayings appear in Luke’s account unless they are common coin among church members.

he that despiseth you despiseth me: This rather judgmental principle appears in more positive terms in Doctrine and Covenants 84:36–38.

Analysis

These verses form part of the Savior’s instruction to the Seventy. They confirm that he turns finally from “every city and village” in Galilee that stand aloof from his miracles and from “the glad tidings of the kingdom of God” (8:1). Not only he, but the Twelve, have gone “through the towns” of Galilee, apparently experiencing only modest success (9:6). As Matthew writes, “they repented not” (Matt. 11:20). To be sure, the combined efforts of Jesus and the Twelve create a following in such numbers that Jesus can choose a group of seventy to represent him. But he will plow his beloved Galilean ground no more.

In fact, Jesus now vents his frustration against whole Galilean communities who show mere curiosity and little genuine interest. But rather than lifting his foot to shake off the dust, as he invites his authorized representatives to do (see 9:5; 10:10–11), he calls down curses on the indifferent towns. Just as the judgment that follows the missionaries’ acts of removing dust will come in God’s own timing, so the results of Jesus’ curse will arrive “at the judgment,” graciously allowing further time for repenting. But any repenting will have to occur without his encouraging presence. He

now turns his back on the Jewish settlements in the north and, as a clear signal of this intentional separation, sends the Seventy into the midst of gentile towns.

The calling of the Seventy and the simultaneous cursing of Jewish communities shows that Jesus is fully aware of the distinctively mixed landscape of Galilee's inhabitants. For archaeological evidence has come to light that, in general, the citizens of Jewish towns do not interact with those of Roman settlements, and vice versa. They live separately, almost as if the others do not exist.³⁶ Except for the foray into gentile territory to heal the Gergesene demoniac (see 8:26–39), Jesus devotes his efforts to reaching out to fellow Jews, preaching “in the synagogues of Galilee” (4:44). But their largely indifferent response leaves him with no choice but to move on to other pastures, supplying a broad hint that future missionary work will lie among Gentiles, as Luke's second volume, the book of Acts, will chronicle.

RETURN OF THE SEVENTY (10:17–20)

King James Translation

17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. 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. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

New Rendition

17 And the Seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name.” 18 And he said to them, “I began to see Satan fall from heaven like lightning. 19 Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will ever hurt you. 20 Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names have been written in the heavens.”

36. Berlin, “Romanization and Anti-Romanization,” 57–73; Berlin, “Jewish Life before the Revolt,” 417–70; Jensen, *Herod Antipas in Galilee*, 236–39.

Notes

10:17 *the seventy returned*: Evidently, as with the mission of the Twelve, all return about the same time, a hint that Jesus fixes a time limit to their activities. Even so, they retain authority to continue their labors in the future: “I give unto you power” (10:19).

***with joy*:** This phrase highlights the typical result of service or linking oneself with the divine cause (see 1:14; 2:10; 8:13; 10:20; John 15:11; 16:20–24; 17:13; Acts 8:8; 13:52; 15:3; 20:24). This joy is also a characteristic of celestial beings (see 15:7, 10) and elsewhere ties specifically to the news of the resurrection (see 24:41, 52).

***even the devils are subject unto us*:** The Greek verb (*hypotassō*) here has to do with keeping the celestial order (see 10:20); it can also point to honoring an earthly order (see the Note on 2:51).³⁷ We sense an almost breathless excitement when the disciples discover that their power is real, although Luke does not record the promise of this power to the Seventy but does so for the Twelve (see 9:1).

***through thy name*:** The phrase, which is literally “in thy name,” captures an important aspect of appointed service: it is performed in Jesus’ name.

10:18 *I beheld*: The verb (Greek *theōreō*) is in the imperfect tense and conveys the meaning that Jesus is beginning to see Satan’s unraveling.³⁸ Jesus’ statement about Satan, of course, rests on his divine knowledge, a characteristic that no one else shares (see the Note on 22:31).

***Satan as lightning fall from heaven*:** The reasons for Satan’s fall may be many. In a prophecy of Isaiah, he is to be “cut down to the ground” as a tree (Isa. 14:12). The actions of the Seventy during their mission evidently weaken or shake the foundations of Satan’s kingdom, an entity that exists, thus toppling him, though not permanently (see the Notes on 11:18 and 22:31). But the wound is deep and, given time, Jesus will thoroughly undercut his power (see the Notes on 11:21–22; 13:16; 22:3, 31, 46, 53).

10:19 *power*: The term (Greek *exousia*) generally means authority. In this case, it also bears the meaning of power because it matches and overcomes “the power of the enemy.” Thus, Jesus transfers his authority and power to his representatives to extend the struggle with the devil’s powers (see the Notes on 4:2, 18; the Analysis on 4:1–13; 4:16–30).

37. BAGD, 855–56; *TDNT*, 8:43.

38. BAGD, 360; Blass and Debrunner, *Greek Grammar*, §327.

to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy:

The allusions to Genesis 3:15 and Moses 4:21 are plain (“her [Eve’s] seed . . . shall bruise thy [the serpent’s] head”) and point firmly to the eventual reversal of what happens in the Garden of Eden. Jesus’ words may also point to Psalm 91:13 that assures protection to the person who trusts in the Lord (“Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon [serpent] shalt thou trample under feet.”). To be sure, in this latter passage, we find no connection to Genesis 3:5 wherein the serpent represents Satan. But the imagery of the faithful person’s power over serpents in Psalm 91:13 is vivid and forms a natural connection to Jesus’s words. Not incidentally, the Joseph Smith Translation recasts Jesus’ words with a future sense and omits the notion of walking on hostile creatures: “I will give unto you power over serpents and scorpions” (JST 10:20).

nothing shall by any means hurt you: Another possible thread to Psalm 91 lies in this promise. For this Psalm consists of a long series of assurances that God will protect the faithful one under any and all circumstances, culminating in a divinely sustained “long life” wherein God shows the person his “salvation” (Ps. 91:16).

10:20 the spirits are subject unto you: Jesus’ observation hints that he empowers the Seventy as he does the Twelve (see 9:1), though Luke does not report such (see the Note on 10:17). One might compare the roughly contemporary notion that “Beliar [Satan] shall be bound by him [the bringer of salvation]. And he shall grant to his children the authority to trample on wicked spirits” (Testament of Levi 18:12).³⁹

your names are written in heaven: This circumstance forms the ultimate reward. The verb translated “written” (Greek *engraphō*) at base has to do with a register of citizens. But here Jesus’ words point to the book of life (see Ex. 32:32–33; Ps. 69:28; Philip. 4:3; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 3:5; etc.).⁴⁰ From Joseph Smith comes the observation that “the book of life is the record which is kept in heaven” (D&C 128:7; also 85:9; 88:2; 132:19).

Analysis

Within these verses rest the unexpected, crippling impact that the actions of a few good, authorized persons can bring down on the realm of evil. Before the Savior’s coming, Satan experiences only limited and episodic resistance to his influence. But by driving out unclean demons, by bringing

39. Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:795.

40. TDNT, 1:618–20, 769–70; Marshall, *Luke*, 430.

relief to the suffering, and by seizing spiritual territory through preaching, Jesus cuts into Satan's kingdom, sapping its vitality. Now comes a wave of empowered emissaries, first the Twelve and then the Seventy. Of the impact of the Twelve, Luke reports little (see 9:6, 10). And perhaps there is little to report because they spend their efforts among fellow Jews who generally respond indifferently, as Jesus' cursing of Jewish towns appears to demonstrate (see 10:13–15). But within a short time the Seventy, common and humble men, both because of their numbers and because of their success among a broader group of hearers, land a serious blow against Satan's hegemony, defeating and subjecting his demons, his representatives (see 10:17). By their actions, the Seventy engage the forces of the unseen world, just as Jesus has been doing for months, and they subdue it with crackling force. Thus, in a struggle of authorized emissaries, those of the Savior ride triumphant over those of Satan.

Any mention of Satan, of course, calls up ties to the Garden of Eden where he shows off, and establishes, his power by enticing Eve and then Adam to turn against God's command by partaking of the forbidden fruit. At that moment, the struggle for souls is fully engaged between the powers of evil and good. And Jesus' words point back to that watershed moment when he grants the Seventy "power to tread on serpents" (10:19), echoing God's words to Eve that her seed "shall bruise [the serpent's] head" (Gen. 3:15; Moses 4:21).

But the broader scriptural framework links to Psalm 91, a "royal psalm of trust or confidence"⁴¹ that celebrates God's power to deliver and protect the one who chooses to make "the most High [his or her] habitation" (Ps. 91:9). Readers have already met lines from this psalm in Satan's temptation at the temple when he tries to entice the Savior to jump from its pinnacle: "it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee; And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone" (4:10–11; Ps. 91:11–12). Plainly, Satan reads these verses as applying to Jesus, notably at the holy temple.⁴² But Jesus now applies other lines from the same psalm to the Seventy, with the same sense of holiness and within the textured fabric of the psalmist's promise of protection: "I give unto you power to tread on serpents . . . and nothing shall by any

41. Mitchell Dahood, *The Psalms II, 51–100*, vol. 17 of *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1968), 329.

42. Craig A. Evans, *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), 4.

means hurt you” (10:19). These lines echo the warp and weft of the psalm: “There shall no evil befall thee. . . . Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder. . . . I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him” (Ps. 91:10, 13, 15). Thus, the scriptural tapestry from which the devil draws strength as he initially engages Jesus in the struggle for power and eminence now provides the twisted, tight threads from which Jesus’ disciples will draw courage that God will watch over them in his service.

One further coloration may tie this scene to Psalm 91—that of Satan’s fall. In words of exaltation, God will lift up those who love and trust in him: “Because he hath set his love upon me . . . I will set him on high” (Ps. 91:14). But Satan has elevated himself on high, as his sudden plummet “as lightning” demonstrates (10:18). In effect, God’s true followers, when exalted, will displace Satan who has “said in [his] heart, I will ascend into the heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds” (Isa. 14:13–14). In a word, the place of exaltation is now cleared and cleaned of Satan’s pretentious presence, readied for those who have “set [their] love upon [God]” (Ps. 91:14).

Finally, manifestations of power pale when set side by side with the reward of seeing one’s name “written in heaven,” in the book of life (10:20). It is this end, rather than the grasping and wielding of unusual powers, that the Seventy are to seek in their continuing ministries. Their task, more than impressing people with their divinely granted forces, is to bring others to God’s book and to see their names written therein.

THE SAVIOR’S JOY (10:21–24)

(Compare Matt. 11:25–27; 13:16–17)

King James Translation

21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. 22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who

New Rendition

21 In that hour, he was overjoyed in the Holy Spirit and said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you hid these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to the childlike. Yes, Father, for such was pleasing before you. 22 All things have been handed over to me by my Father. And no one knows who the

the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

23 And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: 24 For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Son is except the Father, and who the Father is, except the Son and the one to whom the Son desires to reveal him.”

23 And turning to the disciples, he said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. 24 For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and did not see, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear.”

Notes

10:21 *that hour*: This verse and the next are often called “the Johannine thunderbolt” because of their unexpected, close affinity to the language of John’s Gospel (see John 10:15; 7:28–29; 13:3; 14:9–10; 17:25). The phrase “that hour” appears elsewhere in Luke’s Gospel in his descriptions of others’ activities (see 12:12; 20:19; 24:33; also 22:53). In three instances, the term has to do with Jesus’ ministry, both mortal and postmortal (see 7:21; 12:40; 22:14). Perhaps importantly, the words also both mirror language in the Gospel of John (see John 12:27) and recall John’s common expression “the hour,” all of which tie specifically to Jesus’ Atonement and its effects (see John 5:25, 28; 12:23; 17:1; the Note on 22:14).

***Jesus rejoiced*:** The verb (Greek *agalliaomai*), and its noun, frequently express the joy of receiving sacred gifts in a holy setting, or the joy of being part of God’s divine plan (see 1:14, 47; LXX Ps. 15:9; 50:8; Heb. 1:9; 1 Pet. 4:13; Jude 1:24; cf. Mosiah 18:14).⁴³ Thus the translation “rejoiced” does not capture Jesus’ joyful exultation in this moment. The recorded occasions for Jesus or those of the divine world rejoicing in this manner are few (see 3 Ne. 17:20–21; 27:30).

***I thank thee*:** The verb (Greek *exomologeomai*) appears in psalms of praise that present a feeling of jubilation (see 2:14, 29–32; LXX Ps. 7:18; 9:2; 17:50; 27:7; etc.).

***in spirit*:** There are no fewer than four variants of this phrase in the manuscripts. The readings with the strongest support are “in the holy spirit” and “by the holy spirit,” indicating that Jesus’ elation is accompanied by the presence of the Holy Ghost rather than simply being an internal happiness.⁴⁴

43. BAGD, 3–4; TDNT, 1:19–21; Morris, *Luke*, 203.

44. Marshall, *Luke*, 433.

I thank thee, O Father: Jesus now begins a prayer that will continue through the next verse, 10:22.

thou hast hid these things: The referent for this expression appears to be the experience of the Seventy, particularly in the powers that accompany their brief ministries and the celestial gift of their names being “written in heaven” (see 10:17–20). To the unresponsive, such experiences remain hidden; to the uninitiated, God keeps his grand gifts out of sight, revealing them only to the worthy, and in his own time (see 8:10; Deut. 29:29; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26; Ether 3:21, 27–28; 4:1–3; D&C 6:27; 76:7; 89:19; 101:32–34; 124:38, 41; 128:18).⁴⁵

from the wise and prudent: The Joseph Smith Translation adds five words and thereby frames an interpretation, clarifying that Jesus is referring to the self-perceptions of these persons: “from *them who think they are wise and prudent*” (JST 10:22; emphasis added).⁴⁶

babes: This word in scripture often points to the very young (see 3 Ne. 26:16; D&C 128:18). The meaning of the term in this passage (Greek *nēpios*) is broader, including children, inexperienced youths, vulnerable persons, and unaccountable individuals. A sense of innocence underlies all.⁴⁷

even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight: The English phrasing creates difficulties for a reader. A clearer translation might be: “Indeed, Father, for such was pleasing to you.” The phrase “in thy sight” can be rendered “before thee,” that is, a reference to what is done is done in God’s presence, and with his approval.⁴⁸

10:22 *All things are delivered to me of my Father:* The strong language of commissioning and ordination points to a divine act wherein Jesus receives full authority from his Father, a common theme in scripture (see 4:43; John 3:35; 17:2, 7, 18; D&C 93:4; and the Notes on 3:2 and 4:18).⁴⁹ The gifts from the Father must also include knowledge and glory (see John 17:7–8, 22, 24; D&C 93:16–17).⁵⁰

45. TDNT, 3:969–75.

46. Also Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:873.

47. TDNT, 4:912–23.

48. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:864, 873–74.

49. TDNT, 2:171, 348; 5:452–53, 895; Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 9; Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 2:132–33; Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 246 (“receiving the fulness of the priesthood”); JST Luke 9:25 (“whom God hath ordained”); John 17:2, 7, 18; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom. 1:4; Heb. 1:2, 9 (quoting Ps. 45:7); 3:2; 5:10 (compare 7:21; 8:3); 1 Pet. 1:2, 20; Ether 3:14; D&C 93:17; *Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions* 1.45.5; compare also 1 Cor. 2:6–7.

50. Marshall, *Luke*, 436.

no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father: This John-like language mirrors expressions found in the fourth Gospel (see John 6:46; 8:19; 10:15; 14:9). Other such language occurs in 9:48 (“whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me”) and 10:16 (“he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me”). Here, the expression sets off the Son as unknowable, perhaps in the sense that no mortal can know him completely and thereafter “remain in the flesh on the earth” (Moses 1:5). The Joseph Smith Translation, on the other hand, renders the expression radically different: “no man knoweth that the Son is the Father” (JST 10:23). The change takes the meaning in a completely different direction, identifying the Son as the Father, but not in the sense that the Son is identical with his father. For the opening of the verse remains the same and clarifies this point: “All things are delivered to me of my Father.” Rather, from the context of this commissioning by his Father, the sense probably has to do with Jesus as the Father by divine investiture of authority.⁵¹

he to whom the Son will reveal him: The verb translated “will” (Greek *boulomai*) means “to desire” or “to intend,” placing the decision to reveal in the hands of the Son who, of course, does the will of the Father.⁵² Plainly, the Son alone offers access to the Father and, in light of the Joseph Smith Translation’s changes to this verse, the Son alone reveals the nature of his relationship to his Father (see John 14:6–7, 9).⁵³

10:23 *he turned:* By his body language, Jesus conveys that his words are only for his disciples’ edification (see 8:10; the Note on 10:21). Such notations about Jesus’ movements bespeak an eyewitness memory (see 9:55; 14:25; 18:40; 22:61; 23:28; John 8:6–8; the Notes on 7:9 and 7:44).

his disciples, and said privately: The group of disciples must include the Seventy because his previous saying arises “In that hour,” just after their report to him (10:21). As he does with the Twelve, who are likely present, he now reveals privately a truth that is not available to others (see 8:9–10). Jesus thus shows his high trust of these followers in disclosing to them what he does not disclose to others.

51. “The Father and the Son: A Doctrinal Exposition by the First Presidency and the Twelve,” in *EM*, 4:1675–77.

52. BAGD, 145–46; *TDNT*, 1:632–33.

53. *TDNT*, 2:348–49; McConkie, *DNTC*, 1:467; Monte S. Nyman, “Abinadi’s Commentary on Isaiah,” in Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr., eds., *The Book of Mormon: Mosiah, Salvation Only through Christ* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1991), 164–71.

the eyes which see: Within this beatitude lies the heart of what Jesus is discussing: the revelation of “who the Son is . . . and who the Father is” (10:22). In Jesus’ parlance, the disciples are the “babes” to whom hidden things are “revealed” (10:21). In a word, their eyes see.

10:24 *many prophets and kings have desired to see:* Jesus affirms that knowledge of his ministry has been available anciently in enough detail that those who have known of it, including prophets and kings, his authorized representatives of ages past, have pined to be present when he is on the earth so that they could see and hear him. Some prophets, of course, foresee and hear parts of Jesus’ ministry, such as Lehi and Nephi (see 1 Ne. 10:4–11; 11:13–34; Jacob 4:4; 6:8; 7:11; Mosiah 13:33–35; 15:11; etc.; the Note on 18:31).

to see those things which ye see . . . and to hear those things which ye hear: These two senses, sight and hearing, form the basis of certain testimony, that is, knowledge of divine matters (see D&C 76:22–23). Only in special circumstances does a third sense, touch, augment this testimony and lift it to a higher level of certainty (see 1 John 1:1–3; 3 Ne. 11:14–15). Moreover, the experiences of the Twelve and other disciples will form a part of the eyewitness testimony that will come to underlie the Gospels (see 5:9; 8:56; 9:43; 20:26; the Notes on 4:14; 24:13).⁵⁴

Analysis

The persisting, brimming question, “Who is Jesus?” continues to seep its way through Luke’s record, calling up this overflowing query from chapter 9. This time, rather than tying to the Savior’s authority and to his eventual death, as in chapter 9, the issue bubbles up within his relationship to his Father, “no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father” (10:22), and within ancient expectations of his arrival, “prophets and kings have desired to see” (10:24).

But to some Jesus is hidden. Recalling the initial disclosures chronicled at the opening of the Gospel (see 1:31–33, 42–43), readers learn again that grasping Jesus’ true character rests on revelation, not on a chance meeting; that understanding “who the Son is” arises from a gracious act of the Father in uncovering his Son, not in curiously observing him. However, coming to know him does not simply consist of an unlooked for bolt of realization from the Father. Jesus is addressing his most trusted and experienced

54. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 93–132, 146–49, 313–14.

followers. They have been traveling with him for months; they have shown a high level of loyalty; and they have displayed a keen desire to be with him and to imitate him. Plainly, it is a combination of their unflinching loyalty, unfurled over a length of time, and the disclosure of the Father that brings them to comprehend who he truly is.

The Joseph Smith Translation adds illuminating adjustments in 10:22, adjustments that introduce profound doctrine. The opening of the verse remains the same and presents Jesus' commissioning by his Father: "All things are delivered to me of my Father." Hence, the changes that follow these words are likely to be understood in the sense of Jesus as the Father by a divine investiture of authority: "no man knoweth that the Son is the Father, and the Father is the Son" (JST 10:23). A person might initially think of Jesus as the Father in his role as creator or as the Father of those who accept and abide in his gospel (see 12:8–9; the Notes on 9:48; 10:16, 21–22). But the context requires a concept that takes account of the Father's formal authorization of the Son. And no one knows this aspect of Jesus' nature. "There are depths in the being of our Lord that his followers cannot plumb."⁵⁵ The Son alone can reveal such depths.

The similarities to the language found in John's Gospel, particularly in Luke 10:21–22, are remarkable. These verses have drawn the description of "a meteorite fallen from the Johannine sky" and of "a Johannine thunderbolt."⁵⁶ Other sayings in Luke's record also hint at such a connection (see 10:16; 12:8–9). How is one to explain this phenomenon? One possibility is to see it as "a form of [Jesus'] saying which was more at home in the developing Johannine tradition which has affected" somehow the Synoptic tradition;⁵⁷ another understands it as deriving from a Jewish background as manifested in the Dead Sea Scrolls;⁵⁸ a third, that does not strain hard to identify a particular origin, holds "that the style in John is not as alien from the Synoptists as some have maintained," essentially ascribing the sayings to an early common body of memories about Jesus and his teachings.⁵⁹

The Savior's words embrace an affirmation of prophecy's forward-looking powers, specifically prophecy that has long anticipated his arrival. He

55. Morris, *Luke*, 204.

56. The first is quoted from K. A. von Hase in Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:866; Stein, *Luke*, 313.

57. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:866.

58. Marshall, *Luke*, 432; cf. Bultmann, *History*, 159–60.

59. Morris, *Luke*, 203.

first sets the stage by declaring to his disciples: “Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see.” Obviously, his followers do not yet fully comprehend the majesty and significance of what they are witnessing in his company. And he wants to bring them to that higher, broader understanding. He does so by drawing their minds to past individuals who have learned by prophecy about his coming: “I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see.” But mere seeing does not gather all that Jesus is; hearing also draws in his words and allows a hearer to register and hold in memory the divine voice: “and to hear those things which ye hear” (10:23–24). Now his second point emerges, about discerning the content of prophecy. Jesus’ saying underscores his grasp not only that much of ancient prophecy is pointed at him but also that the ancients themselves grasp that he is the object of this prophecy.

Within these verses, when linked to the prior verses about the return of the Seventy (see 10:17–20), stand two central ingredients of Luke’s report. First, the Savior’s kingdom is one of joy. Though the Greek terms in these verses that express this joy are not identical, they nonetheless convey this happy quality: the Seventy return “with joy” and Jesus reminds them that they should “rejoice” that their “names are written in heaven.” In light of their success, and their joy, Jesus himself “rejoiced” (10:17, 20–21). In contrast, “Satan as lightning [falls] from heaven” (10:18). His kingdom, filled with unclean demons and spirits, now suffers a crippling blow. Second, all is accomplished “in the Holy Spirit” (see the Note on 10:21), recalling and verifying both the vivifying influence of the Holy Ghost that descends on Jesus at his baptism (see 3:22) and the empowering “Spirit of the Lord” which, as Jesus announces in the Nazareth Synagogue, has “anointed [him] to preach the gospel to the poor” (4:18). Both Jesus and his followers, as demonstrated by recent events, bear the needed authority to carry the message of joy and the power of the Spirit into the lives of others, as the book of Acts will soon chronicle.⁶⁰

60. Green, *Luke*, 420–22.

**LOVING ONE'S NEIGHBOR:
PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN
(10:25–37)**

(Compare Matt. 22:34–40; Mark 12:28–34)

King James Translation

25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? 27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. 28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? 30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, 34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and

New Rendition

25 And behold, a certain lawyer rose up to test him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 And he said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read?” 27 And answering he said, “You shall love the lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” 28 And he said to him, “You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live.”

29 But wanting to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” 30 Jesus replying said, “A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers, who both stripped him and wounded him and went away, leaving him half-dead. 31 And by chance a certain priest was going down that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 And likewise a Levite also came to the place and, when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

33 “But a certain Samaritan who was traveling came upon him, and when he saw him, he had pity on him. 34 Coming up to him, he bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. And after placing him on his own animal, he brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And the next day he took out and gave two denarii to the innkeeper and said, ‘Take care of him, and whatever

gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? 37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

you spend in addition, I will repay you when I return.'

36 "Which of these three seems to you to be a neighbor to the one who fell to the robbers?" 37 And he said, "The one who showed mercy to him." And Jesus said to him, "Go, and you do likewise."

Notes

10:25 a certain lawyer: It is not at all clear how this man fits into the prior scene of Jesus' private discussion with his many disciples. On one hand, Luke may be drawing from a different cycle of stories and places this story here because of the lawyer's concern with the "eternal life" that one finds in Jesus' kingdom. On another, the story may be tied to the following account that most likely occurs in Bethany, far to the south (see 10:38–42; the Notes on 10:30, 38). On a third, the man may be temporarily traveling among the disciples and his attendance shows that the boundary between disciples and curious onlookers is not always perceptible, or observed. We should think of this lawyer (Greek *nomikos*) as one of the scribes who specializes in learning and interpreting the Mosaic law (see the Note on 7:30).⁶¹

stood up: This act may point to the man's respect for the Savior, whether grudgingly given or not. The detail assumes that the others with him are sitting.

tempted him: The sense of the verb (Greek *ekpeirazō*) is that the lawyer is testing Jesus, but not with sinister intent, although the word can bear this meaning. He seems simply to be testing whether Jesus, a recognized teacher, will give the right answer to an important question.⁶²

Master: The meaning of the term (Greek *didaskalos*) is teacher, a term commonly applied to Jesus (see 8:49; 9:38; 11:45; etc.) and to others (see 2:46; 3:12; Acts 13:1; the Note on 7:40).⁶³

inherit eternal life: The concept of the verb (Greek *klēronomeō*) has to do initially with the casting of lots and then with the land that one obtains by

61. *TDNT*, 4:1088; Schürer, *History*, 2:324–25; Green, *Luke*, 425, 427, n. 101; Brown and Holzapfel, *Lost 500 Years*, 119.

62. BAGD, 243; Plummer, *Luke*, 284.

63. BAGD, 190–91.

lot. Because land ownership passes from parent to child, such land becomes the child's inheritance. At base, this inheritance is palpable and real, not ethereal.⁶⁴ Thus inheriting eternal life—a common saying (see 18:18; Matt. 19:29; Mark 10:17; cf. 1 Cor. 6:9–10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; D&C 50:5)—means becoming a rightful heir of a special quality of life, even God's life (see Heb. 1:4, 14; 6:12; Rev. 21:7; D&C 132:19; the Notes on 20:38 and 24:5),⁶⁵ including inheriting land on the earth (see D&C 45:58; 63:20; 88:17, 26).

10:26 *written*: This verb form (Greek *gegraptai*) regularly points to scripture, including recently dictated scripture (see D&C 84:57), and frequently introduces a quotation from a scriptural text.⁶⁶ It establishes that God's word is available in written form and, in some instances, stands in some tension with the oral and spontaneous character of continuing revelation (see the Note on 3:4).

***the law*:** From Jesus' later comment, this term has to do with the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses (see the Note on 24:44).

10:27 *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*: This commandment appears in Deuteronomy 6:5. Its significance there finds reinforcement in the concrete language that surrounds this directive: "these words . . . shall be in thine heart . . . thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children . . . thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house" (Deut. 6:6–7, 9).

***with all thy heart*:** This phrase stands in the Hebrew text of Deuteronomy 6:5 but not in the Greek translation, indicating that Luke does not seek to harmonize such quotations with the Septuagint.⁶⁷ Instead, he unfolds the story by preserving the clear connections in the man's words to the Hebrew version of the passage that he knows. The accounts that preserve the quotation of Deuteronomy 6:5 in Matthew and Mark differ significantly from Luke's, including the context wherein they appear (see Matt. 22:34–40; Mark 12:28–34). On another level, the lawyer's quotation of Deuteronomy 6:5 shows an insightful grasp that God requires a person's complete love.

***with all thy mind*:** This phrase does not appear in the Hebrew text of Deuteronomy 6:5, but it does occur in the Greek version. Evidently, such phrases, because of their heart-felt meaning in people's expressions of devotion, become common and are thus attributed to the original source of the quotation.

64. TDNT, 3:758–59, 780–81.

65. TDNT, 2:863–66.

66. BAGD, 165–66; TDNT, 1:747–48.

67. Marshall, *Luke*, 443, for a different view.

thy neighbor as thyself: God unfolds this injunction in Leviticus 19:18. Thus, the lawyer skillfully brings together important commandments from different parts of the law. But his understanding of who a neighbor is includes only fellow Jews, not foreigners, and certainly not Samaritans.⁶⁸

10:28 *Thou hast answered right:* Jesus' approval of such love remains as a strong tenet among his followers as mirrored in the epistles of Paul and James (see Rom. 13:9; Gal. 5:14; James 2:8).

thou shalt live: Jesus now brings the man back to his question about living eternally (see 10:25). Jesus here draws attention to more than mortal living.⁶⁹

10:29 *willing to justify himself:* In the exchange with Jesus, which starts innocently enough (see the Note on 10:25), the lawyer now decides to press aggressively one of the issues that lies in the scriptural quotation from Leviticus 19:18 about loving one's neighbor. Luke's note is clearly condemnatory. The verb (Greek *dikaioō*) often bears the meaning that God judges us to be upright, even when we are not (see the Notes on 7:29, 35; 18:14).⁷⁰ Here the lawyer seeks to show himself to be upright in his own eyes (see 16:15).

who is my neighbour?: This question is one for the ages because it focuses our minds on a correct understanding of "others" in our lives. In responding, Jesus will raise up a Samaritan, the most despised of people in the eyes of contemporary Jews, as the true hero in the story.

10:30 *Jesus answering:* Plainly, Jesus does some thinking about this issue beforehand and holds a ready answer in his mind. The verb (Greek *hypolambanō*) means to "take up"; here it means to take up a subject, and appears only here in this sense in the New Testament. In 7:43, the word carries the meaning "to suppose."⁷¹

A certain man: Part of the surprise of the story, and therefore its interest, grows out of this man and the others traveling alone on a dangerous road, acts that stand against the custom of traveling with others (see the Notes on 1:39 and 2:44). If we read this parable as an allegory, then the man represents Adam or any one of us.⁷²

went down: A departure from Jerusalem is always downward, just as traveling to Jerusalem takes a person upward (see 19:28 and the Note on

68. Jeremias, *Parables*, 202–3; Marshall, *Luke*, 444; Johnson, *Luke*, 172–73.

69. *TDNT*, 2:861–66.

70. *TDNT*, 2:211–12, 215; *TLNT*, 1:340.

71. BAGD, 853; Marshall, *Luke*, 447; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:886.

72. John W. Welch, "The Parable of the Good Samaritan as a Type and Shadow of the Plan of Salvation," *BYU Studies* 38, no. 2 (1999): 53–55, 73.

2:4). Allegorically, the man is descending from the heavenly world to the earthly.⁷³

from Jerusalem to Jericho: The Roman road from Jerusalem runs down through Wadi Qelt and brings travelers to the mouth of this canyon at New Testament Jericho whose ruins lie about a mile southwest of the modern town. If Jesus recites this story in the north of the country, it is reasonable to assume that virtually all in his audience know this road because they have walked it previously when visiting the capital city. But if the parable is somehow tied to the following account of Martha and Mary who reside in Bethany, not far from Jerusalem (see 10:38–42; John 11:1, 18; the Notes on 10:25, 38), then the story becomes more vivid and relevant because Jesus and his audience are not far from the place of the attack on the victim. Importantly, such a possibility points to multiple visits by Jesus to the capital city during his ministry (see the Notes on 10:38; 13:1, 34; 19:47; 22:9; 23:5, 28, 50; and 24:13).⁷⁴ If we read the parable as an allegory, Jerusalem becomes heaven and Jericho represents the world.⁷⁵

thieves: The word (Greek *lēstēs*) points to those who commit violent crimes, such as robbers and bandits, rather than petty crimes (see the Notes on 19:46 and 22:52). It can also mean “revolutionary” or “insurrectionist,” as in John 18:40.⁷⁶ In an allegorical view, the thieves can represent any number of difficulties that arise in our lives, whether spiritual or physical.⁷⁷

stripped him of his raiment: Clothing has value (see 22:36). And removing it is a means of shaming an individual (see the Notes on 6:29 and 23:34; Lev. 18:6–19; Isa. 47:1–5; Ezek. 16:36–37; Rev. 3:18). The same verb “to strip” (Greek *ekduō*) appears in the scene of the robing of Jesus in purple (see Matt. 27:28, 31; Mark 15:20).⁷⁸ The man’s appearance, stripped and severely wounded, may give the look of death and thus lead to the inaction of the first passersby.

10:31 there came down a certain priest: The priest is evidently returning to his home, likely in Jericho where homes of priests are identified,

73. Welch, “Parable of the Good Samaritan as a Type,” 74.

74. Plummer, *Luke*, 290: “from a short visit to Jerusalem which Lk. does not mention”; on 23:5, Plummer writes: “it may also refer to previous visits of Jesus to the city” (*Luke*, 521).

75. Welch, “Parable of the Good Samaritan as a Type,” 74–75.

76. BAGD, 474; *TDNT*, 4:257–62; Josephus, *B.J.* 2.12.2 (§§228–230).

77. Welch, “Parable of the Good Samaritan as a Type,” 75–76.

78. BAGD, 238; Plummer, *Luke*, 286–87.

following his semi-annual week of duties at the temple (see the Note on 1:8).⁷⁹ By featuring a priest in the story, Jesus ties the manifest indifference to the most noble and influential class in Jewish society. When viewed as allegory, the priest stands for the law of Moses or any of its representatives.⁸⁰

10:32 *came and looked*: The Levite is at least curious enough to examine, from a pace or two away, the injured man. But he refuses to touch him, possibly from fear of becoming ritually unclean by touching the dead. If the Levite detects life in the man, he is the more condemned for his inaction.

***on the other side*:** At this point in the parable, the Joseph Smith Translation imputes ill motives to the priest and Levite. First, it expands this phrase to, “on the other side of the way” or path, then augments the whole expression by inserting, “for they [the priest and Levite] desired in their hearts that it might not be known that they had seen him” (JST 10:33). Clearly, Jesus uncovers their inner motives although they are unseen.

10:33 *a certain Samaritan*: Jesus’ intent to make a Samaritan the hero of his story harmonizes with his interest in Gentiles that the account of the Seventy raises to view (see 10:1–17). Significantly, Jesus does not allow the boorish actions of a few Samaritans to change his positive view of them (see 9:52–56; 17:11–19; Acts 1:8). In an allegorical interpretation, the despised, compassionate Samaritan is Jesus himself.⁸¹

***had compassion*:** This characteristic, missing in the other two passersby, spurs the man to action, no matter the cost or consequence for himself. The verb (Greek *splanchnizomai*) undergirds Jesus’ raising of the widow’s only son (see 7:13), his feeding of the five thousand, though the verb does not appear in Luke’s story (see Matt. 14:14; Mark 6:34), and the father’s actions in Jesus’ parable of the prodigal son (see 15:20). Such compassion underlies the actions of the Messiah, for it is more than mere emotion (see Matt. 9:36; 20:34).⁸²

10:34 *oil and wine*: Olive oil, of course, possesses the property of keeping the tissue of a wound soft so that it heals more rapidly. Wine, with its alcohol content, acts as a mild disinfectant. Hence, the Samaritan exhibits basic first-aid skills when he applies to the victim’s wounds foodstuff that he is carrying. If we see these details through allegory, the oil becomes the

79. Ehud Netzer, “The Winter Palaces of the Judean Kings at Jericho at the End of the Second Temple Period,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 228 (December 1977): 1–13, esp. 6, 12, and the photographs of ritual baths on 4–6.

80. Welch, “Parable of the Good Samaritan as a Type,” 77–78.

81. Welch, “Parable of the Good Samaritan as a Type,” 79–81.

82. BAGD, 770; *TDNT*, 7:553–55.

consecrated oil of healing and sacred ordinances and the wine stands for the redeeming blood of Christ.⁸³

an inn: The word (Greek *pandocheion*) is not the same as the term translated “inn” at 2:7 (Greek *katalyma*; see the Note on 2:7). The location of the inn remains unknown, though it may stand in Jericho; the detail that the priest is going down toward Jericho (see 10:31) implies that both the Levite and Samaritan are traveling the same direction. Read allegorically, the inn represents the church and its safety against the ills of society.⁸⁴

took care of him: Jesus clearly underscores that the Samaritan generously spends his time and energies in nursing the victim for as long as he can.

10:35 on the morrow: Jesus implies that the critical moment for the injured man passes and that the Samaritan can leave him with a clear hope of his recovery.

two pence: The Roman coin is a denarius. One denarius, the typical payment for one day’s work, though the amount varies and may be less in Palestine, will pay for about twelve days’ care in that era (see the Notes on 7:41; 12:6; 20:24).⁸⁵

when I come again: Plainly, the Samaritan is a regular customer at the inn so that the innkeeper trusts his promise. The expression brims with a sense of continuity and credible relationships. Beyond these meanings, in allegory the reference has to do with the Second Coming of the Savior and the innkeeper’s trust that he will receive repayment or even reward for his care of the afflicted person.⁸⁶

10:36 of these three: This phrase shows that Jesus wants to keep part of the story’s focus on the two officials and their negative example. That example serves as a graphic contrast to the efforts of the Samaritan.

neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves: By asking the question with this definition of the term *neighbor*, Jesus expands the meaning far beyond merely those who reside close to a person’s home or who form one’s circle of acquaintances. In effect, the expression defines Jesus’ view of “neighbor.”

10:37 He that shewed mercy: The lawyer seems not to want to say that the person who shows mercy in Jesus’ story is a Samaritan whom Jews of the day deeply despise. It is as if he is unable to utter the word *Samaritan*.

83. Welch, “Parable of the Good Samaritan as a Type,” 82.

84. Welch, “Parable of the Good Samaritan as a Type,” 83.

85. BAGD, 178; Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 111; Daniel Sperber, “Palestinian Currency Systems during the Second Commonwealth,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 56 (1965–66): 273–301; Morris, *Luke*, 208; John W. Betlyon, “Coinage,” in *ABD*, 1:1086–87.

86. Welch, “Parable of the Good Samaritan as a Type,” 85.

Analysis

Among the most beloved of the Savior's parables and appearing only in Luke's Gospel, here Jesus emphasizes vividly the acts of reaching out to others, no matter their circumstance or origin. This parable underscores the essential meaning of his earlier outreach to Gentiles through the Seventy. The inclusive quality of Jesus' words marks a strong response to any exclusivity, whether perceived or real, and especially to that exclusivity which anchors itself in the hearts and minds of fellow Jews. Setting up a Samaritan as the hero, the most despised of humans in the minds of many contemporaries, sets off Jesus' viewpoint even more sharply. In an earsplitting saying, "all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile" (2 Ne. 26:33).

At risk is anyone who holds a demeaning view of another as somehow worthless. In this light, it may be historically and culturally significant that the lawyer does not object to Jesus' caricature of the priest and Levite in this story. It seems, therefore, that such persons carry an unfortunate reputation of not assisting ordinary people in their difficulties. And here lies one point where surface rubs surface. Although hearers might think of those of elevated rank in such stereotypes, and Jesus' words seemingly capture this sense, their attention is drawn first to the violence, the hurt that the traveler suffers,⁸⁷ and next to the Samaritan's compassionate response. These aspects, more than others, leap into the consciousness of hearers. For they all know stories of those injured either by people of ill will—robbers in this case—or by an accident. They also know stories of how aid comes to the injured parties. Jesus' account is fully believable and real, and may well rest on an actual event.⁸⁸ In his telling, of course, the point of aiding others, no matter their appearance and no matter the cost, memorably defines true love. And, in the parable, this love knows no boundaries, and labels no one as worthless.

As we might expect, the motives of the priest and Levite have drawn much comment, though this concern lies at the side of the parable's potent meaning. Prominent among possible motives, besides their need to hurry or the fear of attack by highwaymen (see the Note on 10:30),⁸⁹ stands the matter of ritual purity, that is, whether touching a dead person renders an individual, particularly one who serves in the holy temple, unclean and

87. Morris, *Luke*, 207.

88. Plummer, *Luke*, 285–86; Jeremias, *Parables*, 203.

89. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 431.

therefore unfit to serve for a season. The possibility is real. For the Mosaic law forbids priests from such profaning acts, except if the dead person is a close family member (see Lev. 21:1–4). The situation with the Levite is more complex. No such prohibition faces this person. Instead, if remaining ritually pure plays a role in his behavior, he is therefore likely on his way to the city for temple duty or is one of the Levites permanently assigned to service in the temple.⁹⁰ But even though we can think of reasons for the two men to avoid a difficult situation because of their roles in the religious life of their people, Jesus' story heaps hot coals on their behavior because they do not respond to a person's need. And the addition by the JST—"they desired in their hearts that it might not be known that they had seen him"—adds more heat because it exposes their inner motives, effectively asking us as readers to examine our own motives when we step away from helping others in need.

Although both the introduction to the parable, that lies within the exchange between Jesus and the lawyer (see 10:25–29), and the parable itself are inextricably intertwined, the conversation between Jesus and the lawyer carries its own importance. For it draws needed attention to the double command to love, first God and then one's neighbor. Because this double command arises in different contexts in the other synoptic Gospels (see Matt. 22:34–40; Mark 12:28–34), it is tempting to see the origins of the accounts as the same, with variants arising from the interests of the Gospel writers.⁹¹ But such a view needlessly complicates the picture. Jesus often repeats himself, as other superb teachers do.⁹² To limit him to voicing an important principle once during his three-year ministry smacks of a shortened view about his teachings and where and on what occasions he declares them. Instead, a reader comes away from the Gospels with a clear sense that Jesus frames and then reframes the essences of his message in an almost endless variation of approaches.

These observations are buttresses all the more if we read the parable as an allegory. Although some scholars flatly reject this approach,⁹³ John W. Welch has made a compelling case that not only do early Church writers view the parable this way but also Jesus speaks the parable as an allegory of the plan of salvation, beginning with Adam descending into the risky

90. Jeremias, *Parables*, 203–4; Marshall, *Luke*, 448.

91. Bultmann, *History*, 22–23; Beare, *Earliest Records of Jesus*, 158–59.

92. Plummer, *Luke*, 437; *TDNT*, 2:631, n. 29; 4:326; Jeremias, *Parables*, 202; Marshall, *Luke*, 701; Morris, *Luke*, 245–46, 299; Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 286.

93. Morris, *Luke*, 208–9; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:883, 885; Stein, *Luke*, 318–19.

world and ending with the compassionate Savior as the one who carries us to safety. Allegory, of course, demands that each detail bears a specific meaning that matches the overall thrust of the story. And Welch ably demonstrates that this is the case.⁹⁴ Hence, the parable carries force on two levels: the first consists of the world that Jesus and his followers inhabit, the second is made up of the outlines of the plan of salvation.

LOVING GOD: MARTHA AND MARY (10:38–42)

King James Translation

38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. 41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: 42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

New Rendition

38 And while they were traveling, he entered a certain village. And a woman by the name of Martha received him. 39 And she had a sister called Mary who, after she sat at the Lord's feet, listened to his word.

40 But Martha was overburdened with a lot of preparation. And standing nearby, she said, "Does it not concern you that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her, then, to help me." 41 And answering, the Lord said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed. For Mary has chosen the good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Notes

10:38 *it came to pass*: The earliest manuscripts (P⁴⁵, P⁷⁵) and others omit this expression.

***he entered into a certain village*:** The Joseph Smith Translation, in keeping with the sense that Jesus is traveling with a large entourage of disciples, changes the first words to "*they* entered" (JST 10:39). Luke does not specify which village the group comes to, but leaves readers with the

94. Welch, "Parable of the Good Samaritan as a Type," 52–87.

impression that it lies on Jesus' extended yet intended pathway to Jerusalem (see the Notes on 9:51; 14:25; 17:11; 18:35; 19:28; the Note below).

Martha: The name means “mistress” and derives from the Aramaic *mārê*, “lord.”⁹⁵ In this story, her name bears no symbolic significance.

Martha received him into her house: The earliest manuscripts, \mathfrak{P}^{45} and \mathfrak{P}^{75} , omit the phrase “into her house,” although many early texts preserve the expression.⁹⁶ Of the traveling party, Martha evidently invites only the Savior in, creating an unusual circumstance with one man and two women in the home, none of whom are married to one another.⁹⁷ Even so, her act contrasts with the rejection that he experiences elsewhere on his journey (see 9:52–53). From the Joseph Smith Translation, a reader learns that Martha owns her own home, a not uncommon practice among women of Palestine,⁹⁸ which agrees with the expanded version of Luke’s statement, “into her house” (JST 10:39; see JST John 11:2, 17). But the location of her home presents a problem. From John’s Gospel, we know that Martha and Mary reside in Bethany, less than three miles from Jerusalem (see John 11:1; 12:1–3). However, Luke seemingly situates this story far from the capital city, as part of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem (see 9:51) and certainly beyond Jericho (see 18:35; 19:1). Hence, this account seems out of place. It is possible that (1) the two sisters are related to persons in this village who allow them to entertain an important guest in their home; or (2) Martha has married someone who lives away from Bethany and therefore she now makes her home where she hosts Jesus; or (3) although the event occurs in Bethany, Luke places the story here as a link back to the parable of the Good Samaritan and an introduction to the accounts in chapter 11 (see the Analysis below). This last option is far more probable. Hence, the story stands as evidence that Jesus and his followers visit Jerusalem and its environs more than once, the time that he comes to suffer and die. This likelihood receives a subtle boost from the observation that the previous parable of the Good

95. Marshall, *Luke*, 451; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 893; Raymond F. Collins, “Martha,” in *ABD*, 4:573.

96. Marshall, *Luke*, 451–52; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:893.

97. Collins, “Martha,” 5:573.

98. For women in Palestine, see Naphtali Lewis, ed., *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1989), 3–24. In Egypt, up to one-third of landowners may have been women—most subject to taxation—during the first century AD, a situation that the Roman government facilitated; Jane Rowlandson, ed., *Woman and Society in Greek and Roman Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 218–45.

Samaritan fits more naturally into a Judean setting rather than a northern setting (see the Notes on 10:30; 13:34; 19:47; 22:9; 23:5, 28, 50; and 24:13).⁹⁹

10:39 *she had a sister called Mary:* The two women are known as sisters and as residents of Bethany in Judea (see John 11:1). This Mary is not Mary Magdalene who resides in Magdala of Galilee (see the Note on 8:2).

sat at Jesus' feet: The posture is that of an eager disciple or pupil (see 8:35; 17:16; Acts 22:3).¹⁰⁰ An alternate, perhaps better reading in some early manuscripts is “sat at the Lord’s feet.”

sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word: Here lies the crux of the story. Unlike her sister, who busies herself in preparing an inviting meal for the guest of honor (see 10:40), Mary chooses to spend her time learning from and interacting with Jesus. Luke justifies this unusual position for a woman by quoting Martha’s title “Lord” for Jesus (see 10:40; the Note on 10:41) and by underlining Jesus’ magisterial role in the words “one thing is needful . . . which shall not be taken away from [Mary]” (10:42).¹⁰¹

10:40 *Martha was cumbered about much serving:* The verb (Greek *perispaō*) means “to draw off” or “to divert,” coming to mean “to distract.” Because the form of the verb is the imperfect passive, it carries the sense “kept being distracted,” as if Martha seeks to be a part of the conversation but is continually drawn back to prepare the meal.¹⁰²

Lord, dost thou not care: The title applied to Jesus (Greek *kyrios*) appears elsewhere in Luke’s narrative and ties to the title for Jehovah (see the Notes on 5:8; 10:1).¹⁰³ Its appearance here confers on what follows in the rest of the Gospel a clear sense that Jesus is Lord and that his teaching is celestially paramount.¹⁰⁴ Embedded in Martha’s words lies a mild yet bold critique of Jesus—“do you not see how burdened I am?” Her appraisal may reflect the view in her society that women generally do not enjoy privileges of education and sets up his response in the next verse.¹⁰⁵

99. Plummer, *Luke*, 290: “from a short visit to Jerusalem which Lk. does not mention”; Collins, “Martha,” 4:573.

100. *TDNT*, 6:630; Walter L. Liefeld and Ruth A. Tucker, *Daughters of the Church: Woman and Ministry from New Testament Times to the Present* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Academie Books, 1987), 26–27.

101. Green, *Luke*, 434.

102. Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, 1386; BAGD, 656; Blass and Debrunner, *Greek Grammar*, §327.

103. *TLNT*, 2:341–52.

104. Green, *Luke*, 434.

105. Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 373; Marshall, *Luke*, 452.

to serve: The verb (Greek *diakoneō*) ties this scene with Luke’s notice of the Galilean women who minister to Jesus and his other disciples (see 8:2–3; the Note on 8:3). The verb’s primary meaning is to serve at table, but also can mean to take charge of a meal.¹⁰⁶

alone: Plainly, Martha and Mary are not in an economic class that allows them to hire help in the home.

10:41 *Jesus answered:* The earliest manuscripts, \mathfrak{P}^{45} and \mathfrak{P}^{75} , both from the early third century, and \mathfrak{P}^3 that dates to the sixth century and is held in Vienna, all read “the Lord answered.” This becomes important for Luke’s evident purpose to draw divine approval onto the woman Mary as a disciple by repeating “Lord” three times in these verses (see the Notes on verses 39 and 40).

Martha, Martha: Jesus’ repetition of Martha’s name underscores his compassionate tone in replying to her. He does not bark at her for her critical words. Rather, he is gently bringing her to understand what it means to learn from him.

thou art careful and troubled about many things: In the manuscripts, this expression is worded in no fewer than six different ways, from the shortened “thou art distracted” to “thou art troubled about much.”¹⁰⁷ The verb translated “to be careful” (Greek *merimnaō*) carries an entirely different modern meaning from the King James translation, “to be anxious,” and “implies division and distraction of mind.” A reader suspects that Jesus may also be tagging his words with spiritual meaning, effectively saying that believers need not experience such divisions of mind.¹⁰⁸

10:42 *one thing is needful:* We must, it seems, understand Jesus’ words to Martha in a celestial vein, for they embrace a dismissal of the worldly, earthly set of needs that each person faces. Rather, he focuses on that which endures eternally.

Mary hath chosen that good part: Because Jesus regularly speaks in heavenly terms, even in conversation, it seems wise to think that he means his remark in the ultimate sense rather than in the transitory, this-worldly sense. On this view, the point of the story stands on a contrast: that choosing association with Jesus is ultimately more important than becoming caught up in the daily cares and chores of this world. While this understanding may seem trite, the story is a significant illustration of this point,

106. *TDNT*, 2:84–93.

107. Marshall, *Luke*, 452–53.

108. Plummer, *Luke*, 291; *BAGD*, 506.

even quoting Jesus' guiding words about this matter. Moreover, Martha is evidently seeing Jesus for the first time in a new light, different from her associations with him in the past, just as those in the Nazareth synagogue see him anew (see the Note on 4:22).

Analysis

This story about Martha and Mary, found only in Luke's Gospel, stands as an important counterpoint to the parable of the Good Samaritan. Why? Because the parable illustrates what it means to love one's neighbor and the account of Mary and Martha demonstrates what it means to love the Lord. For woven into the story of the sisters with the Savior are threads of warmth and love and open friendship. Martha's love leads her to prepare a special meal as a gift. Mary's love brings her to break convention and sit at Jesus' feet as a disciple. Moreover, both the parable and the story are geographically out of place, and therefore they are out of place chronologically. But they fit together because each illustrates the grand principle of loving and each is tied to the south of the country, near Jerusalem.

The report of the sisters' interaction with Jesus has proven to be one of the most enduring accounts from the Savior's ministry both because it involves him interacting with women and because out of the account rises another of the grand principles that he teaches: direct association with him is more important than anything we might do in his name or for his cause. Further, that association, though natural and gracious in its character, as the setting in Martha's home underscores, rests on a relationship with Jesus that implicitly is long-standing, as their warm friendship illustrates, and thus becomes enriched with mutual trust and openness. Lying just out of sight, but very much tied to trust and openness, stands a relationship that is erected on personal bonds or covenants, as John 15:14 illustrates: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." For, as a quick review will exhibit, the Savior's denomination of certain persons as "friends" grows out of long-standing, covenant-based relationships (see 12:4; John 15:13–15; D&C 84:63, 77; 88:3, 133; 93:45).

Part of this story's persisting appeal centers on the tension over a woman's typical role in antiquity, that of being the nurturer in her home. Martha certainly fills that role. It is one that her culture requires of her.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, her meal constitutes her gift to the Savior; preparing the meal forms

109. Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 362–63, 369.

an adornment of her affection and loyalty to him. But Mary's presence adds complication to the scene, especially when she chooses to spend her time in Jesus' company before the meal is served. As the story makes clear, Martha's expectation, and the expectation of their society, is that her sister will join in the effort to create a memorable moment as they share a meal together, complete with inviting aromas and tasty dishes and convivial conversation. The tension that arises between the sisters points to a related situation that women—not men—typically experience. For a woman, a question presses itself on her each time she hosts a guest: Does she pay most of her attention to the meal so that it turns out as she intends or does she spend time with the invited guest in pre-dinner conversation? This aspect, we acknowledge, makes the story true to life and therefore one that catches in the memory, especially a woman's memory.

That women are interacting with a man might seem out of place for their society, even more so when one adopts the attitude of a disciple. But the decisive issue has to do with place. Especially among wealthier families, women normally remain out of sight as much as possible. And they resist association with men outside their families to the extent that they can.¹¹⁰ Perhaps unexpectedly, Luke's story rests entirely on an interaction between two sisters and a man who is apparently not of their family. The key turns on the observation that Martha hosts Jesus in "her house" (10:38). Within her home, much of her society's nervousness over the contact between the sexes relaxes. There, generally in the presence and with the permission of her husband, a woman can be herself in the company of guests, though not always. The fact that no husband of Martha appears in the account leads some to conclude, conjecturally, that she is by this time either widowed or divorced.¹¹¹ Whether or not this is so, the chief observation remains. Inside Martha's home, she and her sister can unwind restrictive custom in the presence of guests. The scene, as Luke narrates it, argues for the current reading "into her house" (10:38) although some important manuscripts omit this phrase (see JST John 11:2, 17).

One of the compelling questions has to do with the placement of this important story about Mary and Martha. At first glance, Luke appears to drop it into its context without much thought of what stands before it and what follows. To be sure, it serves as an illustration of how women offer support for Jesus, a feature of his ministry to which Luke draws earlier

110. Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 359–63.

111. B. S. Easton, cited in Marshall, *Luke*, 451.

attention (see 8:2–3). Moreover, the story’s minimizing of passing, workaday concerns in contrast with enduring, eternal connections finds similarities in Jesus’ later words about the transitory nature of human needs: “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat,” “life is more than meat,” “seek not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink,” “seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added” (12:22–31). But these observations do not satisfy the question, Why place this story here?

In response, the narrative about the sisters ties most comfortably and closely with the accounts that follow in chapter 11. Two fundamental elements in their story connect it with what comes next. First, the report features the importuning of Martha who asks Jesus’ help in encouraging Mary to assist with the meal. In this case, of course, Jesus answers that Mary seeks “that good part” (10:42). Thus, in one sense, it is a story about asking the Lord for help, that is, prayer, and about asking the Lord for the right kind of assistance. The stories that follow immediately all have to do with prayer or importuning in one form or another (see 11:1–13). Hence, the story of Martha and Mary connects directly with what follows. Not incidentally, the most important statement of Jesus in this latter context is: “heavenly Father [will] give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him” (11:13). It is also important to note that Martha does not receive the answer that she seeks, an aspect that often characterizes a person’s life of prayer.

Second, at the beginning of this story, Luke mentions “her [Martha’s] house” (10:38). Deeper into chapter 11, after Jesus’ words about praying, one finds a series of his sayings about houses: the “house divided against a house” (see 11:14–20), the strong man’s “palace” (see 11:21–23), the “swept and garnished” house (see 11:24–26), and the statement of praise about Jesus’ mother (see 11:27–28). Each of these sayings discloses something important about a person’s house or household, as does the story about Mary and Martha. Such a connection, not incidentally, argues for the longer reading “into her house” in 10:38. Importantly, because of rancor, Martha’s house is temporarily divided, like the divided house of Jesus’ later words (see 11:14–20), and its lack of orderliness saps its strength as a refuge from inappropriate influences, as the temporarily “swept and garnished” house that the “unclean spirit” at the last reclaims (see 11:24–26). Moreover, when one reads farther on, one can see these sorts of issues arising again, such as in the stories of the faithful and unfaithful domestic servants (see 12:35–40, 41–48), in Jesus’ words about divisions within households (see 12:51–53), and in his parable about the Prodigal Son (see 15:11–32).

Hence, the story of Martha and Mary forms an introduction of sorts to much else in the Gospel record.

But connections of a different sort may reach back to the prior parable of the Good Samaritan (see 10:25–37). How so? If, as seems most likely, Jesus is in Bethany when Martha hosts him in her home (see the Note on 10:38), then the possibility opens up that he recites the parable in or near that location. To be sure, he can recite this story in almost any locale because most in his audience will have walked the road between Jerusalem and Jericho. It is familiar to virtually everyone. However, the parable becomes more meaningful and relevant if Jesus and his hearers are in the neighborhood and he can point with his finger to the road, or at least in its general direction. In this light, the parable and the story of Martha and Mary become partners in subtly underscoring a prior visit by Jesus to Jerusalem with his disciples (see the Notes on 10:25, 30, 38; 13:34; 19:47; 22:9; 23:5, 28, 50; and 24:13).

One further comment about Martha is important. Luke's story leaves her in a dimmed light. But, according to another account, she appears to have taken Jesus' words seriously. To set the stage, when Jesus later approaches Bethany after the death of Martha's brother, Lazarus, it is Martha who hastens to meet him while he is still on the road. Mary remains in the house (see John 11:20). In one of the important revelatory scenes in the Gospel accounts, Jesus discloses himself to her, unveiling who he truly is: "I am the resurrection, and the life" (John 11:25). Here, in a few words meant only for her, Jesus uncovers one of the secrets of the ages, who he is. To his words she bears strong witness, revealing her grasp of his grand truth: "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God" (John 11:27). In a word, Martha now becomes the only person who both hears Jesus bear witness of himself and beholds his power when, moments later, she and others see Jesus' divine, death-defeating might as he raises Lazarus from the dead.