

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

✝ THE BOOK OF LUKE

WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

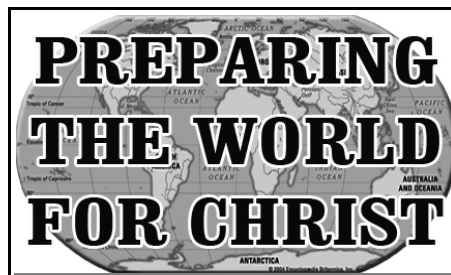
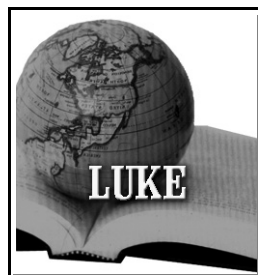
An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely

LESSON NUMBER 30

COMMENTARY ON: 9:1-17

THE SENDING OF THE TWELVE & THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000

For the first time, Jesus sends out the twelve to preach, and to heal the sick, which were among the activities for which He chose them (Mk 3:14-15). He gave particular instructions to them that were designed to teach them to rely upon the Lord. At this time Herod heard all that was being done by Jesus, and was perplexed by the reports. It is recorded that he wanted to see Jesus – but it was not for acceptable reasons. Jesus departed to a desert place, the people followed Him, He received them, spoke to them of the Kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of it. His disciples also were with Him, and as the day was concluding, they suggested He should send the multitude away so they could find lodging and something to eat. This proved to be the occasion when Jesus fed 5,000 men, beside women and children, with five loaves and two fishes – a very important miracle for the disciples.

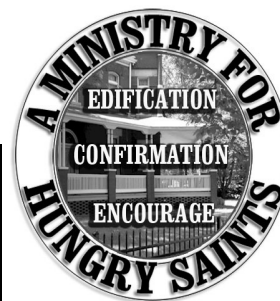


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Book of Luke 1/8/2016

Lesson Number 30



54 VERSIONS OF THE ENGLISH SCRIPTURES

ABP=Apostolic Bible Polyglot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005); AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965); ABP=Apostolic Bible Polyglot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901); BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949); BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899); EMTV=English Majority Text (2002); ERV=English Revised Version (1885); ETH=Etheridge Translation (1849); ETRV=Easy to Read (1999); ESV=English Stand Version (2001); GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599); GNB=Good News (1966); GSNT=Goodspeed (1923); GWN=God's Word (1995); IE=International English (1973); NIRV=New Int'l Readers Version (1998); ISV=International Standard Version (1967); JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917); JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611); LITV=Literary Translation of the Bible (1976); LEW=Lewis Translation (1896); LIVING=Living Bible (1971); MESSAGE=The Message (1993); MGI=Peshitta Translation (2006); MIT=Idiomatic Version; MKJV=Modern KJV (1962); MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001); MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852); NAB=New American Bible (2002); NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977); NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995); NIB=New International Bible; NIV=New International Version (1984); NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985); NKJV=New King James Version (1979); NLT=New Living Translation (1996); NOY=George Noyes Bible (1869); NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989); PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962); PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595); ROT=Rotherham Bible (1999); RPT=Revised Patriarchal Greek Orthodox New Testament; RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952); TNK=JPS Tanakh (1985); WEB=Webster Bible (1833); WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903); WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937); TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526); WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382); YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

FRIBERG; LOUW-NIDA; LIDDELL SCOTT; THAYER; VGNT GREEK DICTIONARY; GINGRICH

A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

PERSUADED OF THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE CERTAINTY OF THE THINGS WE BELIEVE, LUKE MAKES US MORE FIRM BY BUTTRESSING OUR FAITH, AND CONFIRMING WE HAVE NOT EMBRACED FABLES.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

THE SENDING OF THE TWELVE & THE FEEDING OF THE 5000

LUKE 9:1 "Then He called His twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. ² And He sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. ³ And He said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. ⁴ And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. ⁵ And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them. ⁶ And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where. ⁷ Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead; ⁸ And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again. ⁹ And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see Him. ¹⁰ And the apostles, when they were returned, told Him all that they had done. And He took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. ¹¹ And the people, when they knew it, followed Him: and He received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing. ¹² And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto Him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place. ¹³ But He said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people. ¹⁴ For they were about five thousand men. And He said to His disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company. ¹⁵ And they did so, and made them all sit down. ¹⁶ Then He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. ¹⁷ And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets." Luke 9:1-17

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

For the first time, Jesus sends out the twelve to preach, and to heal the sick, which were among the activities for which He chose them (Mk 3:14-15). He gave particular instructions to them that were designed to teach them to

rely upon the Lord.

At this time Herod heard all that was being done by Jesus, and was perplexed by the reports. It is recorded that he wanted to see Jesus – but it was not for acceptable reasons. Jesus

departed to a desert place, the people followed Him, He received them, spoke to them of the Kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of it. His disciples also were with Him, and as the day was concluding, they suggested He should send the multitude away so

Jesus SENDS the twelve on a most arresting mission. When they return, He feeds the five thousand– Given O. Blakely

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they could find lodging and something to eat. This proved to be the occasion when Jesus fed 5,000 men, beside women and children, with five loaves and two fishes – a very important miracle for the disciples.

THE PREFERENCE OF JESUS FOR HIS DISCIPLES

While this is not always perceived by professed believers, Jesus had a preference for His disciples. Most of His

time was spent with them. All of His detailed teaching was for them. They are the only ones with who, He joined Himself with He “withdrew.”

- ⇒ The phrase “*His disciples*” occurs one hundred and thirty-five times in the Gospels.
- ⇒ The expression “*the disciples*,” referring to Jesus’ disciples, occurs forty-three times in the Gospels.
- ⇒ Jesus referred to “*my disciples*” or “*My disciples*” nine times.
- ⇒ Jesus is said to have “*expounded all things to His disciples*” (Mk 4:34).
- ⇒ Jesus said to His disciples, “*Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive*” (Matt 13:13-14).
- ⇒ When praying, Jesus said of His disciples, **and of them alone**. “*I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them me; and they have kept Thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee. For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou*

didst send Me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them” (John 17:6-10).

- ⇒ Jesus is now making intercession for His people (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25).
- ⇒ Jesus is presently appearing in the presence of God “*for us*” (Heb 9:24).
- ⇒ The saints are the only people that can say, “*we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*” (1 John 2:1).
- ⇒ “*By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.*” (John 13:35)
- ⇒ The command of God to His people is, “*That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment*” (1 John 3:23).
- ⇒ “*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*” (1 John 3:14)

None of this precludes preaching the Gospel “*to every creature*,” as the King had commanded (Mark 16:15), or “*to all nations*” (Matt 28:18). However, the Gospel cannot be preached properly by a people who are themselves alienated from God themselves. The Lord will not “*work with*” such people as He did in the beginning (Mk 16:20).

HE CALLED THE TWELVE AND GAVE THEM POWER

LUKE 9:1 “*Then He called His twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.*”

HE CALLED THE TWELVE TOGETHER
“*Then He called His twelve disciples together . . .*”

Matthew reads, “*And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples*” (Matt 10:1a).

Mark reads, “*And He called unto Him the twelve*” (Mk 6:7a).

These twelve men are referred to

in the Gospels twenty-six times (“*the twelve*,” “*His twelve*”), once in the book of Acts, and two times in the Revelation. Four times in the Gospels they are simply referred to as “*the apostles*.” The book of Acts contains twenty-eight references to “*the apostles*,” and the epistles have ten

such references.

We are told that Jesus *"ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach"* (Mark 3:14).

These are key men in the purpose of God, and in the history of the world, as well. The glorified church is depicted in the Revelation as a city that has a wall around it that *"had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb"* (Rev 21:14). It is no wonder that the early church *"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine"* (Acts 2:42). Unfortunately, this continuance soon began to dissipate as imposters crept in unawares (Jude 1:4).

As grievous as it is to say this, it appears there are precious few churches that have a God-honoring regard for *"the apostles doctrine."*

WHAT IS "THE APOSTLES' DOCTRINE?"

The "Apostles' doctrine" is what they taught – foundational teaching. Scripture distinguishes "doctrine" from *"Reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness"* (2 Tim 3:16). This is teaching upon which edification is founded. Spiritual; life is not founded upon *"reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness."* Those are all essential, to say the least. But they are addressed to people who are, so to speak, off the foundation. Those

ministries are precursors to spiritual growth, and not growth itself. True spiritual life is not founded on the tutelage concerning marital, domestic, and social life. Nowhere does apostolic *"doctrine,"* or *"sound doctrine"* (1 Tim 1:10; 2 Tim 4:3; Tit 1:9; 2:1), make such things primary. The reason is obvious. They do not deal with things that are common to all believers.

The *"doctrine"* itself is embodied in the Lord Jesus Christ, and is therefore referred to as *"the doctrine of Christ"* (2 John 1:9). **Any view, word, or deed, that does not integrate with Jesus requires "reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness."** This is in order that the individuals themselves may be properly positioned on the *"Foundation,"* and their growth up into Christ (Eph 4:5) thus made possible. Such growth simply cannot be accomplished while one is off the Foundation, one is not experientially *"joined to the Lord"* (2 Cor 6:17).

Just the fact that Jesus called these twelve men to Himself should alert us to the importance given to them by both God and Christ. These are men Jesus said God had especially given to Him (John 17:9,11). They are the ones who would establish the core, or foundational, teachings of the church.

HE GAVE THEM POWER AND AUTHORITY

" . . . and gave them power and

authority over all devils, and to cure diseases."

Matthew reads, *"He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease"* (Matt 10:1b).

Mark reads, *"and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits"* (Mark 6:7b).

Other versions read, *"conferred on them power and authority,"* ^{WEYMOUTH} *"gave them complete power,"* ^{CEV} *"power . . . and the ability."* ^{PHILLIPS} Most versions read *"power and authority."*

The word *"power"* accents strength or ability, while *"authority"* places the stress on effective influence. These twelve men were given the ability and authority to make things happen – particularly in the area of demons and disease. Neither of these were in any way inherent in human nature – not even among the best and most talented among them. No man, by nature, has any authority over the powers over which Satan rules, or the realm of disease, which is, in a sense, a mysterious realm. **In my opinion, if there is any effective remedy ministered by men in the realm of sickness or disease, it is owing to God granting them wisdom, not mere human formulae or ability.**

HE SENT THEM TO PREACH AND TO HEAL

" 2 And He sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick."

Matthew reads, *"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead,*

cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt 10:5-8). Mark and John omit this account.

Think of the magnitude of this first-time commission! The five-fold commission cited by Matthew certainly would get the attention of anyone receiving it.

⇒ *"Preach saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand!"*
⇒ *"Heal the sick."*

⇒ *"Cleanse the lepers."*
⇒ *"Raise the dead."*
⇒ *"Cast out devils" (demons).*

According to Matthew, Jesus then added, *"freely ye have received, freely give."* Other versions read, *"You received without having to pay. Therefore, give without demanding payment,"* ^{CEB} *"You have received free of charge; give free of charge,"* ^{CSB} *"Give these things without charging, since you received them without*

Jesus SENDS the twelve on a most arresting mission. When they return, He feeds the five thousand- Given O. Blakely

paying," ^{GWN} "You received this ministry as a gift; give generously" ^{MIT} "Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give," ^{NAB} "You received and gave no pay; you must give and take none." ^{WILLIAMS}

What a word was this! As we examine Christ's further instructions, it will become all the more remarkable. Jesus will teach His disciples to rely on Him, not on earthly resources. In this work, their ministry was in no way to be associated with obtaining an income.

Later Jesus "appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said He unto them . . . And **heal the sick that are therein**, and say unto them, *The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you*" (Luke 10:9).

How is it that men could accomplish such works on their very first commission? If Jesus gave them further detailed instructions, there certainly is no record of it. I therefore

conclude that when this word was given, it was accompanied by a measure of faith, and an inner sensitivity, that it could be done. It appears to me that they went out with a bold confidence, not doubting that they would be successful. If this is so, that had to be a ministration from the Lord, for it is not possible for men to have such confidence when going forth to do something they had never done before. We must not doubt that such a thing is possible where faith is resident in the individual.

TAKE NOTHING FOR YOUR JOURNEY

"³ And He said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece."

Not only were they not to receive payment for what they did, they were not to take supplies with them.

TAKE NOTHING FOR YOUR JOURNEY

These men were sent out to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" – the whole land of Canaan, with the exception of Samaria, was their field of labor. The text reports that they "went through towns," fulfilling their mission (Lk 9:2). We do not know the length of the period involved, or if it possibly covered. However, the Lord told them, "Take nothing for your journey." Other versions read, "Take nothing for the road," ^{CSB} and "Take nothing for the way." ^{DARBY} The Lord was very specific.

DO NOT TAKE STAVES

"neither staves . . ."

Other versions read, "staves," ^{NKJV} "stick," ^{CEB} "walking stick," ^{CEB} "traveler's light club," ^{MIT} "rods." ^{ABP}

This was a "WALKING STICK," ^{THAYER} to assist in walking over uneven terrain, and sometimes to defend oneself against robbers or wild animals.

DO NOT TAKE SCRIP

" . . . nor scrip . . ."

Other versions read, "bag," ^{NKJV} "wallet," ^{ASV} "a pack" ^{CJB} "traveling bag" ^{CSB} "sack," ^{NAB} "haversack," ^{NJB} "provision bag," ^{ABP} "knapsack," ^{EMTV} "beggar's bag," ^{GNB} "moneybags," ^{LITV} and "wallet [for a collection bag]." ^{AMPLIFIED}

This was "A WALLET (A LEATHER SACK, IN WHICH TRAVELERS AND SHEPHERDS CARRIED THEIR PROVISIONS)." ^{THAYER}

This would be like a modern accessory or utility bag, relatively small.

DO NOT TAKE BREAD

" . . . neither bread. . ."

Other versions read "food," ^{LIVING} and "food of any kind." ^{AMPLIFIED}

They were not to carry with them something to eat.

DO NOT TAKE MONEY

" . . . neither money. . ."

Other versions read, "silver." ^{EMTV} They were to make no provision to buy anything.

DO NOT HAVE TWO COATS

" . . . neither have two coats

apiece."

Other versions read, "two tunics apiece," ^{NKJV} "extra tunic," ^{NIV} "two tunics," ^{RSV} "not even an extra shirt," ^{CEB} "two shirts," ^{CJB} "two body-coats apiece," ^{DARBY} "a change of clothes" ^{GWN} "a second change of clothes," ^{MIT} "a second tunic," ^{NAB} "extra clothes," ^{NIRV} "two inner garments," ^{ABP} and "two undergarments (tunics)." ^{AMPLIFIED}

This was "A TUNIC, AN UNDERGARMENT, USUALLY WORN NEXT THE SKIN." ^{THAYER} When a man stripped down to this inner garment to work, he was considered "naked" – not in a state of nakedness (John 21:7).

None of these things were to be taken with them on their journey, which would carry them through numerous towns in Judaea. It appears this was intended to allow for free and unhindered movement as they progressed through their mission. Any needed food and provisions would be provided where they would be provided in the homes in which they stayed.

I certainly reserve the right to be wrong on this, but it is my persuasion that this kind of instruction could not be received by most of the generation of our time.

THERE ABIDE

"⁴And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart."

HOSPITALITY

While traveling among their own people, the Jews, they would be depending on their hospitality. Under the Law, hospitality was a requirement: *"For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt"* (Deut 10:17-19). Examples of hospitality were found in Abraham (Gen 18:1-6), Lot (Gen 19:1-3), Isaac (Gen 26:27-30), David (2 Sam 9:6-7), The Shunammite woman (2 Kgs 4:8-11), Elisha (2 Kgs 6:20-23), Job (Job 31:32), Martha (Lk 10:38), Simon the tanner (Acts 10:5-6), Lydia (Acts 16:14-15), Publius (Acts 28:7), Phebe (Rom 16:1-2), etc.

THERE ABIDE

" . . . there abide, and thence depart."

Other versions read, *"stay there, and from there depart,"* ^{NKJV} *"stay there until you leave that town,"* ^{NIV} and *"let that house be your resting-place till you go away."* ^{BBE}

They were to concentrate on their mission, not shifting about from place to place.

Matthew points out that they were to be careful about selecting a place to stay: *"And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be*

unto Him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two" (Mark 6:7). They probably resided in homes in that manner – two at each location – could not be a place in which they could be unduly distracted. The owner of the home had to be a reputable and

You see the importance Jesus placed upon the missions on which He sent His disciples. It was serious business for those among whom they traveled not to receive them, and a blessing for those who received them.

worthy, let your peace come upon it (Matt 10:11-13a). First, they were to inquire who in the town was *"worthy."* Other versions read, *"search for some worthy person,"* ^{NIV} *"find out who in it is worthy,"* ^{NRSV} *"someone who is respected,"* ^{BBE} *"someone trustworthy,"* ^{CJB} *"people who will listen to you there,"* ^{GWN} *"is reputable,"* ^{MIT} *"willing to welcome you"* ^{NIRV} *"search for a godly man,"* ^{LIVING} *"some good man,"* ^{WEYMOUTH} *"some deserving person,"* ^{WILLIAMS} *"worthy enough to have you as their guest,"* ^{CEV} *"some suitable person,"* ^{GOODSPEED} *AND "Get a modest place with some modest people."* ^{MESSINGER}

The place where the disciples stayed – and Mark reports *"He called*

respected man, godly, and apparently with a well-ordered and peaceful home, without discord.

You see the importance Jesus placed upon the missions on which He sent His disciples. **It was serious business for those among whom they traveled not to receive them, and a blessing for those who received them.** Elsewhere He said, *"He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me"* (Matt 10:40). And again, *"He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me"* (Luke 10:16). It is good for us to remember these things.

SHAKE OFF THE VERY DUST

"⁵And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them."

Jesus also gave instructions about confronting someone who did not receive them. **Such rejection was not simply to be disregarded.**

LET YOUR PEACE RETURN UNTO YOU

Matthew reports the following concerning the house that proved unworthy: *"but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you."* Other versions read, *"let your peace come back to you,"* ^{BBE} *"take back your blessing,"* ^{CEB} *"take back your blessing of peace"* ^{NAU} *"If it does not, don't bless it"* ^{NIRV} *"keep the blessing."* ^{LIVING}

the idea is not that the messengers blessed the house, then upon being rejected they called back the blessing. Rather, it is of they were received they were to bless the house, and if they were not received they were not to bless it.

SHAKE OFF THE DUST

Matthew reports, *"And whosoever*

shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city" (Matt 10:14-15). Mark adds that it was to be done "for a testimony against them" (Mk 6:11).

This was something that was to be done publicly. Both Matthew and Mark report that Jesus added, *It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city" (Matt 10:15; Mk 6:11).*

When the Jews in Antioch of

Pisidia "expelled" Paul and Barnabas "out of their coast," confirming the seriousness of that action, Paul and Barnabas "shook off the dust from their feet against them" (Acts 13:51).

When Paul preached in Athens, and were opposed, "he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles" (Acts 18:6).

The rejection of the Gospel is always a serious matter. When it is rejected outrightly, the people need to know why that rejection prompts the proclaimers to leave. There should be no fear to do this.

There are still people and cities in our country, and the world as well, that have refused to hear the Gospel – and it will still be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for them! In my perception, the rejection of the Gospel is not properly viewed in our time. There is too much tolerance rejection and unbelief.

In our time, preachers and teachers have become more fearful of boldly proclaiming the truth, and refusing to continue among those who reject it. This is the day of compromise, concession, yielding to pressure, and career protection. But such action is shameful, and dishonoring to Jesus.

THEY WENT THROUGH THE TOWNS

"⁶ And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where."

In a show of aggressive obedience, the twelve did precisely as Jesus had instructed them. They "went through the towns," which were quite numerous. Other versions read, "going about among the villages," ^{NASB} "went from village to village," ^{NIV} "journeying through all the towns," ^{BBE} "went forth

and itinerated in the villages and the cities," ^{ETH} "proceeded village by village," ^{MIT} "began their circuit of the villages," ^{LIVING} "traveling through each village," ^{IE} "walked from village to village." ^{MONTGOMERY}

Even after Jesus had returned to heaven, and been exalted to the right hand of God, when the early church was persecuted, they did this same thing: "Therefore they that were

scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). O, it was a different time, with different men, having a different spirit, and proclaiming a different message!

May such times surface again, and the hearts of men begin again to burn within them (Lk 24:32). **All of the Divine resources required for such an experience are still available to believers.**

HEROD THE TETRARCH HEARD

"⁷ Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead; ⁸ And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again."

MATTHEW'S ACCOUNT

"At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in Him" (Matt 14:1-2)

MARK'S ACCOUNT

"And king Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him. Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets." (Mark 6:14-15).

HEROD THE TETRARCH HEARD

"Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him . . ."

TETRARCH

" . . . properly denotes the governor of a province or district which was regarded as the fourth part of a larger province or kingdom, while the district itself was called a tetrarchy)." ^{McCLINTOK & STRONG'S}

"The Greeks first used the word. Thus Philip of Macedon divided Thessaly into four "tetrarchies." Later on the Romans adopted the term and applied it to any ruler of a small principality." ^{INT'L Bible Enc INT'L STD BIBLE ENCY}

Other versions read, "Herod the ruler," ^{NRSV} "Herod the king," ^{BBE} "Herod the governor," ^{CJB} "fourth chief." ^{INTERLINEAR}

The word "Tetrarch" is a transliteration of the Greek word "tetrarches." Its lexical meaning is, "A GOVERNOR OF THE FOURTH PART OF ANY REGION," ^{THAYER} "A RULER OF ONE OF FOUR PROVINCES." ^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}

This was a form of Roman

WEYMOUTH "was worried," ^{CEV} "was disturbed," ^{MRD} and "was [thoroughly] perplexed and troubled." ^{AMPLIFIED}

The word translated "perplexed" {dee-ap-or-eh'-o} has the following lexical meaning: "TO BE ENTIRELY AT A LOSS, TO BE IN PERPLEXITY," ^{THAYER} "OF MENTAL PERPLEXITY BE UTTERLY AT A LOSS, BE THOROUGHLY PERPLEXED, BE BEWILDERED," ^{FRIBERG} "TO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO, TO BE VERY CONFUSED." ^{LOUW-NIDA}

" . . . because that it was said of some, **that John was risen from the dead**; And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again."

The particular report that confused and baffled Herod was what some people had said about Jesus – "that John was risen from the dead." Matthew says that Herod said these words: "and **he said**, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him" (Matt 4:1-2). Mark reports the same thing (Mk 6:14-15).

This is particularly interesting since John the Baptist "did not miracle" (John 10:41). Yet, John's preaching had such power that Herod associated Him with the Living God.

THE REASON FOR HEROD'S CONCERN

Matthew 32 provides the reason for Herod's concern.

"For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother" (Matt 14:3-11).

Now, the recollection of these things caused a major disruption in the thinking of Herod. He by no means is godly, but is perplexed.

The idea here is that what was reported was beyond the circumference of mere human experience. It was so radically different that no earthly explanation, of form of human wisdom, could satisfactorily account for them.

government with various forms of rulers being over every section of the country. The nation of Israel was under the dominion of the Roman Empire. This is according to several prophecies by Moses and the Prophets in which Israel was told they would serve their enemies because of their refusal to obey Him (Deut 28:48,53,55; Nah 3:13).

Notice the thoroughness of the reports delivered to Herod: he "heard of all that was done by Him." No doubt, as ruler of that area, he was kept apprized of all significant things that were taking place in the land.

HE WAS PERPLEXED

" . . . and he was perplexed . . . "

Other versions read, "greatly perplexed," ^{NASB} "was in doubt," ^{BBE} "He was confused," ^{CEB} "was in perplexity," ^{DARBY} "was astonished," ^{ETH} "was puzzled," ^{NLT} "was worried and puzzled," ^{LIVING} "was bewildered,"

The idea here is that what was reported was beyond the circumference of mere human experience. It was so radically different that no earthly explanation, of form of human wisdom, could satisfactorily account for them. This is the response of a hardened and unbelieving heart to the works of God. By way of comparison, those who believe respond, "This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes" (Psa 118:23).

Some of God's people have a longing for this kind of work to again confront those who are of the world. It can be realized in an insightful report of the working of God, lives that have been noticeably and consistently altered, and other "wonderful works of God." When religion is set in the context of the normal and the average, at the best, a minimal amount of praise and thanksgiving are raised to God.

IT WAS SAID OF SOME

HEROD DESIRED TO SEE JESUS

"⁹ And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see Him."

JOHN HAVE I BEHEADED

"And Herod said, John have I beheaded . . ."

Other versions read, *"I myself had John beheaded,"* ^{NASB} *"I put John to death,"* ^{BBE} and *"I decapitated John."* ^{MIT}

Herod evidences no repentance for his dastardly deed, even though he was perplexed when he heard the reports of Jesus. Rather, when he hears, and even himself says that this was John the Baptist risen from the dead (Mk 6:14-15), he reasoned after this manner "This cannot be so, for I had John beheaded, and myself saw his head delivered to Herodius by her daughter.

WHO IS THIS?

" . . . but who is this, of whom I

hear such things? And he desired to see Him."

The real Messiah was known by what He said and did. In these, Jesus was remarkable different than all of the Jewish leaders. It was glaringly obvious that He was not taught and enabled by groups like the Sanhedrin, Pharisees, Sadducees, Lawyers, and chief priests.

It was the difference of Jesus that provoked Herod to want to see Him. I cannot imagine him desiring to see any of the traditional Jewish leaders.

This principle remains the same today. **Only those who perceive the uniqueness of Jesus have a desire to see Him.** This is why many people begin the race, but drop out of it; or believe only for a while; or are simply content with life in this world. Their ease and contentment is traced to their ignorance of Jesus Christ. They see no

advantage in believing on Him and following Him. That is why they do not do so.

The same principle applies to the churches. It is only as they are seen as unique from human institutions that those with honest and good hearts will be drawn to them. A legitimate attraction to the body of Christ will not be found in its community involvement and charitable works. Those are not activities unique to the body of Christ, but are duplicated many times by purely worldly institutions. There is no example in Scripture of any assembly engaging in such affairs as an assembly. While we are to "do good unto all men," we are *"especially"* to do so to *"them who are of the household of faith"* (Gal 6:10). If the church is only known for philanthropy, political persuasions, and community involvement, a most serious and jeopardous spiritual condition exists.

THE APOSTLES TOLD JESUS ALL THAT THEY HAD DONE

"^{10a} And the apostles, when they were returned, told Him all that they had done."

WHEN THEY RETURNED

"And the apostles, when they were returned . . ."

We do not know the length of time involved in them going throughout all of the towns and villages. But, when they had completed the circuit, they returned to the Lord Jesus.

That is the manner of the Kingdom: being sent, accomplishing what men are sent by the Lord to do, and returning to the Lord. These men did not prolong their work by going into other areas not included in their commission. Like the Lord Himself would do, they finished the work they were sent to do, and returned to the

One who sent them.

THEY TOLD HIM ALL

" . . . told Him all that they had done."

Other versions read, *"gave an account of all they had done,"* ^{NASB} *"reported to Jesus what they had done,"* ^{NIV} *"they described for Jesus what they had done,"* ^{CEB} *"the emissaries detailed to Yeshua what they had done,"* ^{CJB} and *"declared to him how great things they did."* ^{YLT}

Mark records, *"And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught"* (Mark 6:30).

When *"the seventy"* were sent out by Jesus, they returned and reported

what was accomplished (Lk 10:17).

This is the manner of the real people of God. When the early disciples were persecuted, *"they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them"* (Acts 4:23).

When Barnabas and Saul returned from the mission on which the Holy Spirit sent them, *"when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles"* (Acts 14:27).

When Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem concerning the matter of circumcision, *"when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders,*

and they declared all things that God had done with them" (Acts 15:4).

During the Jerusalem gathering concerning circumcision, Peter reported what he had done: *"And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and*

brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and

them, purifying their hearts by faith." (Acts 15:7-9).

That holy manner commenced during the ministry of Jesus on earth. His disciples would report what they had done. They knew they were accountable to the One who sent them.

HE WENT ASIDE PRIVATELY

"^{10b} And He took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida."

HE WENT ASIDE PRIVATELY

"And He took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida."

Matthew reports, *"He departed thence by ship into a desert place apart" (Mat 14:13).* Mark also reports, *"And they departed into a desert place by ship privately" (Mark 6:32).*

Other versions read, *"taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself to a city called Bethsaida,"* ^{NASB} *"He took them with him and withdrew privately to a city called Bethsaida,"* ^{NRSV} *"taking them, he went aside into a desert place,*

apart, which belongeth to Bethsaida," ^{DOUAY} *"went aside into a solitary place, near to the city called Bethsaida,"* ^{GENEVA} *"He took them with him to a city called Bethsaida so that they could be alone,"* ^{GWN} *"Then he slipped quietly away with them toward the town of Bethsaida,"* ^{NLT} *"He took them and went aside into a solitary place nigh to a city called Bethsaida,"* ^{TNT} *"He took them and withdrew to a quiet retreat, to a town called Bethsaida,"* ^{WEYMOUTH} *and "He took them [along with Him] and withdrew into privacy near a town called Bethsaida."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

I understand this was not the city of Bethsaida itself, as some versions state, but was a desolate region close to it: **"THIS DESERT PLACE WAS THE DESERT OF BETHSAIDA, A LONELY, WILD, UNCULTIVATED, AND**

DESOLATE PLACE, NOT FAR FROM IT" (BETHSAIDA). ^{JOHN GILL} I cannot see why Jesus would retire to a city for privacy. This will be the occasion when He feeds ther five thousand, and it certainly was not within the confines of the city Bethsaida. Of that occasion the twelve came to Jesus and said, *"Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place"* (Luke 9:12). When feeding the five thousand men, besides women and children, Mark reports, *"And He commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass."* (Mark 6:39). It was not, therefore, the city itself to which Jesus retired with His disciples, but to a desolate and solitary place that was close to it.

THE PEOPLE FOLLOWED HIM AND HE RECEIVED THEM

"¹¹ And the people, when they knew it, followed Him: and He received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing."

THE PEOPLE FOLLOWED HIM

"And the people, when they knew it, followed Him . . ."

Mark reports, *"And the people saw them departing, and many knew Him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto Him" (Mark 6:33).*

The uniqueness of Jesus, coupled with the drawing power of God the Father, compelled the people to pursue Jesus. As soon as they knew He had left with His disciples, they followed after Him, walking around the lake while Jesus and His disciples sailed across it. This uncommon response was owing to the absolute uniqueness of Jesus, and the Divine Presence that always accompanied Him.

HE RECEIVED THEM

" . . . and He received them . . ."

Other versions read, *"and*

welcoming them," ^{NASB} *"he was pleased to see them,"* ^{BBE} *"made them welcome,"* ^{NJB} *"receiving them kindly,"* ^{WEYMOUTH}

It is evidence from the earthly ministry of Jesus, and from Hi making Himself available to the people, that Jesus is disposed to welcome those who come to Him. His words, *"Come unto Me"* (Matt 11:28; 19:14; John 7:37) were truthful and encouraging. It is people who refused to come to Him that He rebuked (John 5:40). Jesus promised, John 6:37 --- *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and*

Jesus SENDS the twelve on a most arresting mission. When they return, He feeds the five thousand- Given O. Blakely

him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

Realizing all that was involved in people coming to Him, Jesus promised, *"him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"* (John 6:37). Know that if you sense a need to come to Jesus, and are being inclined to do so, it is the Father who is drawing you (John 6:37). Be of good cheer! The very fact that you want to come to Him is a kind of guarantee that you will be received!

HE SPOKE TO THEM OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

" . . . and spake unto them of the kingdom of God . . . "

Other versions read, *"began speaking to them about the kingdom of God,"* ^{NASB} *"gave them teaching about the kingdom of God,"* ^{BBE} *"discoursed to them,"* ^{ETH} *"conversed with them respecting,"* ^{MRD} *"speaking to them concerning the reign of God"* ^{YLT} and *"teaching them again about the Kingdom of God."* ^{LIVING}

In the Gospels, there are fifty-two

⇒ Jesus spoke of seeking this **Kingdom** (Matt 6:33; Lk 12:31).

⇒ Jesus spoke of entering this **Kingdom** (Matt 19:24; Mk 9:47; 10:23-25; Matt 7:21).

⇒ Jesus spoke of going into this **Kingdom** (Matt 21:31).

⇒ Jesus spoke of *"the gospel of the kingdom of God"* (Mk 1:14).

⇒ Jesus spoke of seeing the **Kingdom** (Mk 9:1; Lk 9:27; John 3:3).

⇒ Jesus spoke of receiving the **Kingdom** (Mk 10:15; Lk 18:17).

⇒ Jesus spoke of being *"not far"* from the **Kingdom** (Mk 12:34)

⇒ Jesus preached the **Kingdom** (Lk 4:43).

⇒ Jesus announced *"the glad tidings of the Kingdom"* (Lk 8:1),

⇒ Jesus spoke of *"the mysteries of the*

⇒ Jesus spoke of a time when men would *"sit down in the Kingdom of God"* (Lk 13:29).

⇒ Jesus spoke of those of whom He said *"theirs is the Kingdom of heaven"* (Matt 5:3,10).

⇒ Jesus mentioned *"the keys of the Kingdom of heaven"* (Matt 16:19).

⇒ Jesus spoke of those who *"shut up the Kingdom of heaven"* (Matt 23:13).

Why is so little being said about this Kingdom today, and why is their little or appetite to learn of it?

APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE DEALT WITH THIS KINGDOM

⇒ *"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."* (Rom 14:17).

⇒ *"For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."* (1 Cor 4:20)

⇒ *"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."* (1 Cor 6:9-10).

⇒ *"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."* (1 Cor 15:24)

⇒ *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."* (1 Cor 15:50)

⇒ *"For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the*

In the Gospels, there are fifty-two references to the "kingdom of God," and thirty-two references to "the kingdom of heaven," an expression used exclusively by Matthew, whereas other Gospel writers refer to "the kingdom of God" in parallel texts.

references to the "kingdom of God," and thirty-two references to "the kingdom of heaven," an expression used exclusively by Matthew, whereas other Gospel writers refer to *"the kingdom of God"* in parallel texts. Referring to God, the phrase *"His kingdom"* is mentioned three times in the Gospels.

⇒ The preaching of Jesus centered in *"the Kingdom of God"* (Mk 1:14; Lk 4:43; 8:1; 9:2,60).

Kingdom" (Lk 8:10).

⇒ Jesus sent out His disciples to *"preach the Kingdom"* (Lk 9:2)

⇒ Jesus spoke of not being *"fit for the Kingdom"* (Lk 9:62).

⇒ Jesus declared what the **Kingdom** was *"like"* (Matt 13:24,31,33,44, 45,47; 18:23; 20:1; 22:2; 25:1; Lk 13:18; Lk 13:18,20).

kingdom of Christ and of God."
(Eph 5:5)

⇒ *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into **the kingdom of his dear Son.**"* (Col 1:13)

⇒ *"And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers **unto the kingdom of God**, which have been a comfort unto me."* (Col 4:11)

⇒ *"Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of **the kingdom of God**, for which ye also suffer:"* (2 Thess 1:5).

⇒ *"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of **the kingdom** which He hath promised to them that love Him?"* (James 2:5)

The frequent mentioning of this Kingdom alone ought to spark a keen and sustained interest in it.

There are also key words that reflect the absolute superiority of this Kingdom. They were words some men do not like to say, and some even choose to twist them to suit their own fancy. Here are some of them.

- ⇒ Predestinate (Rom 8:29-30)
- ⇒ Predestinated (Eph 1:5,11)
- ⇒ Foreordained (1 Pet 1:20)
- ⇒ Foreknew (Rom 11:2)
- ⇒ Foreknow (Rom 8:29)
- ⇒ Foreknowledge (Acts 2:23; 1 Pet 1:2).
- ⇒ Draw (Rom 6:22; 12:32)
- ⇒ Chosest (Psa 65:4)
- ⇒ Chosen (Rom 16:13; Eph 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; James 2:5; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 17:14).
- ⇒ Appointed (Acts 17:26,31; 1 Thess 3:3; Heb 1:2; 3:2; Heb 9:27; 1 Pet 2:8).
- ⇒ Appointeth (Dan 5:21).
- ⇒ Putting something on the heart (Ex 35:34; 36:2; 1 Kgs 10:24; Ezra 7:27; Neh 2:12; 7:5; Psa 4:7; 2 Cor 8:16).

- ⇒ Cause (Gen 7:4; Ex 9:17; Zech 8:12).
- ⇒ Caused (Gen 2:5,21; 41:52; Ex 14:21; 2 Chron 34:32; Jer 29:4; Ezek 39:28)
- ⇒ Causeth (2 Cor 2:14)
- ⇒ Create (Isa 45:7; 57:19; 65:17,18)
- ⇒ Created (Gen 1:1,27; Isa 43:1,7; Eph 2:10; 4:24; Col 3:10).
- ⇒ Establish (Heb 10:9)
- ⇒ Established (Gen 9:17; Gen 41:32).
- ⇒ Stablish (Rom 16:25).
- ⇒ Stablisheth (2 Cor 1:21).
- ⇒ Elect (Isa 42:1; 45:4; Matt 24:31; Rom 8:33; Col 3:12; Tit 1:1; 1 Pet 1:12).
- ⇒ Elected (1 Pet 5:13).

The Kingdom of God is the one Jesus preached. It is the one He told His disciples to preach. It is the one the apostles doctrine expounds. There is no way this great Kingdom is shaped by men, bows to men, or acquiesces to their will. O, that it was being preached and expounded more!

HE HEALED THEM THAT HAD NEED OF HEALING

" . . . and healed them that had need of healing."

Other versions read, *"those who needed healing,"* ^{NIV} *"needed to be cured."* ^{NRSV}

The Kingdom of God is the one Jesus preached. It is the one He told His disciples to preach. It is the one the apostles doctrine expounds.

GOD DOES WHATEVER HE PLEASES

- ⇒ *"But our God is in the heavens: he hath done **whatsoever He hath pleased.**"* (Psa 115:3)
- ⇒ *"**Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.**"* (Psa 135:6)
- ⇒ *"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and **I will do all my pleasure.**"* (Isa 46:10)
- ⇒ *"And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and **He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?**"* (Dan 4:35)
- ⇒ *"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who **worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.**"* (Eph 1:11)

Matthew says of this occasion, *"He healed their sick"* (Matt 14:14). Mark makes no reference to the healing, stating that Jesus *"was moved with compassion toward them"* (Mk 6:34).

The phrase *"had need of healing,"* does not suggest that there were some ailing people who did not need to be healed – although that might have been possible. The phrase *"have need of healing"* could very well be a synonym for being *"sick"* or *"infirm."* It could also suggest those who *"needed"* to be healed could not regain their health in any other way. There is such a thing as a malady that can be cured by practical means, as seen in the case of Timothy (1 Tim 5:23). Even then, of course, the Lord would be in the matter, as when Isaiah provided a means for Hezekiah's poisonous boil (which was taking his life) to be healed). He had men *"Prepare a poultice of figs and apply it to the boil, and he will recover"* (Isa 38:21). James also addresses the matter of someone among the brethren being *"sick"* (James 5:14-15).

I understand that these were not the kind of ailments Jesus was now healing.

THEY SAID, “SEND THE MULTITUDE AWAY”

“¹² And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto Him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.”

THE DAY BEGAN TO WEAR AWAY

“And when the day began to wear away . . .”

Other versions read, “day began to decline,” ^{NASB} “late in the afternoon,” ^{NIV} “day was drawing to a close,” ^{NRSV} “day went on,” ^{BBE} “day was almost over,” ^{CEB} and “began to fade.” ^{MIT}

Jesus had withdrawn from the multitudes with His disciples, sailing across the Sea of Galilee to a deserted area near Bethsaida. The multitudes heard of His departure, and followed him on foot, arriving at the other side before Jesus did, so that they were waiting for Him and His disciples when they arrived.

The time of day that this occurred is not given, but from the language it appears that it was rather early in the day. He spoke throughout this duration to them of the Kingdom of God.

The language itself depicts the impact of sin upon the natural creation. Although from the beginning a day consisted of an evening and a morning, prior to sin, the day did not “wear away.” as it did after the curse of mortality.

There is something else to be seen here. “The day of salvation” (2 Cor 6:2) is also wearing away. There is coming a time when it will end, and the door of entrance will be “shut” (Matt 25:10).

SEND THE MULTITUDES AWAY

“ . . . then came the twelve, and said unto Him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals . . .”

The people had been listening to Jesus’ teaching for some time – apparently without eating. Now. In consideration of a multitude numbering in the thousands, and with an insufficient understanding of Jesus Himself, “the twelve” tell Jesus to “send the multitude away,” so they can find lodging, and “get victuals.” Other versions read, “get provisions,” ^{NKJV} “something to eat,” ^{NASB} “find food,” ^{NIV} “get meat,” ^{GENEVA} and “a supply or provisions.” ^{AMPLIFIED}

The word translated “victuals” {ep-ee-sit-is-mos} means, “SUPPLIES, PROVISIONS, FOOD,” ^{THAYER} “ANY KIND OF FOOD OR NOURISHMENT.” ^{LOUW-NIDA} As we will learn, whole families were present that needed to be fed – men, with women and children (Matt 14:21). The request certainly sounded reasonable – that is, without due consideration for the Person of Christ, who was present.

To this point “the twelve” had seen a number of miracles, including the following:

- ⇒ Turning water into wine (John 2:6-11).
- ⇒ Healing all manners of sickness and diseases as He preached throughout Galilee (Matt 4:23).
- ⇒ Healed all kinds of diseases, torments, demon possessed, lunatic, and palsied among people brought to Him from Syria (Matt 4:23).
- ⇒ Healing of two blind men (Matt 9:27-30).
- ⇒ Healed a dumb man (Matt 9:33).
- ⇒ Healed “every sickness and every disease among the people” as He was teaching in their synagogues (Matt 9:35).
- ⇒ The casting of a demon out of a particular man (Lk 4:33-36).
- ⇒ The healing of Peter’s mother-in-law (Lk 4:38-39).
- ⇒ The healing of those with “divers diseases” (Lk 4:40).
- ⇒ The catching of a miraculous draught of fish (Lk 5:4-7).
- ⇒ The healing of a man “full of leprosy” (Lk 5:12).

- ⇒ The healing of a paralytic (Lk 5:18-28).
- ⇒ The healing of a man with a withered hand (Lk 6:6-11).
- ⇒ The healing of a multitude who had diseases and were vexed with unclean spirits (Lk 6:17-29).
- ⇒ The healing of a centurion’s servant (Lk 7:2-10).
- ⇒ The raising of a dead son of a widow in Nain (Lk 7:11-17).
- ⇒ The curing of many of the infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits, and the blind (Lk 7:21).
- ⇒ The healing of a woman with evil spirits and infirmities (Lk 8:2a).
- ⇒ The casting of seven demons out of Mary Magdalene (Lk 8:2b).
- ⇒ The calming of a storm of wind, and the raging sea (Lk 8:23-25).
- ⇒ The healing of the Gadarene demoniac (Lk 8:27-39).
- ⇒ The raising of Jairus’ daughter from the dead (Lk 8:41-42, 49-56).
- ⇒ The healing of a woman with an issue of blood (Lk 8:43-48).
- ⇒ Jesus giving the twelve themselves “power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases,” and to “heal the sick” (Lk 9:1-2), and “raise the dead” (Matt 10:8).
- ⇒ The healing of many in the very multitude they were asking Jesus to “send away” (Lk 9:11).

AT THIS POINT, THE DISCIPLES WERE NOT CAPABLE OF MAKING A PROPER DIAGNOSIS

There are twenty-five occasions in which Jesus worked miracles, with some of them including numerous miracles. **Collectively, they probably were in the hundreds.** Yet, at this point, the disciples were not able to associate that kind of Divine power with the circumstance they were facing.

I am careful not to be overly critical of the disciples. They had not yet been “born again,” received the promised Holy Spirit, or been raised up to sit with Christ in heavenly places. Yet, they had seen more divers evidence of Divine power than any other persons in the history of the

world. **We learn from this consideration that “flesh” cannot reason with Divine aptitude in mind.** The Adamic nature simply cannot do it. This was confirmed in Israel, who saw the hand of God work in being delivered from Egypt, crossing the Red Sea on dry land, witnessing their dead enemies washed up on the shore of the Red Sea, eating miraculous manna, and drinking water from a river that came out of a rock. **Yet they balked when they had no bread or water, being incapable of viewing that circumstance as something easily addressed by the Living God.**

This remains a tremendous human handicap. No matter how much is seen of Divine power, or how often it is declared, countless professing believers simply cannot address the difficulties of life with a Sovereign God in mind.

WE ARE HERE IN A DESERT PLACE

“ . . . for we are here in a desert place.”

Other versions read, “a deserted place,” ^{NKJV} “desolate place,” ^{NASB} “remote place,” ^{NIV} “lonely place,” ^{RSV} “waste place,” ^{BBE} “No one lives around here,”

^{GWN} “There is nothing here,” ^{NIRV} “a place of wilderness,” ^{TNT} and “an uninhabited (barren, solitary) place.” ^{AMPLIFIED}

For the disciples at this time, this circumstance was unresolvable. There simply were no available resources in this place. The ground had not yielded any, and there were no inhabitants who had them in store. It was hopeless! There was no alternative – the people had to be sent away. Sadly, his kind of reasoning is still found among some of Christ’s followers.

FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES

“ ¹³ **But He said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.** ^{14a} **For they were about five thousand men.**”

GIVE YE THEM TO EAT!

“But He said unto them, Give ye them to eat. . . .”

One of the marvelous traits of the Lord Jesus is that He makes a strong appeal to faith, which is transcendent to natural aptitude. This is clearly made known in His response to the disciples: “Give ye them to eat.” Mind you, they have recently returned from a commanded mission: “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils . . .” (Matt 10:8; Lk 9:2). Jesus had given them “power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases” (Luke 9:1). However, as before noted, they could not correlate that experience with the challenge of a multitude of hungry people.

I have observed over the years that this ineptitude often surfaces among believers. Even though a mighty work may have been done among them, still there is a natural propensity to stagger when faced with new impossibilities. However, there are promises relating to this matter that can fuel our faith:—i.e. “If thou canst

believe, all things are possible to him that believeth” (Mark 9:23). “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Matt 17:20). While we ought not to be overly simplistic about such things, many times it is still in order to say when we face very challenging circumstances, “Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief” (Mark 9:24). It seems to me that an earnest quest for a strong and unrelenting faith is most comely.

ONLY FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES

“ . . . And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people. For they were about five thousand men.”

The disciples said they could only come up with five loaves and two fishes, and that meant it would be necessary to buy food for all of the people, noting there were “about five thousand men.”

Therefore, the disciples saw only one way for the word of Jesus to be fulfilled: “Give ye them to eat.” That was their view of the total possibilities. However, it was not a proper one. **They had not reasoned with Jesus in mind.**

JOHN’S ACCOUNT

John provides us a few more details of this occasion. Jesus had gone up to a mountain, and “sat with His disciples.” Seeing this, the multitude followed after Him. “When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this He said to prove him: for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?” (John 6:5-9).

Thus we see that Jesus tested their faith by first asking Philip; where they could buy bread to feed this great multitude of people. That would mean they had to check their own financial resources. All of their funds together amounted to “Two hundred pennyworth” (“eight month’s wages” ^{NIV}) to one man. That was not enough to give a bite or two to everyone.

The disciples had even searched throughout the crowd to see if they could muster enough food there. Simon Peter’s brother Andrew responded, “There is a lad here, which hath five

barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?" (John 6:8-9).

A small flicker of faith is found in Andrew's answer, but it was doused when he began to reason about it. There was something there, but it was not enough for sound reasoning. Andrew had unwittingly despised the day of "small beginnings" (Zech 4:10). ^{NLT} Like

Israel of old, he had "limited the Holy One of Israel" (Psa 78:41). It was the same kind of thinking found in Israel when, as they were trekking through the wilderness, they asked, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" (Psa 78:19). They too could not correlate what they had seen with the present.

God's people must labor to avoid

this kind of reasoning. Moses had "a rod" (Ex 4:2), Samson had a jawbone (Judges 15:15), Jael had "a nail" (Judges 4:21), David had "a sling" (1 Sam 15:50), the widow of Zarephath had a "handful of meal and a little oil" (1 Kgs 17:12). **All were small beginnings, but fully adequate for the occasions at hand.** Now the Lord will show this small lunch was enough.

MAKE THEM SIT DOWN

^{14b} *And He said to His disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company. ¹⁵ And they did so, and made them all sit down."*

MAKE THEM SIT DOWN

"And He said to His disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company . . ."

Other versions read, "in groups of fifty," ^{NKJV} "in groups of about fifty each," ^{NASB} "in companies about fifty each," ^{RSV} and "Have them [sit down] reclining in table groups (companies) of about fifty each." ^{AMPLIFIED}

This was on the strength of the

report that they had five loaves and two fishes – and John reports they were "small fishes" (John 6:9). To qualify for a work of God to be done, there is not a certain number of resources that must be had – a minimum, so to speak. There are not a certain number of people that must be present – "two or three" is more than sufficient (Matt 18:20). Jesus took just three of His disciples to witness the transfiguration, and the Olivet discourse was delivered to four of the disciples: "Peter, James, John, and Andrew" (Mk 13:3-37).

AND THEY DID SO

" . . . And they did so, and made them all sit down."

No questions were asked about adequacy, or what would be done. **There is no record of the disciples ever disobeying Jesus, or not doing what He told them to do.** In this regard, they are an excellent representation of what a disciple is to be. A true disciple does not know everything, and there may very well be things he does not comprehend. However, there is one thing you can bank on: **a disciple will always do what the Lord Jesus tells him to do!** That is involved in Him saying, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27). And again, "Ye are my friends, if ye **do** whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14).

THEY DID EAT AND WERE FILLED

¹⁶ *Then He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. ¹⁷ And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets."*

HE BLESSED AND BRAKE THEM

"Then He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and brake..."

Matthew's account reads essentially the same (Matt 14:19-20). Mark's account reads, "And when He

had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, He looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided He among them all" (Mark 6:41). John's account reads, "And Jesus took the loaves; and when He had given thanks, He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would" (John 6:11).

The word translated "brake" {klah'-o} means "BREAK, BREAK OFF, BREAK IN PIECES," ^{FRIBERG} AND "BREAK AN OBJECT INTO TWO OR MORE PARTS." ^{LOUW-NIDA}

The miracle of multiplying the bread was wrought by Jesus, not by the disciples. Some of conjectured that Jesus broke twelve parts, one for each of the disciples, and that the multiplication happened as they were distributing it. However, this is not at all likely. The bread was distributed much like the manna. **The full supply of manna fell, and was gathered by each family after that.** To me, it is more likely that Jesus created the full supply of bread, breaking the loaves and dividing the fishes, without the original supply being diminished. This He continued until a supply was reached that could feed the multitude. This would also

account for the excess that remained after the feeding was completed.

HE GAVE TO THE DISCIPLES TO SET BEFORE THE MULTITUDE

" . . . and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. . . "

All of the Gospel records say that Jesus had the disciples do the actual distribution. He provided the supply, the disciples distributed it.

MATTHEW: *" . . . He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to HIS disciples, and the disciples to the multitude" (Matt 14:19).*

MARK: *"He . . . blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided He among them all." (Mark 6:41).*

LUKE: *"He blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude." (Luke 9:16)*

JOHN: *"And Jesus took the loaves; and when He had given thanks, He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would." (John 6:11)*

I suggest that this is still how Jesus feeds the people – especially His

sheep. He first creates an adequate supply, then apportions it to various members of the body to distribute it. Of course, this postulates a multiplicity of distributors that are working together for the same purpose. This manner can be seen in the approach to the public assembly that is portrayed in First Corinthians chapters twelve through fourteen.

THEY DID EAT AND WERE ALL FILLED

" . . . And they did eat, and were all filled . . . "

Other versions read *"satisfied,"* NASB *"had enough"* BBE *"as much as he wanted,"* CJB *"ate and ate,"* LIVING *"had aplenty,"* WILLIAMS *"all they wanted,"* CEV *"eaten their fill."* MESSAGE

That is how Jesus feeds His sheep – so they are all satisfied and filled! Meager and scrimpy meals do not come from Jesus – and yet they are being consistently served throughout the church-world. In fact some meals are so invariably paltry that the appetite of the people for the things of God shrinks until they can not ingest much at all. When hefty appetites are not fed and satisfied, they tend to diminish, until people actually learn to hobble through life weak and emaciated.

The purpose was not to only feed the men, or only the women, or only

the children. **All** were to be fed. Varying capacities and appetites were **all** satisfied – *"filled."* The people were set down in groups of fifty – not groups of women, groups of children, and groups of men. When the Passover meal was served, the household ate together. It is still intended to be that way when the saints come together.

TWELVE BASKETS

" . . . and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets. "

John records that Jesus said, *"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost"* (John 6:12). Both Matthew and Mark add that they were twelve baskets *"full"* of the fragments, and the fishes (Matt 14:20; Mk 6:43).

We are not told what was done with these twelve baskets of food. Some have said there was one for each of the apostles. There is nothing in the text that suggests Jesus would do such a thing. That would have meant He was providing for Himself as well, for the disciples were always with Him. It also would have nullified the ministry of the women who were ministering to them from their substance (Luke 8:2-3). I should not be surprised if they were given to the lad to take home, and bear testimony to what the Lord had done. At any rate, it is not the Lord's manner to be wasteful.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 1/22/15. In our next lesson, we will continue our series in the Gospel of Luke. The THIRTY-FIRST lesson will cover verses 18 thru 27 of chapter 9: "JESUS INSTRUCTS HIS DISCIPLES CONCERNING HIMSELF." After asking His disciples how the people were identifying Him, He asked them who they said He was. He then expounded unto them things concerning Himself. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.