

The Now Kingdom!

Turn with me to **Luke 10** and let's read the first 9 verses together...

Verse 1 The Jews considered 70 to be the number of the Gentile nations and therefore, this may have been the Lord's way of deliberately and dramatically emphasising the universality of His mission. The next thing we notice is that Jesus "sent" them out into every city "two by two", which I believe was for protection, strengthening and encouragement.

Verse 2 Today, the harvest is also great and the labourers are still few! Therefore, you too should continually pray that the Lord of the harvest sends out labourers into His harvest field. The heartbeat of our heavenly Father is to harvest every lost soul, and according to **1 Corinthians 3:9**, we are "God's fellow workers" in this divine venture.

Verse 3 In carrying out their mission the disciples are warned of the potential danger which exists, and therefore, they should remember to be wise and fully prepared to face rejection or persecution. For aren't wolves always seeking to devour the lambs?

Verse 4 God's co-workers should be unencumbered by money or possessions, and should often be trusting in His provision through the generosity and hospitality of others. Furthermore, the instruction to "greet no one along the road" emphatically enforces the urgency of their mission.

Verse 5 When entering any house, they were instructed to greet the household in the traditional way... "Peace be with this house".

Verse 6 Jesus also asks that they be wise and discerning when choosing a temporary abode. And this required them to have a positive witness and be at peace concerning it. **Matthew 10:13** is a parallel scripture and it reads... "If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you."

Verse 7 Paraphrased... "Do not move from house to house when visiting a town. Rather remain with one household and eat and drink whatever they give you. Because if you have discerned the situation correctly, God will bless you for the work which you have done for Him - the labourer IS worthy of his wages."

Verse 8 Jesus reiterates the importance of accepting people's generosity and hospitality without being difficult or a burden to the giver.

Before we examine **verse 9**, I'd like to go over some pertinent information regarding the **Kingdom of God**. Jesus and John the Baptist both used the phrase "***the kingdom of God is at hand***" or, as it appears in this passage of scripture... "***the kingdom of God has come near you.***" Every time this phrase appears in scripture the Greek word 'eggiken' is used and translated 'come near' or 'at hand'. But this word doesn't fully portray the true meaning of this spiritual truth. In fact, because it may give the impression that things are imminent, rather than immediate, it can actually be very misleading. Let me explain....

When Jesus went around preaching He must have spoken in either Aramaic or Hebrew, never Greek. Therefore, all the recorded accounts of His sayings (documented in the four Gospels) must be Greek translations with either Hebrew or Aramaic origins.

This can cause problems because Jesus often used Hebrew idioms in His teachings and sayings. Modern idioms are phrases like: 'Killing time' or 'Eat your heart out'. Therefore, many of the idioms which Jesus used can only be fully understood when properly interpreted in a Hebrew or Aramaic context.

In Hebrew, 'to come near' means 'to be at', and it implies 'right now'. However, the Greek word 'eggiken' can be translated 'about to appear' or 'is almost here'. So if we were to take the Hebrew equivalent of 'eggiken' we would probably use the verb 'karav', which means 'to come up to and be with' or 'to be where something or someone else is'. The Greek, and in turn the English, may imply that 'near' is 'yet to come', and this would suggest that the Kingdom of God is futuristic (not yet here). However, the spiritual truth is - the Kingdom is here right now!

However, the Hebrew word 'karav' can only mean "it's here!" Or, "it's arrived!" Therefore, positively declaring that the Kingdom of God is here - it's arrived! The word 'karav' is a very interesting word. When King Ahaz returned from Damascus to Jerusalem to view the altar which the priest Uriah had built on his instructions; "the King drew near ('karav') to the altar and went up on to it" (**2 Kings 16:12**). In other words, the king went right up to the altar, and stood right next to or beside it. He was "right there," and it was there with him! 'Karav' also implies 'coming into contact with', and does not suggest that there is necessarily any distance between that which is coming near and that which is being approached. And this aspect or view is most important if we are to understand **Luke 10:9 - "The kingdom of God has come near to you."**

Verse 9 - Here, Jesus gives very clear and direct instructions to the 70 disciples. Paraphrased.... "Whenever you enter a town and you are accepted, HEAL THE SICK of that town and tell everyone that the kingdom of God is here!" The Lord gave the very same instructions when He sent out the twelve.... "And as you go, preach (make a declaration), saying, 'The kingdom of Heaven is at hand'. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give" (**Matthew 10:7-8**).

Notice something, the coming of God's Kingdom and the ministry of healing cannot be separated. The ministry of healing should never be divided from the complete declaration of the kingdom's abiding presence. For the Holy Spirit delights in confirming the presence of God's Kingdom by operating through the ministry of healing, and other supernatural signs and wonders.

This concept of the Kingdom is perhaps one of the most important spiritual concepts in the New Testament. The Kingdom of God is never static and has nothing to do with territory or location. But as the Hebrew suggests, it is ACTIVE, it is ACTION, and it is **NOW!** God's Kingdom is constantly demonstrating God's rule in the lives of men and women through miracles, signs and wonders. Quite simply, wherever the **power** and **authority** of God is being released or demonstrated, there you will find His kingdom! And His Kingdom is here right Now!