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Sharing the Gospel (10:1-20)

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1/ After this the Lord installed seventy-two others of them and sent them on before his face in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. 2/ He said to them, "Even though the harvest is plentiful, the laborers are few; therefore ask the lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. 3/ Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. 4/ Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. 5/ Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' 6/ And if anyone is there who is a child of peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. 7/ Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. 8/ Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; 9/ cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' 10/ But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 11/ 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off for you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.' 12/ I tell you, on that day Sodom will be treated with more clemency than that town. 13/ Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, clothed in sackcloth and sitting in ashes. 14/ But at the judgment Tyre and Sidon will be treated with more clemency than you. 15/ And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will descend to hell. 16/ Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me." 17/ The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!" 18/ He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. 19/ See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. 20/ Nevertheless, do not rejoice that the spirits have submitted to you, but rejoice that your names are written in the heavens."

This is the so-called sending out of the seventy-two disciples. It is a text from which the church draws its missionary zeal, its art of being present among other people, and its rules of evangelization. The passage does, in fact, brim over with joy (vv. 17, 20); it celebrates the successes that have been possible (v. 13), enlists persons in struggle on behalf of a cause (v. 2), encourages a journeying as a

team (v. 1), and promises the backing of God and Christ (vv. 1–2). Yet it is also a text that embarrasses the church and its servants, since certain of the requirements it sets out are not capable of being met and several of its opinions are shocking. The equipment, or rather the lack of it, laid down in v. 4 is a discouragement to even the best-intentioned people; the forbidding of greeting people

seems to be a counter-witness (v. 4b); and the condemnation of recalcitrant cities is an expression of a sentiment of revenge (v. 15). This is, in the last analysis, a puzzling text. Just what harvest is in mind (v. 2)? What peace do the disciples have at their disposal without being masters of it (vv. 5-6)? Who are the enemies, the wolves (v. 3), and the Satan (v. 18)—fallen or threatening—that they are going to have to confront?

Analysis

Whatever first reactions readers may have to the above subjects, they cannot fail to notice that a new literary unit begins in 10:1 (cf. “After this”). They will ask themselves where it ends, however. Based on a criterion of themes, it can be said to break off at either v. 12 or v. 16.¹ One structural indication, the temporal complement (v. 21: “At that same hour”), moves me to fix the end of the pericope at v. 20.

A speech by Jesus (vv. 2–16) is the most important part of this pericope; as is often the case (cf. 8:8, 18, 21; 14:35), it ends with a comment on listening. This speech does not develop a line of argumentation; it lays out a series of sayings whose structure and content are heterogeneous: a metaphor, v. 2; a comparison, v. 3; instructions, v. 4; casuistic regulations with brief developments of the themes, vv. 5-13; lamentation, vv. 14-15; and a sapiential oracle, v. 16. A brief description of the setting (v. 1) precedes this string of sayings, which in turn is followed by a dialogue

(vv. 17-20), the heart of which is a new, shorter speech by Jesus, which is introduced by a joyous observation by the disciples upon their return (v. 17). This second speech is composed of three sayings, one with an apocalyptic flavor (v. 18), another with a juridical character (v. 19), and the third with a paraenetic tone (v. 20).

In all of this unit (vv. 1-20), Christology is still present but remains in the background. What Luke places in the foreground is what is involved in the disciples’ work: their responsibility, their missionary practice, and their power. So the travel narrative links the training of the messengers with Jesus’ destiny, ecclesiology with Christology.

Unlike Matthew, Luke did not combine the two parallel traditions he had inherited (Mark and Q).² Instead he used that dual tradition in a creative way to evoke the idea of the two mission fields of the church: Israel and the other nations. The Twelve were to occupy the first field; the seventy-two, the second. This historical and theological perspective gave him the idea of using the Markan text for the account of the sending out of the twelve apostles (9:1-6) and saving the Q text for use in the account of the sending out of the seventy-two evangelists (10:1-20). In Q these messengers had definitely been identified with the Twelve (hence the fusion of Mark and Q in Matt 9:37—10:16). Never mind! In Luke they became “other” disciples, “seventy-two,” the number required to correspond to the biblical number of nations (see Genesis 10).³ All of Luke 10:1 is, moreover, redactional and once more inserts the episode in the context

1 Fitzmyer (2:841–64) subdivides vv. 1-20 into four segments (vv. 1-12, 13-15, 16, and 17-20); Gerhard Schneider (*Das Evangelium nach Lukas* [2d ed.; 2 vols.; Ökumenischer Taschenbuch-Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 3.1-2; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1984] 1:234–42) subdivides them into three (vv. 1-12, 13-16, 17-20); and Eduard Schweizer (*Das Evangelium nach Lukas: Übersetzt und erklärt* [NTD 3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982] 113–19) into two (vv. 1-16, 17-20). As for Philippe Bossuyt and Jean Radermakers (*Jésus, Parole de la grâce: Selon St. Luc* [2 vols.; Brussels: Institut d’études théologiques, 1981] 275–88), they regroup all of chap. 10 under the title “The Mission: Revelation of the Father,” subdividing it into four segments: vv. 1-16, 17-24, 25-37, 38-42). Charles H. Talbert (*Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* [New York: Crossroad, 1986] 114–19) sees here a chiasmic structure: A (Luke 9:51-56); B (9:57-62); A’ (10:1-24). Talbert (pp. 111–12) sees this little chiasm as a component of a much larger chiasm, where A (Luke 9:51-56, toward Jerusalem and rejection) and B (9:57—10:24, following Jesus) correspond to B’ (18:35—19:10, following Jesus) and A’ (19:11-44 toward Jerusalem and rejection).

2 Matthew 9:35—10:16. On this point and on the origin of the discourse “The Commissioning of the Twelve,” see the commentary on Luke 9:1-6 (1:342–43). See also Hahn, *Mission*, 41–46; Hoffmann, *Logienquelle*, 243–54; Lührmann, *Logienquelle*, 59; Schulz, *Q*, 404–19; Schürmann, *Untersuchungen*, 137–49.

3 On seventy or seventy-two, see the commentary below. Luke feels free to vary this number in v. 2 and in v. 17. Elsewhere he does not dare to adapt the discourse of Jesus to this new large number.

of a journey. The speech in vv. 2-16 comes in the main from tradition. In vv. 2-12, Luke kept Q's order⁴ better than Matthew did, which is explained all the better by the fact that Matthew combined Q with Mark.

The saying about the harvest (v. 2), aside from one inversion,⁵ is identical in Luke and Matthew. We read it also in the *Gospel of Thomas* in another context (*Gos. Thom.* 73).⁶ Only small differences distinguish the two versions of the saying about the lambs and the wolves (v. 3 par. Matt 16:16a): the Lukan imperative: "Go on your way," foreign to the saying, is secondary. Luke's word "lamb" (ἀρήν), a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament, is original. Matthew replaced it with the more trivial "sheep" (πρόβατον).⁷ Luke was unaware of the call to imitate the serpents and the doves that Matthew added (Matt 10:16b), which could not have come from Q. It is difficult to make a comparison of the gear to take along (v. 4), since Matthew confined himself to Mark's version.⁸ Perhaps Luke left his personal mark on this verse by choosing to use βαστάζω ("carry") and by writing κατὰ

τὴν ὁδόν ("on the road") and ἀσπάζομαι ("greet").⁹ In the matter of welcome in the houses (vv. 5-6), there are distinct differences between Matthew and Luke as to the language used, even if the content is the same. Here again, Luke seems to have followed Q more closely than did Matthew. At the most one might ask if, for the coming of peace, Q read ἐλθάτω ("let . . . come" [Matthew]) or ἐπαναπαύσεται ("will rest" [Luke]) and, for its disappearance, if it had ἐπιστραφήτω ("let it return" [Matthew]) or ἀνακάμψει ("will return" [Luke]). Luke's futures seem in any case to be older and more Semitic than Matthew's imperatives.¹⁰ As for the order to not change houses and the mention of the deserving of pay (v. 7), in their Lukan version they probably correspond to the earliest wording of Q.¹¹ In the case of the towns (vv. 8-11), welcome and inhospitableness are the two alternatives on the basis of which attitudes are set. The sequence house-town and the two possible reactions were already the reading of Q. Matthew 10:11-14 breaks the parallelism by speaking first of the two cases in which

4 Most of the statements follow the same order in Luke and Matthew; vv. 2, 4, 5-6, 10-11, 12 par. Matt 9:37-38; 10:9-10a, 12-13, 14, 15). However, there are some anomalies: Luke places the statement about the lambs and the wolves at the beginning of the discourse (v. 3), whereas Matthew puts it at the end (Matt 10:16a). Luke has the saying about the wages (v. 7c) coming after those about provisions and the house, whereas Matthew places the saying about the wages (Matt 10:10b) between them. In Luke, the remarks about the wages (v. 7c) and the town (vv. 8-11) follow those about the house (vv. 5-7a) in contrast to Matt 10:7-14, where remarks about the wages (10:10b) and the town (10:11) precede those about the house (10:12-14).

5 Ἐργάτας ἐκβάλλει in Luke (who must be correct), but ἐκβάλλει ἐργάτας in Matthew. Notice, however, that the order of the words in Luke often corresponds to the order in Matthew.

6 See Schrage, *Thomas-Evangelium*, 153-55.

7 2 Clement 5.2 cites this saying in a free manner, employing the diminutive ἀρνία. Has Matthew added the emphatic ἐγώ (cf. Matt 12:28), or has Luke omitted it (cf. Luke 12:20)? According to Schulz (Q, 405) Luke is the one responsible for deleting it.

8 Matthew must have known, however, the version of Q, as the prohibition about the sandals suggests.

9 Matthew 10:9 chooses the verb κτάομαι perhaps

under the influence of Q (Mark 6:8 and Luke 9:3 have αἶρω). The other two expressions are Lukan, κατὰ τὴν ὁδόν (cf. Acts 8:36; 25:3; 26:13; in a figurative sense, 24:14) and ἀσπάζομαι (cf. Luke 1:40; Acts 18:22; 20:1, 7, 19; 25:13). But Luke did not invent the prohibition against greeting anyone on the road (Luke 10:4b, which Matthew ignores). As for the γέ (Luke 10:6b), it must have been added by Luke.

10 The words "eating and drinking whatever is offered to you" (v. 7b) make explicit the meaning of the verb "remain" (v. 7a), but this gloss must have antedated Luke, for it is needed as a justification for the saying about the wages (7c). The word μισθός in Luke must correspond to Q (Matthew, who more often understands μισθός in an eschatological sense, replaces it with τροφή). As for the prohibition against moving from one house to another (v. 7d), which is missing from Matthew (in order to avoid repetition with Matt 10:11c?), it too makes explicit the meaning of the verb "remain" (v. 7a) and corresponds well to the missionary praxis of Q. According to Hahn (*Mission*, 41-43), the statements about food (vv. 7, 8b) could be secondary. Cf. *Gos. Thom.* 14: "And if you enter any country and travel from place to place, if someone receives you, eat whatever is set before you; tend to the sick among them."

one is welcomed (located in a town or village, and then in a house), and then of a single case (not localized) of rejection. In Luke, who follows Q, the house–town parallelism is more felicitous without, however, being perfect: in the house, the disciples are the first to act; in the welcoming town, it is the inhabitants who make the first move, before the disciples. As a result, there is a cohabitation between them and the disciples (v. 8b) before the disciples heal or preach (v. 9). The final words of v. 8b (“eat what is set before you”), a repetition of the idea in v. 7b, could have been penned by Luke. The disciples’ activity in the house was to be limited to a greeting conveying peace, whereas in the town they were to perform healings and to proclaim the kingdom. Matthew seems to have used this material to beef up the sending itself (Matt 10:7-8). The order of miracle–preaching (Luke) must go back to Q, even though Luke himself seems to have been fond of it, too (cf. Acts 1:1). Matthew inverted it, following the same theological requirement that made him place the Sermon on the Mount (chaps. 5–7) before the series of miracles (chaps. 8–9). I do not think that the justification proposed by Matthew alone (“You received without payment; give without payment” [Matt 10:8b]) comes from Q. Was it Luke who added the words “near to you” (v. 9), in connection with God’s reign, in order to avoid misunderstanding (since strictly speaking, the reign is still awaited)? The answer to that question is dependent on the connections that exegesis might establish with v. 11b.

The tradition taken over by Mark and the one preserved in Q were in agreement on suggesting to the disciples that they wipe off the dust clinging to their feet when they were not welcomed (in Mark 6:11 and parallels and Luke 10:10-11). Matthew 10:14 was content to

adapt Mark’s version. Luke, who reproduced the text of Mark in Luke 9:5, has here transmitted Q’s version. Was he responsible for adding “into its streets,” a phrase of which he was fond?¹² In any case, the direct style comes from the tradition. Verse 11b (the end of what the disciples were to say to the refractory inhabitants) is found only in Luke. Since it is a confirmation and a correction of v. 9b, we must be dealing with a redactional addition with obvious theological importance. In the main, the simplicity of v. 12 in Luke corresponds to Q. As a reader of the Bible, Matthew paraphrased it by adding Gomorrah and by noting that “that day” (Luke 10:12) would be “the day of judgment” (Matt 10:15).¹³ As is attested by the whole speech, what Matthew and Luke had in front of them was a *Greek* version of Q, probably in written form. It may be asked if the limitation of the mission to Israel, excluding Gentiles and Samaritans (Matt 10:5b-6), did belong to Q.¹⁴ Luke would have crossed out this statement, which was intolerable to his way of thinking, even when resituated in the pre-Easter period.

The ultimately favorable destiny of a guilty town, Sodom (v. 12), led to the literary attraction of the oracle of doom spoken against the towns of Galilee (vv. 13-15), all the more because one word (*ἀνεκτότερον*, “more tolerable,” “with more clemency”) served as a link and because the names of other sinful towns in Scripture are mentioned, namely, Tyre and Sidon. Even if Matthew placed this oracle later (Matt 11:20-24), it would appear that Luke preserved Q’s sequence. The internal differences in the oracle are insignificant, since both Matthew and Luke honored the wording of Jesus’ sayings. The oracle in Q itself is a conglomeration of two “woes” whose parallelism Matthew improved on more than Luke did.¹⁵ The first “woe,” the one announced on Chorazin and

12 Cf. Luke 13:26; 14:21; Acts 5:15 (always plural, as in Matt 6:5 and 12:19, whereas the Apocalypse always has the singular (Rev 11:8; 21:21; 22:2)).
13 The *ἀμήν* in Matt 10:15 must also be redactional.
14 So Schürmann (*Untersuchungen*), who places these verses in Q between Luke 10:7 (house) and Luke 10:8 (town). But I am not satisfied with his conclusion since it breaks the parallelism.
15 Luke prefers *ἐγενήθησαν* over *ἐγένοντο* (Q no doubt). For clarity he adds “sitting” (*καθήμενοι*). It may be that he has deleted *λέγω ὑμῖν* (Matt 11:22) in order to avoid repetition with v. 12. Did

he amend “on the day of judgment” to “at the judgment” for the same reason (cf. v. 12)? There follow in Matthew two sentences unknown to Luke, a secondary syllogism on Sodom (Matt 11:23b, which must serve as a parallel to Matt 11:21) and a doublet to Matt 10:15 par. Luke 10:12. Here again the composition of Matthew appears to be secondary, more developed (cf. the refrain of *πλὴν λέγω ὑμῖν* in v. 22 with v. 24 in Matthew 11). See Joseph A. Comber, “The Composition and Literary Characteristics of Matt 11:20-24,” *CBQ* 39 (1977) 497–504.

Bethsaida, is subdivided into three parts: (a) the woe, (b) justification by means of a comparison, and (c) the apocalyptic perspective. The second part does not have the word “woe” but, with the help of words borrowed from Isa 14:13-15, it does announce with sadness the final humiliation of Jesus’ favorite town, Capernaum. The Q tradition makes use of the literary genre of the oracle against the Gentiles,¹⁶ but applies it here to the towns in Israel, thus respecting a habit of turning the oracles back against Israel, a habit that was rooted in the preaching of the historical Jesus.

Even though the idea being defended, which is the solidarity between Jesus and his envoys, is found elsewhere in the Gospel tradition (cf. Matt 10:40; Mark 9:37; and John 13:20), the location—at the end of the discourse—and the wording of the following saying (v. 16) are definitely redactional. Should we see in Matt 10:40 and Luke 10:16 two rereadings of a single saying of Q?¹⁷ That is not certain. In any case, the Lukan version interprets the welcoming (Matt 10:40: “welcomes”) in terms of listening (cf. Luke 7:47) and stresses the risk of rejection. Unlike in Matt 10:40, we have here in Luke a pointing out of a succession of rejections (ἀθετέω, “reject,” occurs three times), whereas the parallel in Matt 10:40 stresses the welcoming (δέχομαι, “welcome,” occurs four times).¹⁸

The following verses—on this everyone is agreed¹⁹—have been given their structure by Luke. Perhaps under the inspiration of 9:10 par. Mark 6:30, Luke has composed an introduction that includes (a) the joyful return of the disciples and (b) the account of their success, which already announces the theme of victory over the world of demons (v. 17). The Gospel writer next quotes (probably from L) the apocalyptic saying about Satan’s fall (v. 18), to which only John 12:31 (“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be

driven out”) is close. This is the only place in the New Testament where we read of Jesus having a vision. The following saying (v. 19) has no parallel in the Gospels, aside from the content, but not the wording, of the spurious ending of Mark (Mark 16:17-18). The present structural composition of the saying is very Lukan.²⁰ The conviction that it expresses, however, was shared by the earliest Christians. We can find an approximate quotation of it, introduced by the words καὶ πάλιν ἐν ἑτέροις λόγοις ἔφη, “and also he said, in other sayings” in Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with Trypho* 76.6.²¹ The word πλῆν, “nevertheless” (v. 20), which occurs here for the third time (cf. vv. 11b and 14), and which expresses a hesitation, is characteristic of the end of passages that Luke has developed. This hesitation involves the nature of the joy expressed in v. 17; it should not be that of domination of the demons but that of being signed up by God. Did Luke himself compose this verse? That can be doubted when we consider the fact that neither the vocabulary of submission nor the theme of having one’s name written in the heavens is typical of him. Justin’s expression “in other sayings” perhaps alludes to L or another collection of sayings.

Commentary

■ 1 The role Jesus plays here is that of “the Lord” (ὁ κύριος) who is still alive but already enthroned in Luke’s time. He “installed”: the verb ἀναδείκνυμι (“install,” “commission”),²² less common than ἀποδείκνυμι (“appoint”), can take on a certain official flavor (Luke 1:80 spoke of the “installation” [ἀνάδειξις] of John the Baptist with respect to Israel). The coordination of the verbs (“installed” and “sent”) ought not to mislead us; the purpose of the installation was, in fact, the sending.

16 See Lührmann, *Logienquelle*, 64; Schulz, *Q*, 366.

17 This is the opinion of Schulz (*Q*, 457–59).

18 In v. 17, ὑποστρέφω is very Lukan, as are λέγοντες (cf. 20:11), μετὰ καρᾶς (cf. 24:52), and esp. δαιμόνια (cf. 9:1).

19 For example, Lührmann, *Logienquelle*, 60. According to Miyoshi (*Anfang*, 78–80), Luke could have been influenced here by Mark 9:38–40, a text of Mark that Luke has just taken up (Luke 9:49–50), conspicuous for its use of Num 11:24–30. This parallel with Numbers 11 could explain the number of those sent.

20 Similarities in form with v. 19 can be seen in 4:6; 20:2; 21:15; similarities in theme in 22:29. On the other hand, the notion of treading on serpents and scorpions is not found elsewhere in Luke-Acts; likewise the designation of Satan as the “enemy” (but note its occurrence in Matt 13:25, 39).

21 This text is available in Kurt Aland, ed., *Synopsis quattuor evangeliorum* (15th ed., Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996) 262.

22 Retained by D and Old Latin witnesses.

Those whom he chose were “other” disciples²³—other than the Twelve (9:1), that is—rather than “other than” the messengers sent to Samaria (9:52). Their number had to correspond to the number of nations established in Jewish thought. But the manuscript tradition of Luke 10:1, like the Jewish tradition, fluctuated between seventy and seventy-two. I read “seventy-two,” following the text of Genesis 10 in the LXX, rather than “seventy,” the reading of the MT of the Hebrew Bible,²⁴ since Luke customarily follows the text of the LXX rather than that of the Hebrew Bible. Faithful to the missionary rule, which is articulated also in Mark and which was practiced by the earliest Christians (Mark 6:7; cf. Acts 13:2), they went out two by two. They still had a pre-Easter mission that is reminiscent of the sending out of the messengers to Samaria (9:52), which was a preparatory mission, in which they went “before his face”; Luke stresses the implication that they were to go “where he was to go himself.” What we are told in the following verses contradicts this perspective, since nothing more is said of Jesus walking in the footsteps of the seventy-two. The contradiction is diminished, however, if we understand, with the help of the redactional reflection in 22:35-38, that Luke thought of the sending out in Luke 10 as a training exercise, a dress rehearsal. The seventy-two were still under the protection of Jesus’ proximity.²⁵

■ 2 “He said to them”; following Q, what Luke has given us here is an exposition of missionary instructions more than an account of their being put into practice for the first time. The metaphor of the “harvest,” which in

Scripture is applied especially to the judgment, sometimes takes on—and that is only natural—a positive sense. That is the case here (cf. Isa 9:2; Ps 125[126]:5-6),²⁶ as it also is in John 4:35.²⁷ The prayer orients the metaphor²⁸ in the direction of allegory; the Lord of the harvest makes his dramatic appearance on the scene. But joy is threatened by the lack of laborers, and that fear inevitably gives rise to prayer. That is the meaning of v. 2, taken by itself. But when it is set in its present context, it suggests that Jesus’ sending out (vv. 2-3) must correspond to God’s intention. It also indicates that the missionary journey was to begin with a prayer, which in turn naturally implied that other disciples would come to join forces with the seventy-two.

■ 3 “Go”: Luke adds this imperative in order to be able to insert this verse into the hortatory series.²⁹ In spite of fear, a lack of preparedness, and limited means, one must go on one’s way.³⁰ The note of confidence, calm, and absence of cares implied in the verb *ὑπάγω*, “go on your way,” used intransitively, contrasts with the following indication: lambs among wolves. This perilous situation calls to mind the way the earliest Christians felt in their Jewish environment,³¹ but the memory of Scripture (Isa 11:6: “the wolf shall live with the lamb”) also allows hope of an eschatological reconciliation. The *Acts of Philip* (8.15-21 [96–101]) tells how the prophecy was fulfilled in a proleptic way by the conversion to the Gospel of a kid and a leopard (cf. Isa 11:6: “the leopard shall lie down with the kid”).³² 2 *Clement* (5.1-4) attests to the fact that Jesus’ saying was on Christians’ minds and gave rise to

23 The large number of witnesses that read a *καί* before *ἐτέρους* (“still others”) underscores this fact.

24 The Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* (1.40) speaks of the “seventy-two” and not of the “seventy,” a fact already noted by Godet (2:16–17 n. 1). On the seventy or seventy-two, see Bruce M. Metzger, “Seventy or Seventy-Two Disciples?” *NTS* 5 (1958–59) 299–306; and Sidney Jellicoe, “St. Luke and the ‘Seventy(-Two),’” *NTS* 6 (1959–60) 319–21. $\P$ ⁷⁵ reads “seventy-two.”

25 Note the expression *οὗ ἡμελλεν αὐτὸς ἔρχεσθαι*, which implies (a) the motif of the history of salvation and (b) a christological connotation.

26 In the sense of judgment, the “harvest” appears in Isa 17:5.

27 Is there a literary connection between Luke 10:2 and John 4:35? Probably not.

28 Note the equilibrium in the first sentence: *μέν . . . δέ, θερισμός . . . ἐργάται, πολὺς . . . ὀλίγος*.

29 This development corresponds to that which must have taken place in an earlier stage for v. 2: the sentence (now an affirmation) has been doubled from an exhortation (an imperative).

30 The intransitive *ὑπάγω* signifies “to retire” or, as here, “to advance calmly.” The nuance in this case: with confidence.

31 See the statements about persecution (e.g., Luke 6:22) and the accounts of Jewish hostility in Acts (e.g., 6:8-15; 7:54–8:1; 13:44-48).

32 Ambrose (*Exp. Luc.* 7.48–52 [2.24–26]) is acutely aware of heretical wolves as he preaches on account of the events of 386, during which he saved his church from the Arian bishop Auxentius, when the latter laid claim to it with imperial support.

a legendary development: “Wherefore, brethren, let us forsake our sojourning in this world, and do the will of him who called us, and let us not fear to go forth from this world, for the Lord said, ‘Ye shall be as lambs in the midst of wolves,’ and Peter answered and said to him, ‘If then the wolves tear the lambs?’ Jesus said to Peter, ‘Let the lambs have no fear of the wolves after their death.’”³³ Then an allusion to Luke 12:4-5 follows.

In vv. 1-3, there is a rich vocabulary connected with sending (ἀποστέλλω, “send”; ἐκβάλλω, “send out”; ὑπάγω, “go on your way,” in the imperative).³⁴ Even though it corresponded to the social practices of the community of Q, it also served Luke’s purposes in a missionary situation that was admittedly different but not without analogies.³⁵ In the thinking of the Gospel writer it recalled the origins of the Christian movement and—especially in Luke 9—those of the apostolic mission. Jesus, God’s envoy (10:16b), himself dispatched messengers. If we were to look for an antecedent to this move, we would have to turn to the figure of Wisdom; she also came from God and enlisted humans in collaborating in the mission.

■ 4 Verse 4 is concerned with the way in which the disciples were to accomplish their mission; first of all, as in 9:3, severe limits were placed on the gear to be taken along. No “purse,”³⁶ no “bag,” no “sandals”³⁷ were Jesus’ instructions, which ruled out even the minimum that all travelers need to take for their trip. As we have remarked in connection with 9:3, these instructions, typical of Q’s radicalism, had lost their topicality by the time Luke was writing (cf. 22:35-38). Nevertheless, out of deference,

the Gospel writer transmitted them but consigned them to a past time. What he was anxious to emphasize was the missionary’s fragility and dependence on the Lord and the inhabitants of the place being visited. There is a possibility that these instructions were intended to distinguish the Christian missionaries from both Jewish pilgrims and itinerant philosophers. Another possibility is that we have here a revival of the Levitical ideal.³⁸ However—and this is the most important point—for Luke, doing without was no longer a sign of the imminence of God’s reign but the memory of an ideal past, of a time when Jesus’ presence was a guarantee of peace and security.

Verse 4 next communicates a mystifying ban on greeting anyone on the road (which contrasts with the greeting given in a house, v. 5). Different explanations of this ban have been suggested: eschatological haste, concentration on the basic essentials, fear of making contacts and being lured by them, or training for facing hostility.³⁹ After much hesitation, I opt for the idea of choosing one’s priorities. In other words, it is not until one arrives at one’s destination, in a town and then in a given house, that one should greet anyone. Such greetings should be not a simple formality but the expression of the peace that God himself offers.

■ 5-7 Success in a town (vv. 8-11) presupposed access to the houses (vv. 5-7). That is because there was a missionary experience underlying this literary composition. So establishing personal contacts was meant to be a prelude to public proclamation. The house⁴⁰ was to be the place where the first exchanges were to take place. The secu-

33 The English translation is that of Kirsopp Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers* (2 vols.; LCL; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1912-13) 1:135.

34 On the use of ἀποστέλλω in Q in the apocalyptic sense of the prophets who encounter hostility as they are sent to reclaim Israel, see Schulz, *Q*, 414.

35 See François Bovon, “Pratiques missionnaires et communication de l’Évangile dans le christianisme primitif,” in idem, *Révolutions et Écritures: Nouveau Testament et littérature apocryphe chrétienne: Recueil d’articles* (MB 26; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1993) 149-62.

36 Βαλλάντιον (“purse”) is a rare word, but Luke is fond of it (Luke 12:33; 22:35-36). The prohibition corresponds to μήτε ἀργύριον (“nor money”) in Luke 9:3. On πήρα (“satchel”), also found in 9:3, see Wilhelm Michaelis, “πήρα,” *TDNT* 6 (1968)

119-21. The reference here is to a leather satchel for carrying food provisions and not to a satchel for begging. Jesus prohibited carrying provisions, not begging.

37 Cf. Luke 22:35, where one finds these same three words: purse, satchel, and sandals. Luke 9:53 would preclude a change of shirt, but the prohibition did not extend to footwear.

38 See the commentary on 9:3-5 (1:345).

39 Cf. the injunction of Elisha to Gehazi in 2 Kgs (LXX 4 Kgdms) 4:29; Luke 9:62. On this prohibition, see Fitzmyer, 2:847; O’Hagan, “Greet No One on the Way” (Lk 10,4b),” 69-84; Lang, “Grußverbot oder Besuchverbot?” 75-79; and Bosold, *Pazifismus und prophetische Provokation*.

40 Luke alternates between οἶκος and οἰκία. Why? Probably because οἰκία denoted merely the build-

lar acts of eating, drinking, and resting take on value because they serve as vehicles for the communication of the good news. These elements, which are necessary for existence, were to be considered by the missionaries as the limited salary that they nevertheless deserved.⁴¹ The religious “peace” that was to precede the envoys conferred on their mission a sacred dimension. At that time the words were still forceful: “peace” was the fullness of life and relationships, and dynamic and concrete happiness were the signs of the messianic kingdom. That is what a true greeting was meant to be, the opposite of curses that were so commonly uttered, a greeting that could be distinguished from the polite formulas ordinarily exchanged (cf. Matt 5:47). The God who sends his messengers on their way (vv. 3-5) is also the one who accompanies them, for they are talking about his peace. Luke preserved both the Semitic phraseology (“child of peace,” literally “son of peace,” v. 6) and the biblical imagery (the peace associated with a journey and with communication; cf. 1 Sam [1 Kgdms] 25:5-6; like the “wandering” ark of the covenant that could bring either a benediction or a curse; cf. 1 Sam [1 Kgdms] 4-7 and 2 Sam [2 Kgdms] 2). The missionaries were to stay in the first house that welcomed them; it was this gesture of hospitality that counted, rather than comfort or luxury. It was also the best means to avoid creating rivalry among the members of the community that was coming into being.⁴² All it took for communication of the gospel to take place was to have someone there who was a “child of peace.” It was not necessary for that person to be a father who could impose belief on each member of his family, as was the case in ancient religion based on the principle of duty. The only presence that counted was that of those

little children who will be mentioned later, in 10:21. Verses 5-7 say, in a more developed way, what Luke had already said in 9:4 about the mission of the Twelve. ■ 8-9 Towns, being larger than houses, could represent the mission field.⁴³ Proceeding from Galilee to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem to Rome, Luke’s work unfolds thanks to a network of towns and cities. These localities are the nexus of the life, history, power, conversion, implantation, and finally the building up of churches, and the collective acceptance or rejection of the gospel. Luke’s focus on these localities matches his interest in mediations and grows out of his effort to historicize. In other words and in summary, we may say that v. 8 says again in terms of towns what vv. 5-7 said about houses. Once the missionaries get set up in a town they are ready to start work, a *public* work. Verse 9 gives a dazzling summary of the church’s mission in wording that certainly corresponds to the pre-Easter period but which was still timely in Luke’s day. As is often the case, the Gospel writer places the action (“cure,” *θεραπεύω*) before the spoken word (“say,” *λέγω*). The charitable action is expressed by a verb (“cure,” *θεραπεύω*) that lays less stress on the healing, which is not in doubt, than on the care that is required.⁴⁴ Luke, who sketched out the person of Jesus as physician,⁴⁵ has here conferred on his disciples an analogous therapeutic function. The disciples need to pay attention to the care that they must dispense. God will provide the healing, whether it be slow or immediate. The Christian church finds in this command the legitimization of its work of service and hospitality (cf. 10:29-37, where the Samaritan takes charge of the wounded person for as long as necessary).

ing, whereas *οἶκος* denoted not only the building but also its inhabitants.

41 On wages on the servants of God, see Num 18:31; Luke 10:7b par. Matt 10:10b; 1 Cor 9:4-14; Phil 4:18; Gal 6:6; 1 Tim 5:18. Like the sons of Aaron or of Levi, Christian missionaries had no possessions but deserved a part of the offerings in lieu of wages.

42 Ἄν with the subjunctive indicates repetition, a contingency, a condition, or rule (see BDAG, s.v. *ἄν*; and BDF §380.1b). On *ἐπαναπαύομαι* (“to rest,” “find rest,” “support”), see the LXX at Num 11:25-26 and 2 Kgs (4 Kgdms) 2:15, where the Spirit “rests” upon someone. The enclitic particle is often used in composition as it is here: *εἰ δὲ μή γε* is the best way to underscore the nuance “but in case of the opposite,” “but if not.” *Ἀνακάμπω* can take three senses: (a) “to bend back” and (b) in the intransitive and figurative sense “to retrace one’s steps,” “to go and return,” “to walk up and down,” and (c) “to turn away from.” Here it is used in sense (b). See Plutarch *Mor.* 796D; and Diogenes Laertius 5.2; 7.5.

43 The word *πόλις* (“town”) appears five times in vv. 1-16, where it is used to name six different towns.

44 Luke is especially fond of the verb *θεραπεύω* (“to honor,” “to take care of,” “to give medical care to,” “to care for”).

45 See the commentary on 4:40-41 (1:164).

While, according to Luke, John the Baptist did not yet have the right to preach the kingdom (3:3-17), Jesus' disciples, following their master, always have that right. They are even obligated to proclaim the kingdom's imminence, an imminence that the Easter event has modified (the book of Acts maintains the importance of the "kingdom" [βασιλεία] but not that of its imminence). The image conjured up by the Greek verb ἐγγίζω ("draw near," "come near," "approach") is, moreover, more spatial than temporal and is fitting in this chapter, where places play a determining role. Like the peace that can arrive, the kingdom of God has come near. In order to personalize that reality, Luke has added "to you," but he has not lost sight of its objective component, since in v. 11b he recalls, for the sake of the disciples, that the kingdom has come near in an absolute manner, whether the inhabitants of the town accept it or not. This v. 11b is decisive; behind these historical observations⁴⁶ there is the divine decision that the believers know ("know," γινώσκετε)⁴⁷ by virtue of their faith: independent of human desires and whims, God has come near in order to establish his power of peace and justice.

■ **10-11** The rite involving dust corresponds more or less to the solution advocated for the Twelve in 9:5.⁴⁸ The present text stresses the public character of the act ("into its streets"), provides for a word to confirm the act ("say," εἰπατε), and describes the dust in a heavy way (literally, "that which clings to us of your town to our feet"). But the verb used here is less violent than the one in 9:5; there the dust was shaken off (ἀποτινύσσω). Here it is removed by wiping (ἀπομάσσομαι).⁴⁹ Finally, in 9:5 the

act served as testimony against the inhabitants, whereas here the use of "for you" (ὕμῖν) suggests that the disciples leave it with them or give it back to them. That means "we're even" and "we haven't taken anything of yours," thereby implying the end of a relationship rather than an act of cursing.

■ **12** The town, as a collective entity, can be held to be just as responsible and culpable as an individual. Here the Synoptic tradition follows the biblical tradition that dared to condemn Babylon, Nineveh, Sidon, Jerusalem, and Sodom. At home with hyperboles, the Jesus of Q, who has become the Lord of Luke, condemns the town, which has refused the preaching of the kingdom, to a fate worse than that of the guiltiest of the towns of the old covenant.⁵⁰ Jewish literature, which naturally was acquainted with Sodom's guilt and its stubbornness, encouraged people not to follow its attitude, since a similar fate would meet them all.⁵¹ Here the text goes further and the reader discovers that it is more serious to close one's heart and mind to the proclamation of the kingdom of God in the Gospels than to have that attitude toward the Law or the Prophets.

■ **13-14** Next, two towns in Galilee are criticized. The double "woe" (οὐαί) is more of a lamentation than a curse.⁵² The language used here is more than an observation and less than a condemnation. In solidarity with the God of judgment, Jesus prophetically foresees the inexorable fate awaiting these two towns. The names of Chorazin and Bethsaida are anchored in the tradition (Luke himself does not pay them any attention elsewhere).⁵³ The fatal error of these towns was that, unlike Nineveh

46 Note the important usage of πλὴν ("but," "only," "nevertheless") in vv. 11b, 14, 20, where it indicates a reservation: in spite of human weakness or refusal, God acts or has acted.

47 On knowing God or God's purpose in Luke, see Luke 1:77; 11:52. On being ignorant of God or of God's purpose, see Acts 3:17; 17:30. See also Bovon, "Le Dieu de Luc," in idem, *L'œuvre*, 235–37.

48 See the commentary on 9:3-5 (1:346).

49 See Paul Joüon, "Notes philologiques sur les évangiles," *RSR* 18 (1928) 353.

50 On Sodom in the OT, see Genesis 19. See also the comparisons with Sodom in Isa 1:9; Jer 23:14; 49:18. In Judaism, Sodom is infamous for its sin (*Jub.* 13:17; *Bib. Ant.* 8:2) and for the just punishment that it received (*Jub.* 20:6; *T. Naph.* 3:4; *T. Ash.* 7:1; *T. Benj.* 9:1; *Bib. Ant.* 45:2). *Jubilees* 20:6 and 22:22

compare idolaters with the people of Sodom. In *Asc. Isa.* 3:10, Isaiah is reproached by a false prophet for having called Jerusalem "Sodom."

51 Accordingly, OT and Jewish tradition adheres to a comparison between them (e.g., Jer 50:40 [LXX 27:40]).

52 See the commentary on 6:24 (1:225).

53 Chorazin is not mentioned either in the OT or in Josephus. It is cited by Eusebius *Onom.* 303 (*Eusebius Werke* 3:147 GCS) and by Jerome *Comm. in Is.* 3 (*PL* 24:127), but they differ as to its precise location. Several modern scholars have identified Chorazin with the ruins of an important city at Kh. Kerazeh, which is just a few kilometers from Capernaum (see Fitzmyer, 2:853). The present-day picture of this town in ruins is perhaps the best commentary on this verse. On Bethsaida, situated on the shoreline

(cf. Jonah 3:6 and Luke 11:32), they did not repent. This is a biblical theme: God offers one last chance through the proclamation by a prophet or through the evidence of a sign: the “deeds of power,” “miracles” (*δυνάμεις*) done “in you” (we are to understand “by Jesus”) have not occasioned any repentance (the verb “to repent” [*μετανοέω*] occurs in v. 13). These recalcitrant towns were not able to adopt a penitent attitude, clothe themselves in sackcloth made of goat’s wool, or sit on a heap of ashes while scattering them on their head.⁵⁴ In the face of such signs, such miracles, those proud foreign cities would have given way before God a long time ago (*πάλαι*) and repented.⁵⁵ Their eschatological fate (“at the judgment” [*ἐν τῇ κρίσει*]) will be more tolerable than that of the towns in Galilee.

■ **15** At this point, the voice takes on a more urgent tone (“And you, Capernaum” [*καὶ σύ, Καφαρναούμ*]). We can feel emotion, sadness, and betrayed affection breaking in. The ancient oracle against Babylon (Isa 14:14-15) is here turned around and directed against a town in Israel, Capernaum, the town where Jesus’ message has rung out the most.⁵⁶ Although we do not know what that town’s ambitions were, we can readily understand what fate awaited it: being brought down to hell.⁵⁷

■ **16** Luke finishes off this speech to the seventy-two with an assertion of the solidarity between the messengers and the one who gave them their mandate (cf. 9:48a).

We thereby uncover a line of communication that starts from God (“the one who sent me”), passes on to Jesus (“me”), and ends up with the disciples (“you”). Since the one speaking demonstrates an imperturbable prophetic conscience, the envoys cannot fail to sense their worth and feel protected by their ties to him, and through him to God. Not being listened to⁵⁸ and being rejected⁵⁹ were to be painful experiences for them. On the other hand, although the disciples were to be turned away and not understood, they would be consoled by their communion with the Father and the Son.

■ **17-19** The envoys come back and tell their story. The reader will notice (a) that Luke is not interested here in the installments of the story of their mission, or even in the missionaries themselves; (b) that the success of the messengers is expressed in terms of exorcism and not conversion; (c) that the text is a reflection on the nature and origin of true joy (v. 17, “with joy,” *μετὰ χαρᾶς*; and v. 20, “do not rejoice . . . rejoice,” *μὴ χαίρετε . . . χαίρετε*).

Jesus’ saying, that Luke was keen to put at the center of the pericope (v. 18), establishes its isotopy: that of exorcisms and not of preaching. The Christian conviction is that, since the coming of Jesus, the demons’ strength has waned; the demons submit to the power and to the “name” of Jesus Christ (v. 17b). This conviction ensured the success of Christianity⁶⁰ and played out in

of the lake northeast of the mouth of the Jordan, see the commentary on 9:10-17 (1:354 n. 7).

54 Most often a dark color, “sackcloth” was a piece of coarse fabric that was worn around the waist (the upper portion of the body being left naked) as a vestment of mourning and of penitence. Other gestures of lamentation or of penitence that accompanied the wearing of “sackcloth” include beating one’s breast, cutting one’s hair, and sitting in ashes (Jonah 3:6; Job 2:8; Matt 6:16).

55 See the oracles against Tyre and Sidon in Isaiah 23 and Ezekiel 26–28, paired together in Jer 47:4; Joel 4:4 (LXX 3:4); Zech 9:2. In the intertestamental literature, these two cities are less prominent than Sodom.

56 At the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, Luke indeed shows less concern for Capernaum (4:23, 31; 7:1) than for Nazareth (4:16-30), but later he makes it a home base for activity.

57 Luke uses the word “Hades,” which I translate as

“hell,” only twice, here in v. 15 and in 16:23. With the exception of 12:1, Luke avoids the strange word. As for *ἄβυσσος* (8:31), it does not necessarily refer to the abode of the dead. On the contrast between exaltation and abasement, see Eph 4:8-10.

58 Notice how the text personalizes the communication. It does not say “whoever listens to the word” or “to your word,” but “whoever listens to you.”

59 In Luke, the verb *ἀθετέω* occurs only here in this passage (four times) and in 7:30, and it means “to declare invalid,” “to annul,” “to break” (a treaty or a promise), “to repulse,” “to reject.”

60 On the phrase “treading on serpents and scorpions,” see Ps 91 (LXX 90):13 (but the names of the animals do not correspond to those in Luke 10:10). See also Mark 16:17-18 and Justin (*Dial.* 76.6), who draws a connection between the text of the psalm and Luke 10:19. Serpents and scorpions are the first dangers to menace Israel in the desert (Deut 8:15). To resist them is to resist temptation and sin (see

narrative fashion in the apocryphal literature and later, the hagiographic literature.⁶¹ The source of Christian joy is to be located elsewhere, however, namely, in the conviction of being known and protected by God.⁶² Be that as it may, this relationship to God is lived out here below in superiority in the face of the world of demons. The role of intermediary, which Jesus played between God and God's children, noted in v. 16, turns up again here in v. 19 with a strong emphasis: "See, I have given you authority. . . ." This is an authority that both triumphs and protects.

In order for this authority to be communicable to Christians, Satan had to be defeated. That is the way eschatology was to be fulfilled. The fall of the tyrant, for example, the king of Babylon (Isa 14:12-14), which the biblical prophets perceived and announced ahead of time, was understood in the intertestamental literature as being the fall of Satan himself.⁶³ Luke placed Jesus in this prophetic and apocalyptic stream. With the speed of lightning, Satan fell from heaven.⁶⁴ So the events of the end-time were being played out. As a privileged seer, Jesus was witness to the expulsion and fall of the accuser and tempter, Satan.⁶⁵ Luke created the scenario of the victorious return of the seventy-two in order to put the spotlight on this apocalyptic vision. In his thinking, Jesus was not just a spectator of this routing of the Evil One; he was God's principal adjunct. Even though he only

witnessed the fall, he nevertheless participated in the defeat of Satan's militia,⁶⁶ in the casting out of demons (cf. Luke 11:20), and in a more general way in the victory over evil.⁶⁷ On the other hand, for Luke, as for the Seer John (Rev 12:7-18), Satan's expulsion from heaven did not mean that he was slain once and for all. He still had some last might to throw into the fray. His power *on earth* still had to be blocked step by step by Christ's troops.⁶⁸

The task for our times is to demythologize this doctrinal certitude (or, more exactly, to remythologize it in contemporary idiom): the Gospel, especially this v. 18 in Luke 10, assures us that in Jesus Christ, God decided to overcome evil and that the deity has accomplished the first half of this project. Christians live in the tense situation in which the victory is assured in the middle of the turmoil. They already share in the triumph, the fellowship, and the love, all the while being subject to the last assaults of suffering and dying.

What cheers them up, what must cheer them up, according to v. 20, is not the seductive euphoria of victory but the unshakable assurance of being loved by God. Saying that our names are written in heaven (or in the book of life, Rev 3:5) means that we believe that only God's memory assures the continuity of our life into eternity. This conviction, which is a source of joy, is the ground of our hope against all hope (Rom 4:18).

Miyoshi, *Anfang*, 102). Must one understand this verse in a literal sense? In "Étude critique de Luc 10,9," (in Delorme and Duplacy, *La parole de grâce*, 87-100), Pierre Grelot contends for the figurative sense "victory over evil." But I plead for a literal sense that is open to figurative interpretation.

61 See Rosa Söder, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und die romanhafte Literatur der Antike* (Würzburger Studien zur Altertumswissenschaft 3; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1932; reprinted 1969) 51-102; and Alain Boureau, *La légende dorée: Le système narratif de Jacques de Voragine* (†1298) (Histoire; Paris: Cerf, 1984) 153-65.

62 On names written in heaven, see Hagemeyer, "Freut euch, daß eure Namen im Himmel verzeichnet sind!" 160-63; and Fitzmyer, 2:863-64. In the background stands an idea inspired by the royal archives of the ancient Near East, a record of life, a list of those who belong to God. See Exod 32:32-33; Ps 69:28 (LXX 69:29); Mal 3:16-17; *Jub.* 30:19-23; *1 Enoch* 47:3; Rev 3:5, etc.

63 See Puig i Tàrrach, "Lc 10, 18," 217-43.

64 See *ibid.*; and Rosenstiehl, "La chute de l'Ange," 37-60. When Puig i Tàrrach and Rosenstiehl traced the theme of Satan's fall through Jewish and Christian literature, they found that the devil is hurled down from heaven by God either because he challenged God as a rival or because he refused to respect humankind as God's new creation. Among the numerous texts that they uncovered are *2 Enoch* (long recension) 29:4-5; *Life of Adam and Eve* 14-16; Rev 12:7-18. On Satan and Luke, see "Excursus: The Devil" in the commentary in chap. 4 (1:141-42).

65 Notice how the aspect of the past tense and the duration of this event are indicated by the use of the imperfect: ἐθεώρου ("I was contemplating").

66 In spite of what others have said, I believe that the power of evil spirits in the Judaism of that time was associated with the power of Satan.

67 See n. 60 above.

68 Among the textual problems posed by vv. 17-20, there is the uncertainty about the order of the

History of Interpretation

At the end of the second century,⁶⁹ Irenaeus of Lyons utilized one or another of the verses in this pericope in a doctrinal context or corrected the interpretation being given it by Gnostic adversaries. Thus, the presence of the seventy disciples allowed him to rule out the Gnostic interpretation of the Twelve as figures of the twelve eons emanating from Man and the Church (since there was no group of seventy eons in the system under attack) (*Adv. haer.* 2.21.1). So the knowledge of the gospel depends on the apostolic preaching authorized by the one who said, “Whoever listens to you listens to me . . .” (v. 16) (*Adv. haer.* 3. prologue). Consequently the creed proclaims the true passion and the Easter victory of Christ, who sent the Paraclete on earth, to which the devil had been cast down like a flash of lightning (*Adv. haer.* 3.17.3), and who gave his disciples the authority to tread on snakes and scorpions (v. 19) (*Adv. haer.* 2.20.3).⁷⁰ So, as a theologian, Irenaeus restructured the Lukan text, taking as his starting point a confession of faith that was attuned to Christ’s passion and resurrection.

For his part, Clement of Alexandria quoted the saying about the plentiful harvest (Matt 9:37 par. Luke 10:2) in the context of the parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30).

In his opinion, the “laborers” are those who proclaim the Word of God, whether by hand or by word, that is, by written or by oral communication.⁷¹

It is as difficult to read Tertullian of Africa’s *Adversus Marcionem* as it is to understand Racine’s *Plaideurs* if we do not understand the historical background. We miss the allusions, and its irony plunges us into uncertainty. It seems clear, however, that Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* 4.24) was putting up a fight step by step against his enemy, Marcion, and was contradicting, verse by verse, the interpretation that Marcion had developed in his “Antitheses.”⁷² The constant thrust of Tertullian’s argumentation was to show that, by his commands, Jesus was not opposed to the Hebrew Bible but confirmed it or fulfilled it. For example, the order to greet no one on the road is closely akin to the order Elisha gave to Gehazi (2 Kgs [4 Kgdms] 4:29, a recurring parallel drawn throughout the history of Christianity); thus, if the kingdom comes near, that means that it was far away, but if it was far away, then it was already in existence. In spite of Marcion’s recriminations, the newness of Christianity was not absolute.⁷³

When preaching on Luke 10, Ambrose, bishop of Milan, expounded on it allegorically (*Exp. Luc.* 7.44–65). The framework of contemporary ethological knowledge made it possible for him to identify the wolves with the

words in the second half of v. 18, the uncertainty about the tense of the verb “to give” in the first half of v. 19 (present or perfect?), and the uncertainty about the reading in the latter half of that verse (a double negative with the subjunctive or a simple negation with the future?).

- 69 There are scattered instances as early as the end of the first century where certain statements found in Luke 10:1-20 are quoted in a free manner either directly from Luke’s Gospel or from oral traditions: the wages of the worker (v. 7) in 1 Tim 5:8 and in *Did.* 13.1-2; the lambs and the wolves (v. 3) in 2 *Clem.* 5.2 (see pp. 25–26 above) and in the apocryphal epistle of Pseudo-Titus on virginity (the citation is in Aland, *Synopsis*, 259); the listening to the witnesses (v. 16) in Justin *I Apol.* 16.10 and 63.5; the power over the serpents (v. 19) in Mark 16:18 (inauthentic ending) and in Justin *Dial.* 76.6; the harvest (v. 2) in *Gos. Thom.* 73; and the welcoming in the towns and the healing of the sick (vv. 8–9) in *Gos. Thom.* 14.

- 70 Irenaeus understands here “the power of the enemy” (v. 19b) as “the initiator of apostasy.”

- 71 Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 1.7.1) says that the workers are *βραχέεις* (“small” in number), where Matthew and Luke have *ὀλίγοι* (“few” in number). Gregory the Great (*Moral.* 27.30.54) understands v. 2 as an illustration of preaching. Bonaventure (*Comm. in Luc.* 10.4, p. 254) compares good preachers to the harvesters who carry out their work thanks to the sword of God’s word.

- 72 Marcion must have considered the behavior of the Israelites in carrying out the Egyptian vessels during the exodus (Exod 12:34-36) to be robbery and so must have opposed the attitude of the disciples as depriving themselves even of the necessities of life by order of Jesus.

- 73 Concerning our verses, there is extant a fragment of Origen (*Hom. in Luc.* frg. 69, ed. Rauer 158 [*Origenes Werke* 9:290 GCS]; cf. Origen, *Hom. in Luc.*, p. 519). It bears on the expression “two by two” (v. 1) and stresses the antiquity of the arrangement (cf. Moses and Aaron) that favors a mutual strengthening in the ministry of the word (Origen refers to Prov 18:19 and Eccl 4:9).

heretics and implicitly attack one of them, his enemy Auxentius, the Arian bishop involved in the quarrel over basilicas (in the year 386). As long as the shepherd, that is, the bishop, is there, the flock is not threatened. But he still needs to see the wolf before it sees him. Otherwise, according to ancient zoological concepts, the wolf will take away his voice! What is more—in the eschatological perspective—the sending out of the lambs into the midst of wolves must result in a final reconciliation, as announced in the prophecy in Isa 65:25. Jesus' restrictions on carrying a beggar's bag and sandals (Ambrose adds a staff, with Matthew) allowed Ambrose to create a harmonious composition in which the dominant themes were glorious poverty (no beggar's bag), renunciation of mortal attachments (the leather in the sandals) and giving up of power (the staff).⁷⁴ Finally, Ambrose exquisitely juxtaposes the refusal to greet any travelers ("in the presence of divine orders, human considerations must temporarily be set aside" [*Exp. Luc.* 7.64])⁷⁵ and the proclamation of peace to those who lived in the house (*Exp. Luc.* 7.63).

In the fifth century, Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria, devoted five sermons to these verses (*Hom. in Luc* 60–64).⁷⁶ The most significant one of them, the first (*Hom.* 60), spoke of the mission of the seventy itself.⁷⁷ Taking as his starting point a Christology of salvation (the only Son has justified us by faith, purified us, and liberated us from fallen Satan), Cyril declared that this new world inaugurated in Christ needed to be proclaimed: by the Twelve to Israel, then by the seventy to the whole world. Cyril found a prefiguration in Scripture of the path leading from the event to its being preached about: it was announced not only by the choice of the seventy elders installed by Moses (Num 11:16) but also, following a typological exegesis that could already be found in Tertullian's writings (*Adv. Marc.* 4.24), by the

description of the site of Elim with its twelve wells and its seventy palm trees (Exod 15:27).

The Venerable Bede provided an allegorical explanation of v. 4a. Money, that is, wisdom, remains hidden in the purse. But, according to Sir 41:14, hidden wisdom is useless.⁷⁸ Concerning v. 4b ("greet no one"), Bonaventure furnished a palette of allegorical interpretations. So one must not greet anyone on the road since salvation is offered not in order to carry on a dialogue with the saints but to imitate them. It is life (*vita*) and not the road (*via*) that must be shared with them.⁷⁹

In connection with the dust to be wiped off (vv. 10-11), Bonaventure brought up preachers, whom he compared to one's feet, while the triple dust that threatened them stands for the world's lack of seriousness, that is, the preachers' vainglory, when they are praised; impatience, when their message is not received; and greed, when they are offered remuneration.⁸⁰ In the background of this allegory of the feet, there is probably the text of Isa 52:7 ("How beautiful . . . are the feet of the messenger who . . . brings good news") and the Johannine account of foot washing (John 13). Clement of Alexandria (*Paed.* 2 [8].63.2) had already pointed out that Jesus washed his disciples' feet in order to purify them for preaching.

In commenting on v. 18, the *Glossa ordinaria*⁸¹ gives us Satan as an example not to follow. If the devil himself could be thrown down to earth, how much more do we, who come from the earth, risk the same humiliating fate when we attempt to raise ourselves up by our pride.

When we get to the reformer Calvin, we find once again the relationship between the Twelve ("in order to wake up the Jews to the hope of the salvation that is to come") and the seventy ("in order to spread the news of Christ's coming in all places"). But marked by the humanism of his time, Calvin also gave a historical explanation of the number seventy (it was the number

74 In this connection, he writes: "For he has sent them to sow the faith not through coercion but through teaching, not by showing the strength of their power, but by exalting the doctrine of humility."
75 Ed. Tissot, 2:30. As for Chrysostom (*Hom. in Matt.* 46 or 47 [PG 58:480]), he cites v. 8 in order to say that mutual love is more important than fasting.
76 Payne Smith, *Cyril*, 1:272–95.
77 Ibid., 1:272–76). The passage summarized here is preserved in Greek (frg. 100 in Reuss, *Lukas-Kom-*

mentare, 106). A dozen Greek fragments of *Hom. in Luc.* 60–64 are extant; see Reuss, *Lukas-Kommentare*, 106–10.

78 Bede, *In Luc.* 3.1928–37 (ed. Hurst, p. 215).

79 Bonaventure, *Comm. in Luc.* 10.10 (ed. Bernardini, p. 255).

80 Ibid., 10.20 (pp. 258–59).

81 *Glossa ordinaria*, Luke 10:17-18 (PL 114:285).

of the elders in Exod 18:22 and Num 11:24-30 and of the members of the Sanhedrin that King Herod decided to do away with) before coming to his half-historical, half-theological conclusion: "It appears now that the Lord orders seventy heralds to publicize his coming, in order to promise and give hope of the re-establishment of the state that had fallen."⁸²

Further on, Calvin analyzes v. 16, which gives him the occasion to reflect on pastoral ministry, caught up in a chain of accreditations: "And on the contrary, God has decided to govern his Church by means of the ministry of men, and he even often takes from among the common stock those whom he makes into ministers of the Word." The saying in Luke increases the standing of this ministry: "It is, then, a matter for praise and particular commendation of this external ministry, when Jesus Christ says that all the respect and honor accorded to men's preaching, provided it is pure and faithful, God accepts as being accorded to himself." It follows that it is in our interest to (a) "embrace the doctrine of the Gospel" and (b) have confidence in such a human testimony. And it is also in our interest to recognize (before laying into the pope)⁸³ that "this passage gives magnificent authorization to the status of pastors who faithfully exercise their charge in single-minded love."

Verses 19-20, which speak of names being written in the heavens, could not fail to inspire Calvin. When the disciples returned, Jesus had no reservations about the excellence of the divine gift that they had just applied with success. But, as Calvin wrote, "there is something else that is higher, to which they should give their principal attention." For him, reading v. 20, this higher reality, source of the true joy, could only be "God's free election." Here Christ "wished to touch on the beginning from which all these blessings had proceeded, i.e., God's free election, so that they would not give themselves any of the credit."⁸⁴

Conclusion

Coming back to Luke, here is what I would say by way of conclusion. As there are two types of commissioning stories, one concerning the apostles' names (cf. 5:27-28), the other remaining indeterminate (9:57-62), in Luke there are also two kinds of installation, one of the Twelve, whose names are listed (6:12-16), and another of the anonymous seventy-two (10:1), as well as two sending-off speeches (9:1-6 and 10:1-20). Unlike the Twelve, whose mission was concentrated on Israel, the seventy-two represent the Christian mission among the Gentiles, such as it was practiced in Luke's time. These messengers are sent "before his face," as had been their companions into the Samaritan village (9:52-56). However, it is a question no longer of going on ahead to prepare Jesus' arrival but of going to announce God's reign, as Jesus himself had done. The collaboration is thus one of a different order: it resembles a delegation, as v. 16 suggests. Nevertheless, since the episode occurs before Easter, it has also and foremost the character of a dry run, a dress rehearsal. With time would come Christ's passion and the true mission of the disciples (cf. 22:35-38). As may be seen, Luke tried to paint a historical picture of the life of Jesus and sketch a normative view of the Christian mission at the same time. As a historian, he was aware that contemporary evangelization (cf. his accounts in the Acts of the Apostles) was carried out in a way different from Jesus' and his disciples' attempts at missionary work (cf. Luke 9:1-6 and 10:1-20). Luke was, however, also a theologian and, in addition to the changes, he noted the permanent features of the proclamation of the gospel. Among these abiding features, we should note the following points:

82 Jean Calvin, *Harmonia ex tribus Evangelistis composita Matthaeo, Marco, et Luca; adiuncto seorsum Iohanne, quod pauca cum aliis communia habeat; cum Ioannis Calvini Commentariis* (Geneva: Robertus Stephanus [= Robert Estienne], 1555), translated as John Calvin, *A Harmony of the Gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke* (trans. A. W. Morrison [vols. 1, 3] and T. H. L. Parker [vol. 2]; 3 vols.; Calvin's Commentaries 1-3; Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1972) 2:13 (cited from the English translation).
83 Ibid., 2:17-18.
84 Ibid., 2:19-20.

- The Lord is the one who sends (v. 1).
- The mission is one of the stages in the history of salvation (v. 2).
- The mission and suffering go hand in hand (v. 3).
- In evangelization, it is not just a matter of giving; in the exchange, there is also receiving (v. 7).
- The deed accompanies the word (v. 9).
- The earliest community was centered in homes (vv. 5-7).
- Thought must be given to which means to use or not to use; in other words, the question is raised as to how missionaries are to be trained, as well as how they are to act.
- The Lord God and the Lord Jesus, although they are the senders, do not remain inactive. The reign is ever dawning, whether or not those who receive it accept that fact.

Once the disciples have been sent off, they are of necessity separated from their Lord. That certainly does not mean that all communion with him is cut off, but it is lived in the context of the way faith operates: contact with God is not direct but rather mediated by prayer (v. 2), and henceforth the relationship with Christ partakes of the character of analogy and delegation (v. 16). The disciples, whose anonymity allows us to identify with them, are called to a mature faith. Christ's presence is symbolically summarized by his name (v. 17).

This text takes into account an intense reflection on missionary practice, both the means that are available and the attitudes that are to be adopted. This reflection takes place in a realistic framework, not a utopian one. The kingdom of God, whose lively expansion is announced in vv. 6-10, does not, for the time being, assert itself as being something that is self-evident or a constraint. Nevertheless, it does possess objectivity, and its being near does not depend on either its proclaimers or their listeners. If the life of men, women, and children is to be enriched by this reign, it must be received subjectively. In order to respect this liberty, the God who is coming is mediated through the hands and voices of his human envoys—hence the importance given to mediating agents. In order to avoid the misunderstandings of a theology of glory that would risk puffing up the missionaries, the Lukan Christ strenuously limits the means that may be used, according to the biblical concept of

the holy war. Human intermediaries are necessary, but, in order for the glory of success to redound to God, they will be limited in number and given limited provisions, as Gideon and David were. Since it is a venture of faith, membership will be voluntary. Believing that the kingdom will be drawing near involves accepting the fact that the Christians' God makes himself known, around a table as it were, by means of humans speaking to each other. But it still truly is God and God's kingdom whose presence is to become a reality. Here and there, we read that this human speech will be completed by actions and even by deeds of power, what we call miracles, healings, and exorcisms (vv. 13, 17, and 19), in line with what is found in the rest of the Gospel. These acts will have the force of signs rather than proofs, which will classify them in the category of the word that invites and does not coerce.

Although preachers, their speech, and their actions can be counted among these mediating agents, that is also true of the listeners, the towns in which they live, their houses, and their meal tables. Moreover, the distinction between evangelists and those who are evangelized will tend to fade, since every person spoken to who accepts the transformation represented by repentance and conversion (*μετάνοια*, v. 13) will in turn become a messenger of the good news.

This strategy on God's part for reaching human beings, through his Son and his envoys, by persuasive rather than coercive means, is not without risks, which are also both objective and subjective. The text pays attention to adversaries, compared to wolves (v. 3). The text speaks of enemies in a mythological mode, in terms of Satan, fallen from heaven, therefore dethroned, and on earth, thus near and threatening (v. 18), and of demons to be exorcised (v. 17). The mention of "wolves" leads us to understand that these objective forces of evil are incarnated in human beings. However, we are not told their names or their categories; this is undoubtedly because no one is of necessity an enemy or lost forever to the cause of the gospel. Any witch hunting is prohibited.

The dominant theme at the end of the pericope is joy, in spite of the fact that God is absent and Christ is distant, and in spite of dangers from the enemy (v. 19) and his henchmen (vv. 3 and 17). This is the joy of the kingdom of God, which has really come near, in spite

of war and death (v.11b), which are still active; it is also the joy over the election of believers who know that they are loved for all eternity (the image of our names being written in the book of life; v. 20); and the joy of life in the present, with all the risks and excitement it involves

by virtue of the task we have been given, the successes we count on, and the fellowship with our collaborators. Finally, it is the joy inherent in being a part of a circle of believers and having a link to the Father through the Son (v. 16).