

Commentary on Luke's Gospel

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SECTION 4 (9.51-11.54).

Jesus Sets His Face Towards Jerusalem Followed By Centring on the Lord's Prayer For The Evangelisation of the World (9.51-11.54).

This section commences with Jesus setting His face towards Jerusalem because the time for Him to be received up (as mentioned in 9.22, 31, 44) is approaching, and it centres around the Lord's Prayer for the evangelisation of the world (11.1-4) which is exemplified throughout.

This is apparent from an analysis:

- a 'And it came about when the days were well nigh come that He should be received up He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem' (9.51).
- b The Samaritans reject Him because of the physical place to which He is going. They do not look underneath to the heart. Nevertheless there is no woe on the Samaritans (9.52-56).
- c Call to discipleship and singleness of purpose so that they may proclaim the Kingly Rule of God (9.57-62).
- d The seventy go out preaching seeking men to win under the Kingly Rule of God - woes on the cities who reject them (10.1-15).
- e "He who hears you hears Me, and he who Hears Me hears Him Who sent me" (10.16).
- f The disciples rejoice because the devils are subject to them, Jesus declares 'I saw Satan fallen from heaven.' They will be delivered from serpents and scorpions (10.17-20).
- g Jesus rejoices in the Spirit, God has revealed His truth to babes, and given to His Son the privilege of revealing Him (10.21-24).
- h About the Good Samaritan who responds and gives good things to the one in need (10.25-37).
- i About Martha who serves well and feeds Jesus and the Apostles, and Mary who chooses the better part, the presence of Jesus (10.38-42).
- j The Lord's Prayer for the evangelisation of the world (11.1-4).
- i About the friend at midnight who responds and feeds his friend (11.5-8).
- h God will freely give from His goodness to those who reveal their need of Him (11.9-10)
- g Those who come to Him as Father will receive good things, (not serpents and scorpions), including the Holy Spirit given to those who seek Him (11.11-13).
- f The Pharisees accuse Jesus of being aligned with Satan because the devils are subject to Him, and He describes Satan's total humiliation and defeat (11.14-22).
- e "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me, scatters" (11.23).
- d Evil spirits are out looking for men to possess. Woe to the present generation for rejecting the Great One and His preaching (11.24-32).
- c The light is shining and men should open their eyes to it with singleness of eye and let it fill their lives (11.33-36).
- b The Scribes and Pharisees reject Him because He refuses to conform to their physical requirements, for they also do not look at the heart. But there are woes on the Pharisees, for they should know better (11.37-52).
- a 'And when He was come out from there the Scribes and Pharisees began to press

Him hard and provoke Him to speak of many things lying in wait for Him to catch something out of His mouth' (11.53-54).

Note that in 'a' mention is made of Jesus being 'received up' as a result of the action of His enemies, and in the parallel the Scribes and Pharisees are trying to entrap Him so that they can accuse Him. In 'b' the Sadducees are influenced by the physical place to which He is going, they do not look at the heart, however, no woe is to be declared on the Samaritans, but in the parallel the Pharisees are influenced by His failure to conform to their physical requirements, they too do not look at the heart, but woes are declared on the Pharisees for they should have known better. In 'c' men are called to follow Him with singleness of purpose, and in the parallel they are called to singleness of eye. In 'd' the seventy go out preaching and woes are declared on those who do not hear, and in the parallel evil spirits go out looking for men to possess and Jesus speaks of woes on the people because they reject His preaching. In 'e' there is a saying of Jesus, and in the parallel a similar saying is given. In f there is rejoicing over the defeat of Satan, and in the parallel Jesus is accused of complicity with Satan and describes his total defeat. In 'g' Jesus rejoices in the Spirit and reveals the Father to His own, and in the parallel the Holy Spirit is given to those who ask the Father for Him. In 'h' the Good Samaritan gives good gifts to the one in need, while in the parallel God will respond to those who reveal their need of Him. In 'i' Jesus is fed and in the parallel the friend at midnight is fed. Central to the whole passage in 'j' is the Lord's prayer, which is reflected throughout the surrounding material.

Connections In This Passage With the Lord's Prayer.

Central to this section is the Lord's Prayer in Lucan form as follows:

- **'Father.'** See 10.21-22; 11.11-13, the first full revelation in Luke of the special nature of the Father in relation to His special people. Compare 1.32; 2.49; 6.36; 9.26.
- **'Hallowed be Your Name.'** This has in mind the prophecy of Ezekiel 36.23-32 where we learn that His name is to be hallowed by the future outpouring of the Spirit and the transformation of His true people. See 10.21 where the Spirit is connected with the full revelation of God to His people; and 11.13 which refer to the Holy Spirit's coming. But His Name will also be hallowed by the coming about of His Kingly Rule (9.62; 10.9, 11.20) and His judgment on sinners (10.13-15), and by His being known in the eyes of many nations (Ezekiel 38.23). If we take its wider meaning of ensuring that His name is treated with reverence and worship and is not blasphemed (Isaiah 8.13; 29.23) we can consider 11.14-52 where the hypocrisy of those who claimed to be His mouthpiece and brought shame on Him is condemned. See especially 11.19-20, 42, 49.
- **'Your Kingly Rule come.'** See 9.52-10.20 which are concerned with the spread of the Kingly Rule of God. Also 11.20 where the coming of the Kingly Rule of God causes the defeat of Satan. The Good Samaritan can also be seen as establishing the Kingly Rule of God (see on that passage).
- **'Give us day by day tomorrow's bread.'** See 10.38-42; 11.5-8 which speak of the provision of food. The Good Samaritan also provides the needy Jew, who represents the people of God, with his daily food. We see there an example of how God does cause His people to be fed, often through strangers.
- **'Forgive us our sins for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.'** See 10.25-37 where the good Samaritan personifies forgiveness.
- **'And bring us not into testing.'** See 10.25; 11.16, the deliverance from Satan (11.14-26) and the comparison of those who will be brought into testing (11.37-53), of whose teaching the disciples must beware lest it test them (12.1).
- **And possibly 'deliver us from the evil one'.** See 10.17-20; 11.14-26.

The Father's special concern and something of His nature is shown in 10.21-22; 11.11-13. The dedicated disciples and the seventy are appointed in order to hallow God's name and establish

the Kingly Rule of God, (see 9.57-10.20), and there is rejoicing over deliverance from the Enemy (10.17-24). The Good Samaritan exemplifies the Kingly Rule of God coming to bring provision and salvation from a non-Temple source when the Temple has failed, including 'daily food' and the willingness to forgive others. The provision of 'bread' is described in different ways from 10.25-11.13, illustrating the giving of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is constantly 'tested' (specifically mentioned in 10.25; 11.16). But He will not bring His own into testing, delivering them by the defeat of Satan (11.14-26), and by His teaching as the greatest of all teachers bringing light instead of darkness (11.27-36), while He will bring the Scribes and Pharisees into Judgment where they will be thoroughly tested (11.37-53), because they have refused the light.

So it will be noted that the Section follows this overall pattern, the spreading of the Kingly Rule of God; the provision of bread, which illustrates the coming of the Holy Spirit; the confrontation with and defeat of evil spirits by the Stronger than he; the presence of the Greatest of Teachers Who comes bringing light which divides men into those who seek the light and those who remain in darkness; ending with those who remain in darkness and are condemned. And all is exemplified in the Good Samaritan who comes bringing eternal life, life to the dead.

Jesus Sets His Face Towards Jerusalem.

9.51 'And it came about, when the days were well-nigh come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.'

We have already seen in 9.22, 31, 44 that Jesus' destiny is to die in Jerusalem. We are now told that the remainder of Luke's Gospel is to be read in that light. All that is said from now on is to have as its background His coming death and resurrection. Note how by implication His death and resurrection are seen together. This was specifically so in 9.22, it is shown to be so in 9.44 by the use of the term 'exodus' as a synonym for 'death and what lies beyond', and here by the description of His being 'received up' (compare 13.33). The two terms used in the latter two cases connect Him to Moses and Elijah, for Moses led the Exodus of God's people out of Egypt and Elijah was 'received up' into Heaven. 'Received up' here must include His death, for His purpose in going to Jerusalem is to die (13.33; compare also John 12.32-33), but the comparison with its use of Elijah (2 Kings 2.10-11 LXX) suggests that it also includes His resurrection.

The previous section to this has concentrated on Who He is, culminating in His Transfiguration, and is now behind us. From now on concentration is to be on His teaching, His warnings and His response to His enemies in preparation for the final climax. This will then result, in Acts, in the spreading of the Kingly Rule of God throughout 'the world'. And in order to concentrate our minds on the cross in relation to it Luke depicts all that follows in terms of His 'set purpose to go to Jerusalem' to die. All that He does and teaches from now on He does against the background of the cross.

As usual Luke achieves his impression by silences, a typical Lucan approach. Jesus actually visits Jerusalem three times during the course of these chapters, but Luke deliberately passes over the fact so as give the theological impression of one drawn out journey to Jerusalem. For he wants us to see that from this moment on Jesus is heading towards His death in Jerusalem.

He does, for example, draw attention to Jesus going through Samaria on the way to Jerusalem in the verses immediately following this verse, after which He almost certainly visits Jerusalem in 10.38, for Mary and Martha lived at Bethany on the outskirts of Jerusalem (John 11.1). But he describes it merely as 'a visit to a certain village'. He does not want to disturb the idea that Jesus is 'on His way to die in Jerusalem'.

He is probably also in or near Jerusalem at the time of 13.34, compare Matthew 23.37, for Matthew's context for that saying is Jerusalem, and 13.22, 33 in Luke appear to be building

up to being again at Jerusalem. Yet in 17.11 He is passing between Galilee and Samaria 'on the way to Jerusalem'. A number of visits to Jerusalem in fact ties in with John's Gospel, which depicts precisely that. But Luke wants us to recognise that in all this journeying His eye is on His final entry into Jerusalem to die and on His final triumph there, and he therefore refrains from mentioning actual visits to Jerusalem before that. Theologically from this point on He is making one long 'journey to be received up in Jerusalem'.

Matthew and Mark both only deal with this period briefly. Having led up to the recognition of Jesus as 'the Christ' by His disciples, and the revelation then made that He must suffer, they move swiftly on to that suffering (especially Mark). Luke has the same pattern, but expands the period over which it is revealed that He will suffer. Thus Luke emphasises the cross more than all.

The following verses reveal this progress towards Jerusalem:

- 'Who appeared in glory, and spoke of His exodus which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem' (9.31).
- 'And it came about that when the time was come that He should be received up, He set His face like a flint to go to Jerusalem' (9.51).
- 'And they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He was going to Jerusalem' (9.53).
- 'And Jesus answering said, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead" ' (Luke 10.30).
- "Or those eighteen, on whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, do you think that they were sinners above all men who dwell in Jerusalem?" (Luke 13.4).
- 'And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying towards Jerusalem' (Luke 13:22).
- "Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem" (Luke 13.33).
- "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which kills the prophets, and stones those who are sent to her, how often would I have gathered your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!" (Luke 13.34).
- 'And it came about that as He went to Jerusalem, He was passing through the midst of (between) Samaria and Galilee' (Luke 17.11).
- 'Then He took to him the twelve, and said to them, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished" (Luke 18.31).
- 'And as they heard these things, He added and spoke a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingly rule of God was about to immediately appear' (Luke 19:11).
- 'And when He had thus spoken, He went on before, going up to Jerusalem' (Luke 19.28).

Now while the parable of the Good Samaritan (10.30) does not depend on His being near Jerusalem, for a priest and Levite required such a background wherever He was, the parable certainly makes better sense as being given there, and this is especially so as it is followed immediately by His visit to Bethany which is on the outskirts of Jerusalem. The same applies to His reference to the Tower of Siloam in 13.4, while 13.22, 33, 34 equally give the appearance of an immediate approach to Jerusalem culminating in His cry over it. After that we then have the further approach in 18.31; 19.11, 28. So each approach towards Jerusalem is to be seen as part of the one final great approach when He enters Jerusalem in triumph to die.

This also explains why He can here approach Jerusalem through Samaria in the following verses in this chapter, and yet can later approach it through Peraea. This first visit is from

Luke's point of view a 'non-visit', for it is not with a view to His death.

Jesus Is Warned Off By The Samaritans Because He Is Headed For Jerusalem (9.52-56).

The Samaritans lived between Galilee and Judaea in Samaria, in and around Shechem, and had grown into quite a large community. We do not really know from where they came. They were possibly originally a group of religious purists from the Northern tribes who settled there in order to establish their own form of Israelite religion based on the Law of Moses, a belief in the coming Taheb (Redeemer) and a Temple established at Mount Gerizim. That Temple was destroyed by John Hyrcanus for which the Jews were never forgiven. They were, however, not regarded by the Jews as Gentiles for they observed the rules of cleanliness and were thus seen as 'half-Jews', especially at better times.

We note that Jesus 'sent (apostello) messengers (angels) before His face (prosopon)' to go to a Samaritan village who were 'to make ready for Him.' The verb for 'make ready' could simply mean to assure lodgings, but it is also used of John the Baptist 'preparing the way for the Lord', where it clearly signifies preaching. In 10.1 the seventy are similarly sent (apostello) before His face (prosopon) to every city to which He was about to come (to prepare the way of the Lord), and in their case it clearly included proclamation of the Kingly Rule of God.

Therefore knowing Jesus, and remembering John 4, we must surely recognise that they would not only arrange lodgings but would also expect to proclaim the Kingly Rule of God. The Samaritans in the normal course of events might well have been expected to hear His message. It is difficult to believe that Jesus would expect to lodge in a city and not proclaim His message. His fame as a preacher and healer had spread far and wide, and it is incredible to suggest that the Samaritans would not know of it. They lived too near to Galilee, even if we ignore Jesus' impact on them in John 4. This explains why this story is here. It is the first stage in the fulfilment of 'Your Kingly Rule come' in the Lord's prayer. And to Luke it is the more important because it represents his first attempt to speak of Jesus as aiming to minister to 'foreigners' (non-Jews).

A further reason for telling this story about the Samaritans is in order to bring out that, while in some ways Jesus has been very much like Elijah and Elisha in what He has done, He is of a totally different spirit. He had come to seek and save, not to seek and destroy. It may also be significant that just as Jesus' initial ministry had commenced with a rejection by the Jews (4.16-30), so His first ministry after the commencement of His purpose to go to Jerusalem commences with rejection by the Samaritans.

Above all the story makes clear that Jesus does not bring His own judgment on the Samaritans. In the future the Good News will be opened to them again (Acts 8) and indeed John tells us that there has already been an initial outreach to the Samaritans as early as John 4. But if they were seen as having rejected His message as well as His presence it helps to explain why James and John were so incensed that this particular village had rejected him, and why they were quite sure that He would want to punish them. In their view fire was far more effective than shaking off dust at indicating judgment. That would certainly make people around sit up!

What a contrast between Jesus' attitude and theirs. And what a difference there is between Jesus' attitude and that of His opponents. They were seeking to destroy Him because they rejected His teaching. Jesus here is called on to destroy people who reject Him, people whose teaching He disagrees with and who will not receive Him, but He refuses to do so. Jesus used words as His weapons, not hatred and fire. He would not be like His opponents. Rather He would leave judgment in His Father's hands.

Analysis.

- a He sent forth messengers before His face, and they went, and entered into a village of

- the Samaritans, to make ready for Him (52).
- b They did not receive Him, because His face was as though He were going to Jerusalem (52-53).
- c When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, is it your will that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?” (54).
- b But he turned, and rebuked them (55).
- a And they went to another village (56).

Note how in ‘a’ Jesus has chosen a village where they are to prepare for Him, and in the parallel because of His rejection they go to another village. In ‘b’ they receive a hot reception, and in the parallel James and John receive a hot reception from Jesus. Central to the passage is the request of James and John which enable Him to reveal His true nature, and His true goodness.

Jesus Attempts To Bring The Kingly Rule of God to the Samaritans But Is Rejected.

9.52-53 ‘And he sent messengers before his face, and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for him, and they did not receive him, because his face was as though he were going to Jerusalem.’

Many Galileans on going to Jerusalem would go via Peraea in order to avoid Samaria precisely for this reason, because the Samaritans, who had had their own temple on Mount Gerizim before it was destroyed and hated the Temple in Jerusalem (so much so that they had turned down Herod’s offer to rebuild their temple because he was also intending to build one in Jerusalem), often physically opposed any Galileans if they were on their way to Jerusalem, while if they were going the other way there was no such problem.

But Jesus had a purpose for going through Samaria, for He ‘sent forth’ (apostellein) messengers ‘before His face’ (pro prosopou) to prepare the way for His coming. If we compare how the seventy are also ‘sent forth’ (apostellein) ‘before His face’ (pro prosopou) to cities to which He is to come, presumably again to prepare the way for His coming, everything suggests that these messengers were intended also to prepare for the proclamation of the Kingly Rule of God.

Up to this point in Luke the verb ‘prepare’ has been used exclusively with the significance of God preparing His people to receive His word through His servants (1.17, 76; 2.31; 3.4). This gives support to the idea that we have the same use here. (Although it is used later in Luke in its more mundane meaning).

But on the arrival of His messengers at one of their villages, on being told that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem they refused to receive Him or His message. This is the first time we learn of Jesus sending messengers before Him. The sending of the seventy will be the second. Such indications must therefore be seen as significant and as pointing to the same purpose, they are messengers who have come to prepare the way of the Lord.

9.54 ‘And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, is it your will that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?”’

At this rejection of Jesus and His message James and John were furious. They probably considered that the Samaritans should have been feeling greatly honoured (they had never suggested similar treatment for Jews who refused to receive His words). So, with Elijah’s exploits on those who had come from Samaria in mind (2 Kings 1.9, 12), and with their new perception of Jesus’ glory gained at the Transfiguration, they asked Jesus whether He wanted them to call down fire on the village. That would show everybody what happened to people who treated Jesus like this! Note their confidence in what they were able to do with Jesus present. Note also that they had not yet caught on to what Jesus had been teaching them. Here their desire to be ‘the Greatest’ was still coming out. And they were trying to involve Jesus in

it too. Had they had their way Jesus would never have got to the cross, and mankind would never have been offered salvation.

9.55 ‘But he turned, and rebuked them.’

Jesus’ response was to rebuke them. Had they thought back they would have remembered His words, ‘Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who use you badly.’ But they saw such words as for hanging up in museums or religious buildings, not as for daily life. It would, however, have brought home to Luke’s readers that they were intended for practical use, and that Jesus not only preached such things, but actually practised them as well.

For Jesus was ready to leave their judgment in the hands of God, as He will also the judgment on the cities of Galilee in God’s hands (10.13-15). But we should note that they would not get off scot free. For 10.16 applies to all.

9.56 ‘And they went to another village.’

So they moved on to another village. The words are poignant. The village that Jesus had chosen had lost its opportunity to hear the Good News. Significantly this will now be followed by descriptions of three men who also had to choose whether they would miss their opportunity to follow Jesus.

Three Disciples Are Challenged With Following Jesus (9.57-62).

The Lord’s prayer in 11.1-4 commences with, ‘Hallowed be Your Name’ (by the bringing about of Your will in purifying Your people - Ezekiel 36.23-28), Your Kingly Rule come.’ It is a prayer of dedication to the service of the Kingly Rule of God and a longing for the purifying of God’s people. Here we are told of three men whose desire is for that service but who are challenged about their sufficient dedication.

It may be that we are to see in the calling of these three men an indication of Jesus’ preparation for the wider ministry of the seventy. They were clearly men who already had some kind of commitment to Him and He is now pressing them to make it specific in view of the impending mission. If they were part of His planned seventy we can see why His call was so urgent.

It will be noted that in all three cases ‘homes’ are involved. The first is told that he will have no home if he follows Jesus, the second wants to go home until his father has died, the third wants to go home to say ‘Goodbye’. Jesus is clearly laying a great stress on the fact that a man’s home and family must not be allowed to be a hindrance to discipleship.

Analysis.

- a As they went on the way, a certain man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go” (57).
- b Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head” (58).
- c He said unto another, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father” (59).
- c But he said to him, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead, but you go and publish abroad the Kingly Rule of God” (60).
- b And another also said, “I will follow you, Lord, but first allow me to bid farewell to those who are at my house” (61).
- a But Jesus said to him, “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingly Rule of God” (62).

Note the interesting parallels. In ‘a’ the man promises to follow Jesus wherever He goes and in the parallel Jesus warns about not doing so. In ‘b’ the man is told basically that he will have

no home, and in the parallel the man is loth to leave his home behind. In 'c' the man wants leave to 'bury his father' and in the parallel Jesus tells him to leave the dead to bury their own dead.

9.57 'And as they went on the way, a certain man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." '

The first man came and offered to follow Jesus (Matthew tells us he was a Scribe - 8.19). Luke wants us to see him as typical of all would be disciples. He assures Jesus that he is willing to follow Him 'wherever He goes'.

9.58 'And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." '

Jesus' reply lays down the requirements for His disciples, and is an honest appraisal of what they can expect. Let him recognise what 'wherever He goes' means. Foxes and birds are able to settle somewhere for a time, rough and ready though it may be, but the disciple of Jesus cannot settle anywhere. He has no home. If he would follow Jesus he must recognise that he is choosing a way in which there are no material comforts whatsoever.

There is, however, a further point, brought to attention by the term 'son of man'. The place where 'son of man' is contrasted with animals is in Psalm 8, where man is seen as set over the animals. Thus Jesus is pointing out that in contrast this Son of man (Himself) has chosen to place Himself below the animals, for unlike them He has no home. In other words His call is to a life of humility and service without reward, not to one of dominance, and if this man would follow Him he too will need the same attitude..

9.59 'And he said unto another, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father." '

A second possible disciple is specifically called by Jesus. In this case he expresses willingness but asks permission to go and bury his father. As it is very unlikely that he would have been there if his father was already dead, for filial duty and responsibility would have already called him home, this probably means that he is a man with a real sense of responsibility for family and is signifying that he will follow once his father (possibly his aged father) is dead and he is freed from home ties. Alternately it may be that Jesus knew of the very recent bereavement but wants him to remain with Him in view of the nearness of the impending mission. He needs disciples to be available for that mission. But in Judaism the literal need to bury a father took precedence over everything else, including the study of the Law, but not including a Nazirite vow which had precedence (Numbers 6.7), nor a High Priest going about his duties (Leviticus 21.11). So it may well be that Jesus is making it clear that the proclamation of the Kingly Rule of God is even more important than that duty, being the equivalent of acting as High Priest or being a dedicated Nazirite. Indeed it is so important that nothing must be allowed to stand in its way.

Luke uses 'Lord' of Jesus constantly, both in narrative (5.17; 7.13), and in speech (5.8, 12; 7.6) and on His own lips (6.5, 46). He is the One set apart from men because of His authority and Who He is. But it becomes even more prominent in this section, both in narrative 10.1, 39, 41 and in speech 9.59, 61; 10.17, 40; 11.1). There is a growth in emphasis on His Lordship.

9.60 'But he said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead, but you go and publish abroad the Kingly Rule of God."

Jesus counters the earnest young man's argument, giving him a chance to think it over. He points out that he is being called to a ministry of life which has precedence above all else. He must leave the spiritually dead to look after each other. They have plenty of time for burying the dead. But what he must do is concentrate on what is important, offering people life by proclaiming the Kingly Rule of God. It is a strong reminder that Jesus' mission must take

precedence over everything else, and what He urgently needs is proclaimers of the Kingly rule of God right now. It may also be that He was moving from the region so that this would be the young man's last chance.

Note the theological implication behind 'dead'. Like Paul Jesus sees men as dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2.1). In the words of Jesus later they are 'evil' (11.13). Jesus had no doubt about the sinfulness of human nature.

9.61 'And another also said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first allow me to bid farewell to those who are at my house." '

This third man is especially interesting. His reply is the same as that of Elisha when Elijah called him (1 Kings 19.20). He wants time to say 'Goodbye' to his family.

9.62 'But Jesus said to him, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingly Rule of God." '

Jesus' reply reflects the fact that Elisha had been a ploughman when Elijah called him, and he had slaughtered his oxen to feed the needy before following Elijah fully. Jesus is probably here warning the young man that he may say Goodbye to his family but must make sure that he 'burns his boats' like Elisha did. If he would be fit for the Kingly Rule of God he must not look back. He too must rid himself of his plough. For no one who is two minded is fit for it. It may include the thought that the ploughman who is always looking back will never plough a straight furrow. He is thus of little use to God.

Alternately he may be thinking in terms of the ploughman as an essential part of obtaining a harvest and simply be saying that one called to plough so as to reap a harvest for the Kingly Rule of God is of no use if he is constantly looking back.

These examples of the calling of other disciples, two of which are also found in Matthew, confirm that Jesus was intending a wider ministry than that of just the twelve. We are not therefore now surprised to learn of the ministry of the seventy. We could have surmised some such thing even if Luke had not told us about it.

The Mission of the Seventy (Two) (10.1-9).

Following Jesus' call to the three potential disciples Jesus now appoints seventy (or seventy two) disciples to go out two by two as messengers before His face preparing the way for Him. They too are fulfilling the prayer, 'may your Kingly Rule come'.

- a After these things the Lord appointed seventy (two) others, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, to which He Himself was about to come (1).
- b And He said to them, "The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the labourers are few, pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth labourers into his harvest" (2).
- c "Go your ways. Behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves" (3).
- d "Carry no purse, no wallet, no shoes, and salute no man on the way" (4).
- c "And into whatever house you shall enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.' And if a son of peace be there, your peace will rest on him, but if not, it shall turn to you again" (5-6).
- b "And in that same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house" (7).
- a "And into whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you, and heal the sick that are in it, and say to them, The Kingly Rule of God is come near to you" (8-9).

Note that in 'a' they were to go to every city to which He was about to come, and in the parallel they enter the city and say, 'the Kingly Rule of God (in the person of the King) is

come near to you'. In 'b they are to pray for labourers to go forth into the harvest, and in the parallel the labourer is worthy of his hire. In 'c' they go forth as lambs, and in the parallel they offer peace. Central to all is their total trust in God and desire to serve with full dedication.

10.1 'Now after these things the Lord appointed seventy two (seventy) others, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, to which he himself was about to come.'

As He had previously sent messengers to the Samaritans so He now 'sent forth before His face' messengers to all the places which He intended to visit to prepare the way before Him. They were sent two by two and amounted to seventy/seventy two in all. They may have included the Apostles, although most see 'appointed seventy others' as excluding them. But the exclusion is not necessary. The Apostles had not previously been 'appointed' they had been 'chosen', and 'others' may be in comparison with the three described in 9.57-62, or the messengers of 9.52. Thus there is no reason why they should not now be appointed for the mission along with sixty (fifty eight) others. It is clear from what follows that these seventy two/seventy were to have a preaching ministry.

'Seventy two.' The manuscripts differ between seventy (Aleph A C L W Theta f1 f13) and seventy two (p75 B D 73 - a strong combination). Both have strong support. There are also reasons both ways why an alteration might have been tempting to a copyist. But seventy two is a multiple of twelve and Luke tends to see the disciples in multiples of twelve (compare Acts 1.15). It may well be that a group of five men was allocated to each Apostle. They could still be sent two by two and some would cover the area surrounding each town as well as the town itself. While it is always possible that thirty six towns and villages to which 'Jesus would come' were to be visited, it is unlikely, simply because of the burden that it would place on Him, but six cities, each approached by an evangelistic party of twelve, led by two Apostles and reaching out into the area round about, is quite feasible.

The number seventy two (seventy) might have in mind the elders appointed by Moses, seeing them as seventy plus the two in the camp (see Numbers 11.16-29), demonstrating that these disciples are seen as founding the new Israel. Or seventy could parallel the seventy 'sons of Jacob' who went down into Egypt (Exodus 1.5), again signifying a new Israel (as twelve had also done). The fact that they are sent in twos (thus making 36 or 35 pairs) is against any idea of them representing the world of seventy/seventy two nations.

'Two by two.' This would be for mutual support and strength, but also because the testimony of two witnesses confirmed the truth of their message.

One more thought is worthy of consideration here, and that is the similarity of this aspect of things in Luke with that in Acts. In Luke Jesus has sent out His Apostles to the Jews, then He has sent messengers to the Samaritans, now He sends out the seventy anonymous disciples. In Acts the same pattern emerges, first the Apostles go to the Jews, then there is a ministry to the Samaritans, then the message spreads wider through anonymous evangelists, reaching out to Jews around the world (resulting in the end in outreach to the Gentiles). The pattern is therefore repeated.

10.2 'And he said to them, "The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the labourers are few, pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth labourers into his harvest." '

This is the kind of statement that we might well expect Jesus to continually repeat, especially if He saw it as a kind of commissioning. This latter is easily possible for it occurs at the appointment of the twelve (see Matthew 9.37-38), and now at the appointment here, and is very suitable for a commissioning which has in mind continual expansion. They are not to see their appointment as just for this mission but as permanent and lasting, and as committing them in the long term. It gave them a vision of what would be. They are to see their own going forth as but a prelude to others going forth in larger numbers, something for which they had

to pray.

He is thus here urging them to pray for the sending forth of more labourers, to follow up their own work. In a sense it is an amplifying and making practical of the prayer 'May your Kingly Rule come' (11.2) describing how it is to come by many evangelists going out in the name of Jesus. Matthew has it in an earlier context (Matthew 9.37-38) at the time of the call of the twelve. But it was probably the constant burden on Jesus' heart, repeated whenever men were commissioned to go out (there were probably a number of these evangelistic forays). He was seeking continually to pass on the urgency of its message to His disciples. He wanted them constantly to recognise that there was an abundant harvest waiting to be gathered in, but that there was a shortage of labourers (compare John 4.35-38). And this shortage was so, for He was constantly seeking to recruit more (9.57-62). But He would only do so if they came up to His standards. In the end it was left in His Father's hands. It is the first instance we have which indicates that He longed for more evangelists.

He had previously urged this prayer on the early disciples (Matthew 9.37-38) and it had been answered to the extent that there were now seventy. So now He urges the seventy to pray for a further extension in their numbers. They too are to ask 'the Lord of the harvest' to send forth more labourers into His harvest. There were so many to be reached and so few to reach them, and He was conscious that the time was short. It was also another way of impressing on them the importance of their task, and the speed that was necessary in its accomplishment.

The reference to the final harvest confirms that He sees these as 'the last days'. That was when the final harvest was to be gathered in (Isaiah 27.12; Joel 3.13 LXX; Amos 9.13; Hosea 10.12; Matthew 3.10-12; Luke 3.9.16-17; 10.9-15). The theme of spiritual fruitfulness and harvest is a common one in Scripture.

10.3 "Go your ways. Behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves."

He sends them out as messengers of peace. They are to be like lambs in the midst of wolves, seeking to bring the wolves into oneness with themselves (Isaiah 11.6; 65.25) but recognising that they might be 'eaten'. There is a recognition here in the mention of wolves of the dangers and tribulations that they will face (compare Ezekiel 22.27; Matthew 7.15; 10.16; John 10.12; Acts 20.29), including harsh treatment from the synagogues (21.12; Matthew 10.17; 23.34; Mark 13.9; John 16.2). But they are to be like lambs, not retaliating but being non-belligerent and accepting of what comes to them, in a similar way to the Servant of the Lord (Isaiah 53.7), and recognising that as His lambs God carries them in His arms (Isaiah 40.11). Ancient Jewish tradition (Psalm of Solomon 8.23/28) also says, 'The pious of God are like innocent lambs in their midst' (that is, in the midst of the nations of the earth).

10.4 "Carry no purse, no food bag, no shoes, and salute no man on the way."

They are to go out in haste, trusting fully in God's provision, and not wasting time on conventional greetings which in those days could be long and time consuming, nor in idle chatter (compare 2 Kings 4.29 for a similar idea). They are to be recognised as King's Messengers, with their concentration set on reaching out with the Good News. All would thereby recognise the urgency of their mission and the importance of their message. And they are to be seen as having no love of possessions. Men will listen to them and respect them because they are like the prophets before them, and are not seeking for money to fill their purses. Similar restrictions were applied to the Essenes.

'Carry -- no shoes' indicates that they are not to carry spares. It is interesting that in the Talmud carrying all these things was also forbidden on the Temple Mount, although there too they could wear sandals. Carrying luggage would distract from the main purpose of their being there.

'Salute no man on the way.' It was recognised that a messenger in a hurry would not greet

people (compare 2 Kings 4.29), for once he had done so he might be involved in a long delay. Courtesy demanded that the greeting be accompanied by the social niceties which could become extended (consider Judges 19.4-9 where the attitude is exemplified).

10.5-6 “And into whatever house you shall enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house.’ And if a son of peace be there, your peace will rest on him, but if not, it shall turn to you again.”

And whenever they enter a house they are to wish peace on the house. This parallels being like lambs. And if the inhabitant proves to be a person who responds to the offer of peace (a ‘son of peace’), as revealed by his treatment of them and his response to their message, then their peace will rest on him. And if he turns out not to be so then the blessing will be recalled. It will be the same thing as the shaking of the dust off the feet. The suggestion therefore is that God will honour their call for His peace, and the true man and his family will find peace with God, while those who do not welcome them will find no peace. They have rejected the messengers of peace.

‘Peace to you’ was a normal Jewish greeting. But here it becomes more than that. It becomes a spiritual weapon, and gains its significance from the status of those who say it.

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

Once they have accepted hospitality they are to continue in that same house eating and drinking whatever they are given, accepting it as their hire as the Lord’s labourers, whether it be rich food or poor food. They are not to move from one house to another, enjoying widespread entertainment. For their task is too urgent. And it would be insulting to the host. All their efforts must be expended on their mission, not on seeking self-comfort.

10.8-9 “And into whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you, and heal the sick that are in it, and say to them, The Kingly Rule of God is come near to you.”

And whenever they enter a city and are received in friendly fashion, then they must eat what is set before them. This would be a token of friendship, and identify them with their hosts. Possibly also the idea of this seeming repetition of verse 7 is to add the idea that they are not to be fussy about the ritual ‘cleanness’ of the food. Unless they have reason to think otherwise they may accept it at face value. And as far as possible they must accept the traditions of each city. This would later be applied by Paul to the problem of eating food bought in the open market which might have been sacrificed to idols (1 Corinthians 10.27).

They are also to heal the sick that are there. And at the same time they are to proclaim, “The Kingly Rule of God is come near to you.” That is the reason why they are there. Once more the good tidings will be proclaimed and the Messianic signs given by healing. “The Kingly Rule of God is come near to you” will then prepare the people of the city for the arrival of the King. For Jesus will be following on shortly afterwards in order to introduce and establish the Kingly Rule of God among them.

Indication of the genuineness of these words in context is given by the fact that unusually ‘heal the sick’ comes before the preaching. For these are only preparers of the way. Their healings will reveal that the Kingly Rule of God is here, while their preaching is only preparatory, preparing the way for the full proclamation of Jesus when He comes

Woes On Those Who Will Not Receive the Message of His Disciples (10.10-16).

Inevitably all the wolves will not respond, and we now recognise that Jesus’ message is not only one of mercy but of judgment. His words here are severe. If His disciples are persistently rejected they are to shake the dust of the cities that reject them from their feet. That will be a sign that they are cut off from Israel and that in the coming judgment they will be dealt with by God. For in line with what John said about Him He has come both in Holy Spirit and in

fire (3.16-17). It is a reminder that although in 4.19 He had closed the book after reading of the 'the Lord's year of acceptability', the day of vengeance of God would one day also come (Isaiah 61.2).

Analysis.

- a "But into whatever city you shall enter, and they receive you not, go out into its streets and say (10).
- b "Even the dust from your city, which cleaves to our feet, we wipe off against you, nevertheless know this, that the Kingly Rule of God is come near" (11).
- c I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city" (12).
- d "Woe to you, Chorazin! woe to you, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which were done in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes" (13).
- c "But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment, than for you" (14).
- b "And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades" (15).
- a "He who hears you, hears Me; and he who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me, rejects Him who sent Me" (16).

Note that in 'a' they do not receive the disciples, while in the parallel by not receiving the disciples, Jesus is not received, and thus they reject the One Who sent Him. In 'b' the dust of their feet is wiped off against them, and yet the Kingly Rule of God has come near them, while in the parallel they think themselves exalted to Heaven but they are brought down to the dust, to Hades. In 'c' and its parallel are the declarations that it will be more tolerable in the judgment for infamous cities than for them. And centrally in 'd' is the declaration of judgment on the cities in question.

10.10-11 "But into whatever city you shall enter, and they receive you not, go out into its streets and say, 'Even the dust from your city, which cleaves to our feet, we wipe off against you, nevertheless know this, that the Kingly Rule of God is come near.'"

After they have made every attempt to evangelise a city or town, if they find themselves 'not received' they are to go out into the streets of the city and publicly shake the dust from their feet. (Their non-reception might be revealed among other ways by their being beaten in the synagogue, a treatment meted out to 'heretics'). This shaking of the dust from the feet was something all pious Jews did on leaving Gentile territory, because such territory was seen as 'ritually unclean'. Here it would be an indication that that city or town was to be seen as unclean by God. They were thereby cut off from the covenant. They no longer belonged to Israel. They were effectively under a curse. So while Jesus did not approve of immediately bringing down fire on men, He did recognise that they could be committed to the future judgment of God.

At the same time they were to announce to them the reason why they did it. It was because the Kingly Rule of God had approached them, but they had rejected it, and thus God had rejected them. It would thus still give opportunity to any seeking heart to seek them out and receive their message, and enter under the Kingly Rule of God.

10.12 "I say to you, it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city."

Once they had done this it would bring that city or town into a position where it would be seen as worse than Sodom in the day of Judgment. For with all its sins Sodom had not rejected the Kingly Rule of God. The Rabbis would claim that the inhabitants of Sodom were so wicked that they would not rise again at the last day, for the fate of the people of Sodom (Genesis 18.16-19.22) had become proverbial (compare Isaiah 1.9-10). How much more doomed then the city which turned its back on the Kingly Rule of God. This does bring out how seriously their message and mission was to be viewed.

10.13-14 “Woe to you, Chorazin! woe to you, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which were done in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment, than for you.”

Jesus then extended His words to cover cities and towns that He had already visited. The inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida had had their opportunity. They had seen mighty works multiplied before them. But even then many of them had not turned to God in order to find forgiveness and a new life. They had had no change of heart and mind and will (they had not repented). Yet if Tyre and Sidon, famous for their arrogance against God (Ezekiel 28), had seen what they had seen ‘they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes’. And His conclusion is that in the day of Judgment it would be better for Tyre and Sidon than for Chorazin and Bethsaida. The words are powerful and memorable, and a reminder of the seriousness of not responding to the Gospel. They do not in fact make Tyre and Sidon’s position at the judgment any better.

By these words Jesus is emphasising the hardness of heart that there was among many Jews, and suggesting that it was less so among Gentiles, a factor which Luke no doubt expected his readers to gather, and which we will discover fulfilled in Acts. For while the point being made here is by a comparison between two Jewish towns and long past cities famed in Scripture for their failings, and is to that extent exaggerated, it is also significant that Jesus is by it suggesting that these two Gentile cities are now ripe for conversion. It is preparing for the outreach to them in the future, indicated as having taken place in Acts 21.3-6. We note also that Jews from those cities had already been seeking Jesus (6.17), and it was in the region of Tyre and Sidon that He would heal the Syro-phenician’s daughter (Mark 7.24-31).

Sackcloth (often made out of goat’s hair) and ashes were worn, or could be sat on, to indicate deep mourning and often therefore genuine repentance from sin (see 1 Kings 20.31-32; 2 Kings 19.1; 1 Chronicles 21.16; Nehemiah 9.1; Esther 4.1-3; Joel 1.13; Amos 8.10).

On the other hand we must recognise that a number of the residents in these two Jewish towns would almost certainly have responded to Jesus and His message, (Philip the Apostle came from Bethsaida - John 1.44. 12.21) so that His words are to be seen as really addressed to the hardened majority who had clearly proved such a disappointment to Jesus. We actually know very little about His work in these two towns (see Mark 8.22-26), a reminder of the huge amount that we do not know about Jesus’ ministry, and which is also a reminder of how much material was available to Luke that he did not use. His problem was not lack of material but having too much of it (compare John 21.25). Our uncertainty about the archaeological whereabouts of these towns may be seen as demonstrating how completely these judgments were initially carried out, although Chorazin may be the modern site Kerazeh, two miles north east of Tell Hum (which in turn may have been Capernaum). But in the last analysis it is the day of Judgment, after the resurrection, that will find them out (John 5.28-29).

‘Woe to you.’ Some would translate this as ‘alas to you’, a grief-stricken cry from the heart, although it is probably both. But either way God was dooming these cities.

10.15 “And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades.”

The same condemnation comes on Capernaum (‘village of Nahum’), the home of Peter and Andrew, which was the most influential town in the area. It would appear that Capernaum in some way saw itself as especially exalted and made great claims for itself. The vivid picture is taken from the description of the fate of the King of Babylon in Isaiah 14.13, 15 who sought to exalt himself to Heaven, only to be brought crashing down. So Capernaum might exalt itself, but it also would be brought crashing down. Hades is the world of the grave (and therefore down), the world of shadows, but often used to depict the sad state of the wicked dead. That

these words would grieve Jesus Himself comes out in that He had begun to look on it as His home town because He had spent so much time there, possibly because His mother had moved there (Matthew 9.1). Capernaum's judgment would in fact begin at the time of the Galilean rising in around 66 AD, and it would eventually cease to exist altogether in 7th century AD. But the point here is that its final judgment still awaits the day of Judgment, as is true for all who reject the Kingly Rule of God and the message of Jesus. We are not even sure whether we know its genuine site although there is a good probability that it is Tell Hum.

10.16 "He who hears you, hears me; and he who rejects you rejects me; and he who rejects me, rejects him who sent me."

Jesus then finishes off His condemnations by pointing out to His disciples that they are so much His representatives and one with Him that if people hear them it is as if they hear Him (compare 9.48). But if they reject them then it is as if they reject Him, and not only Him, but also the One Who sent Him. For the Father, the Son and the disciples are one in the work. For the idea of Jesus being 'sent' see 4.18; 4.43; 9.48. He had a deep sense of being sent by His Father. And they are a part of it. They too are 'sent'. So they are very much part of God's own planned outreach to the world, and intimately involved in it.

These disciples were thus to see themselves as ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5.20) and, as such, citizens of Heaven (Philippians 3.20). That is why their names are written in Heaven (verse 20 below).

The Seventy (Two) Return (10.17-20).

The return of the disciples, rejoicing in their being able to cast out evil spirits in Jesus' name, leads on to Jesus confirmation of the defeat of Satan and of the fact that He has given them power over all Satanic forces so that they need not be afraid of them. But He then stresses to them that they should recognise that what really matters is not these passing achievements. What matters is that their names are written in Heaven, that they are citizens under the Kingly Rule of God. That is the greatest privilege of all.

Analysis.

- a The seventy two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name (17).
- b He said to them, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven" (18).
- b "Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall in any wise hurt you" (19).
- a "Nevertheless in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (20).

Note how in 'a' they rejoice because the spirits are subject to them, and in the parallel Jesus refers to this but points out that what is more important is that they are citizens of Heaven. In 'b' He refers to the defeat of Satan of which he has been a witness, and in the parallel confirms that that defeat renders them secure from all his powers.

10.17 'And the seventy two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." '

The disciples returned rejoicing because they had been able successfully to cast out evil spirits. Perhaps they remembered the time when some of them had failed to do so (9.40). But now success had attended them continually and they were delighted. They had never dreamed that one day they would have this power. Note that they did it through the name of Jesus. It was to His authority that the evil spirits had responded. This clearly struck them more than other miracles of healing, demonstrating the awe in which such spirit possession was held.

10.18 'And He said to them, "I beheld (or 'I was beholding') Satan fallen as lightning from heaven." '

Jesus replied that it was what they should expect, for He their Master had seen (or ‘was beholding’) Satan fall from Heaven ‘like lightning’. He was a defeated foe. ‘Like lightning’ may refer to the speed at which it happened, it happened in a flash, or to a vivid and symbolic picture of an angel of light (compare 2 Corinthians 11.14) falling into darkness. Lightning more suggests the latter. But the idea is metaphorical, not literal (Satan is never seen, he is a spiritual being).

‘From heaven.’ That is from the heavenly sphere. We are not necessarily to see this literally as a fall from a height, but as a movement from heavenliness to non-heavenliness. he ceased to enjoy the benefits of being ‘heavenly’. As man through sin ‘died’, so Satan through sin lost his heavenliness. He lost his authority, he lost his privileges, he lost his position, he lost the presence of God, he lost what he essentially had been. It was this loss that made spirits seek to possess the bodies of men and women.

It has been suggested that this might refer to:

- 1). The original fall of Satan, when, in pre-creation times, he fell from His position as an angel attendant on God through pride, which was what has resulted in His opposition to God ever since, an opposition expressed in Genesis 3; Job 1-2; Zechariah 3.1-5.
- 2). Jesus being continually aware of what His disciples were successfully doing and seeing in it symbolically the swift fall and defeat of Satan. As the Kingly Rule of God advances Satan now ‘falls from heaven’. He has no place in the Kingly Rule of God and is thrust outside and must flee before it. This would tie in with verse 19 which depicts the changed status of the disciples.
- 3). A foreview in vision or spiritual insight, as a result of what was happening now, of the final victory He would gain over him at the cross (Revelation 12.7-9).

If we take the first Jesus is here saying that they need not fear Satan’s power because in the face of Jesus authority as the One Who cast Satan out of Heaven Satan is a defeated foe, a fact to which Jesus Himself can bear witness. This idea naturally arises out of the conversation. As the disciples rejoice in what they have seen of defeated evil spirits Jesus wants them to know that He saw, and was responsible for, an even greater defeat of evil when Satan himself was cast from Heaven. Let them therefore recognise that for them the most important thing is that their names are written in Heaven. Even though He has given them amazing powers and abilities nothing is more important than that.

If we take the second it is Jesus rejoicing with them over the defeat of Satan as He has witnessed it in their activities, in the same way as he has also already been defeated in Jesus’ own activities since His coming. He is on the run.

But essentially the New Testament sees the defeat of Satan as finally accomplished at the cross (Colossians 2.15; Revelation 12.7-9). And the reason that they are able to defeat him now, even before the cross, is because they are ambassadors of the One Whose authority is above that of Satan because of Who He is. Thus when they act in His name the forces of darkness will be defeated, for He is the One Whom all evil spirits must obey because He is Lord of all. Something on which the cross will put the final seal.

(So the idea is that Satan is to be seen as already defeated, whatever his part in world history. We are not therefore intended to see him as able to fight God. God is over all, and Satan, whether he likes it or not, must do His will. And his end is certain. But it is a reminder that when he fell God did not destroy him, any more than he destroyed man when he fell. He has allowed him to operate within the created sphere, although held on a tight rein).

10.19 “Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will in any way hurt you.”

The result of Satan's fall, whether seen as actually having happened or as potential, is that those who are in the Kingly Rule of God have authority over all his minions who can be trodden underfoot, for Jesus has given His ambassadors authority over them. And this is what they have been engaged in. There is here a glance towards Genesis 3.15 where the curse on the Serpent was to result in the bruising of his head by man as he himself struck at man's heel. This bruising was now in process (and would continue - Romans 16.20) . The evil spirits which are symbolised as serpents and scorpions can do no harm to those sheltered under the authority of Jesus who can tread on them with impunity. Even their heels are not vulnerable. They will find this guaranteed by the fact that physical serpents and scorpions will be unable to hurt them as well (compare Mark 16.18), but this last is secondary, it is but a symbol of the real thing. For the idea of treading on serpents compare Psalm 91.13. Because they are within God's Kingly Rule serpents have become their plaything (Isaiah 11.8).

'The power (dunamis) of the Enemy.' That is, the power of Satan and all the forces of evil. Though they may have to battle with him (Ephesians 6.12) those who are truly in Christ need fear nothing of him, for Christ is with them. While Satan has may have a certain 'power' (dunamis) Jesus has total authority over him (exousia), and He has given it to His own.

10.20 "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

However, while they may rejoice in the spirits being subject to them they should not make this the main reason for their rejoicing, for it is theirs because of something in which they should rejoice even more. And that is that they belong to Him and are therefore citizens of Heaven, with their names written in the citizenship roll of Heaven. They are recognised citizens under the Kingly Rule of God. That is why as His heavenly ambassadors they been able to defeat Satan. We may see this citizenship roll as the equivalent of the Lamb's book of life where the names of His own are written from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13.8; 17.8; 20.15; 21.27; Philippians 4.3). It contains the names of all who are His.

Jesus was aware of the danger of their seeing power over evil spirits as too important. It could become their fetish. They must rather see it in its place as a secondary result of what they are in Him. Primary must always be their relationship with and knowledge of Him which has resulted in them being heavenly citizens. They should thus primarily rejoice because they are men of the Spirit (John 3.1-6). As He will go on to point out, their ability to cast out evil spirits in His name, comes from their knowledge of Him in their inward hearts. Were they to lose that the spirits would no longer be subject to them

Jesus Rejoices Over The Fact That His Father Has Revealed The Spiritual Truth Of Who He Is To His Disciples (10.21-24).

As a result of His disciples' victory over the forces of Satan through the authority of His name, Jesus rejoices in what it is clear that His Father has revealed to them, otherwise they could not have done it. And what has been revealed is Who and What He is as 'the Son'. They are entering into the truth of Who He is. This recognition of Jesus as the only and true Son of God is the sign by which all His own can be recognised (1 John 5.13). For this distinctive description of Jesus as 'the Son' compare Mark 13.32 and regularly in John. In the same way He reveals to them Who and What the Father is. The Father and the Son are by this separated off from the remainder of reality. They are unique and in a unique relationship.

Note the prayer to 'Father'. This is partial preparation for the Lord's Prayer (11.1-4) which will shortly follow. Yet it is expressed in a slightly different way (with the article) reminding us that Jesus' relationship with the Father is distinctive. He speaks as 'the Son' to 'the Father'.

Analysis.

- a In that same hour He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I thank you, O Father,

- Lord of heaven and earth, that you hid these things from the wise and understanding” (21a).
- b “And revealed them to babes” (21b).
 - c “Yes, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in Your sight” (21c).
 - d “All things have been delivered to Me of my Father, and no one knows Who the Son is, save the Father, and who the Father is, save the Son” (22a).
 - c “And he to whoever the Son wills to reveal Him” (22b).
 - b ‘And turning to the disciples, he said privately, “Blessed are the eyes which see the things that you see” (23).
 - a “For I say to you, that many prophets and kings desired to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them” (24).

Note that in ‘a’ the things are hidden from the wise and understanding, and in the parallel they are hidden from prophets and kings. In ‘b’ they are revealed to babes, and in the parallel the disciples are blessed because they see them. In ‘c’ this is the Father’s good pleasure and in the parallel it is the Son’s will. And central to all is the great truth so revealed, the mutual self-knowledge of Father and Son.

It should be noted that this chiasmic format indicates that this saying is a unity, spoken by Jesus at one time, even though Matthew has split it to suit his literary purposes. Luke has simply introduced into it ‘and turning to the disciples, He said privately’ in order to emphasise that the last words were only intended to apply to them.

10.21 ‘In that same hour he rejoiced (‘was thrilled with joy’) in the Holy Spirit, and said, “I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you hid these things from the wise and understanding, and revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in your sight.”’

‘In that same hour.’ This closely connects what follows with what has gone before. It is important that His disciples have their hearts and minds centred on what is of primary importance, and not be taken up with the idea of the casting out of evil spirits. God Himself must always take precedence over His work (compare verse 42).

‘Rejoiced in Spirit.’ Note in the passage the build up of joy. The disciples returned with joy. They are rather to rejoice that their names are written in heaven. Now comes fullness of joy in that God has revealed Himself to His own.

We learn here first of all that Jesus is still ‘full of the Holy Spirit’ (4.1), for He ‘rejoices’ (is ‘thrilled with joy’) as a result of the Holy Spirit at work within Him. And through the same Holy Spirit He thanks His Father, Who is Lord of heaven and earth, because it has pleased Him, while hiding ‘these things’ from the wise and understanding, to reveal it to those who are babes in wisdom and understanding. ‘These things’ include the authority and power of Jesus over evil spirits by virtue of Who He is. The disciples could do what they did because within their hearts, even if not fully in their heads, they knew Who Jesus really is. Thus the Father has given them a revelation of Who and What the Son is. And He has done it because it was pleasing in His sight. It is of His sovereign will, and not of their deserving. Thus we have here confirmation that, although they may not have been able to put it into words, they are within them aware of the full divinity of Jesus.

‘He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit.’ This is indicating in Jesus’ unique case what was previously expressed in terms of ‘being filled with the Holy Spirit’. But because He is continually full of the Holy Spirit (4.1) this filling is ever within Him, thus when prophesying He rejoices and exults in the Holy Spirit Who is continually within Him in full measure, rather than receiving a filling. He is unique. The Holy Spirit is not given to Him by measure (John 3.34). He continually enjoys His total fullness. These words that follow are then specifically to be seen as

‘prophecy’, the forthtelling of what comes from God in inspired form, similar to the prophecy we saw in chapters 1 & 2, but this time through a perfect channel.

‘You hid these things from the wise and understanding, and revealed them to babes.’ In Psalm 8.2 we read, ‘Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings you have established strength.’ Jesus may well have had these words in mind in the form in which He cited it in Matthew 21.16, replacing ‘strength’ with ‘praise’. The babes praise because they are given the understanding that others lack, compare 18.16-17, and thereby are made strong for God.

For the whole principle of comparison between the weak and the strong in God’s purposes see 1 Corinthians 1.18-20, 26-29. The wise and understanding from whom such things are hidden include the chief priests, the Scribes and the Pharisees. And even past kings and prophets did not know them because they had not yet been revealed (verse 24).

10.22 “All things have been delivered to me of my Father, and no one knows who the Son is, save the Father, and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whoever the Son wills to reveal him.”

In His prayer/prophecy He now reveals that the Father has put all things in His hands, including full knowledge about Himself, so that He can communicate it to others in as far as they can receive it. All things absolutely have been delivered to Him, that is transferred to Him for Him to apply (compare the use in Matthew 28.18). This can only be because He is Himself God, for none but God could know and transfer the fullness of the knowledge of God. This includes what the Father knows about the Son, about His very being, as well as what the Son knows about the Father, and about His very being. Note how this is based on the argument that a natural father and son can fully know each other in ways that no other can. That is because there is a unique affinity between them because they are ‘of one blood’. Because they are uniquely of the same stock they have a knowledge of each other that no other can share. In the same way the Father and the Son are ‘of one spirit’. They have a unique relationship that no other can share, apart from the Holy Spirit. They are the divine threeness in unity, of the same nature and essence. So the full knowledge of the situation of what each is within the Godhead is available to Him for Him to deliver to His disciples. But He has been able to reveal it to His disciples because the Father has been pleased to do so. The revelation has therefore come to them from both Father and Son.

Note that the Father’s knowledge of the Son is equated with the Son’s knowledge of the Father. That Jesus had the same knowledge of the Father that the Father had of Him puts Him at the same level of omniscience as the Father. Such a conclusion is unavoidable. There is therefore here a full revelation of His Godhead. But also, on top of that, there is the confirmation that it is known to His disciples, even if they cannot put it into words.

So in His relationship with His Father Jesus has a knowledge greater than that of the fathers, greater than of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, than of Moses and the prophets. He has a direct source of knowledge, even though it is also partly communicated through the Scriptures.

, ‘All things have been delivered into My hand.’ Compare here John 3.35. ‘The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand.’ There it includes the Spirit Who is not given to Him by measure, and the very words of God, and the result is that He offers eternal life, life under the Kingly Rule of God, to those who believe in Him. In this passage also He has the Holy Spirit in Whom He rejoices, and the knowledge of His Father which He can pass on to His own.

10.23 ‘And turning to the disciples, he said privately, “Blessed are the eyes which see the things that you see,” ’

Recognising this He turns to His disciples from His exalted state in the Spirit and says privately, “Your eyes are blessed at seeing what you have seen.” For they have seen in Jesus in

their inner hearts the coming of the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9.6), God's beloved Son (3.22; 9.35), His chosen One (9.35), in Whom He is well pleased (3.22).

10.24 "For I say to you, that many prophets and kings desired to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them."

This was something that many wise men of understanding, many prophets and kings, have desired to see, and have not seen it, have desired to hear and have not heard it (compare 1 Peter 1.10-12; Isaiah 52.15). They saw it in part but they could not know. But they, the disciples, have heard it and seen it and are therefore truly blessed. This is therefore what they should primarily rejoice in. Note the introduction of the idea of 'hearing'. Hearing His words is constantly central in Jesus thinking. Having 'seen' Him as the beloved Son they must hear Him in His role as the introducer of the last days, of the acceptable year of the Lord (4.19), as the revealer of the mind of God.

The Testing of Jesus And the Parable of the Good Samaritan (10.25-37).

We should note that this passage, and the parable it contains, follows directly on the idea of the previous self-revelation of Jesus. It gives us the clue that within it Jesus is revealing more of Himself. And this is confirmed by the fact that it is itself followed by a further three examples of where seemingly simple stories bring out great spiritual truth. That confirms that this is thus to be seen as a section containing revelation about the work of God in bringing great spiritual blessing, for here we see that the physical food provided by Martha (10.38-42), the daily bread of the Lord's Prayer (11.1-4), and the pleading for the food at midnight (11.5-8) are all symbolic of the reception of greater spiritual blessing, namely, Mary receiving 'the good part' (10.47), the seeking of 'Tomorrow's bread' (11.3), and the asking for and receiving of the Holy Spirit (11.9-13). In conformity with this therefore we should expect to see, and should look for, some deeper truth underlying this passage also. This also is a parable with a dual significance.

The self-revealing of Jesus and full appreciation of the Father now leads on to His revealing something of His Father to 'a certain lawyer (one of Luke's words for a Scribe/Rabbi) in the parable that follows. The lawyer is said to be 'making trial of Him'. This has in mind that Jesus will shortly be teaching His disciples to pray, 'do not bring us into trial' (11.4). Yet trial is always present for those who serve God.

But the Scribe here receives far more than he is expecting. He is not only to receive an important lesson on who his neighbour is, but he is also to be given an overall picture of what Jesus has come to do for those who are His. The parable that follows will also be an example of one who forgives others, not holding their sins against them, and provides daily bread, thus relating it to the Lord's Prayer (11.4).

However, central to the whole thought here is of knowing and loving God, and as a result their neighbour. And the story that follows not only reveals who our neighbour is, but it also reveals a man whose life revealed his love of God, and what the love of God will supply to His needy people, thus providing the reason as to why we should love Him. For the overall search behind this passage is not just for an understanding of who our neighbour is, important though that may be. It is a search for eternal life, and how this may be enjoyed.

The placement of this parable is very important, for at first it seems almost out of place, and that in a writing where the writer places everything consummately. But a second glance reveals the very opposite. The growth of the proclamation of the Rule of God has been described, together with the defeat of the one who held men in his sway (which is then dealt with in depth in 11.14-26), a defeat which in itself reveals that the Kingly Rule of God is here (the deliverance of the captives, and the release of those who are oppressed). Now that is revealed in a man who exemplifies what it is for a man to love God with all his heart and his

neighbour as himself. To the poor broken man attacked by robbers (Isaiah 42.24), despised by the Temple, comes an unorthodox heretic (the main idea in the minds of Jews about Samaritans) from the north, who brings him life and good things, and will provide for his full restoration when he comes again. In context it is difficult not to see in this that Luke intends us to see the coming of the Son of Man, the Prophet from the north, to defeat Satan and release his victims (11.14-26), setting aside the Temple, and bringing light in the darkness (11.27-36) and delivering from the power of Satan to God (Acts 26.18 for the whole)

The passage may be analysed as follows:

- A certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? (25).
- He said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read it?” (26).
- He answering said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself” (27).
- He said to him, “You have answered right, this do, and you shall live” (28).
- But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?” (29).
- Jesus made answer and said, “A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead” (30).
- “By chance a certain priest was going down that way, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side” (31).
- “And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side” (32).
- “But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was, and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion” (33).
- “And came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine. And he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him” (34).
- “And on the morrow he took out two denarii, and gave them to the host, and said, ‘Take care of him, and whatever you spend more, I, when I come back again, will repay you.’” (35).
- “Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbour to him who fell among the robbers?” (36).
- And he said, “He who showed mercy on him.” And Jesus said to him, Go, and behave in the same way.” (37).

We note that in ‘a’ the question is what he shall ‘do’ to inherit eternal life, and the reply in the parallel is ‘show mercy’ in the same way as mercy has been shown (to him). In ‘b’ Jesus asks him a question, and in the parallel He does the same. In ‘c’ he answers that he is to love God with all that he is and has, and his neighbour as himself, and in the parallel the Samaritan shows love to his neighbour with all that he is and has. In ‘d’ he is told that if he does what he has outlined he will find life, and in the parallel the Samaritan restores life to the dying man (a picture of Jesus restoring life to Israel). In ‘e’ his question is ‘who is my neighbour?’ and in the parallel the reply is a description of the ‘neighbourly’ Samaritan. In ‘f’ the man is robbed and left half dead and in the parallel we have the Levite passing by on the other side. And central to the passage in ‘g’ is the fact that the priest also passes him by on the other side, presumably because he wants to avoid defilement, an indication of the Temple failing to provide mercy. The fact that this last is central confirms that Jesus sees in His parable a description of Israel like a half dead man, robbed by its foreign rulers, and despised by its priests and their hangers on, waiting for a ‘foreigner’ from unorthodox Galilee to come to its rescue. (Note that elsewhere Jesus can be described by people like the questioner as ‘a Samaritan’ (John 8.48). The name was used of those seen as heretics, outcasts or breakers of the Law).

10.25 ‘And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” ’

A Scribe approaches Jesus to ‘test Him out’. This may signify an attempt to make Him make a false move, or it may be a sign of genuine interest and a desire to discover His calibre. His question goes right to the heart of Pharisaic thinking. One of their main aims was to discover how they could receive eternal life. They believed that if only they could fully fulfil the covenant then they would receive it. That was what all their regulations and rule were aimed at. Seeking to ensure full compliance with the covenant of Moses so as to seal their place as the people of God. Possibly he expected Jesus to repudiate Moses, or possibly he had a genuine problem that he hoped would be resolved.

‘Inherit eternal life.’ Canaan had been Israel’s inheritance. But now that inheritance is replaced by ‘eternal life’, the life of the age to come, life under the Kingly Rule of God. That now was what all Israel sought for.

10.26 ‘And he said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read it?” ’

In dealing with his question Jesus followed a favourite technique of the Rabbis and replied with a question. He asked him what he thought the Instruction (Law - Torah) of Moses taught on the matter. Note His emphasis on ‘written’. He is not thinking of the traditions of the elders but of the Scriptures, and particularly the Law of Moses. He is pointing to that as the sole arbiter of religious response and behaviour.

10.27 ‘And he answering said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.” ’

The reply of the Scribe possibly mirrors a standard reply on the subject which was prevalent in Judaism, although we have no actual evidence of the use of the latter part in this way prior to the time of Jesus unless the relevant parts of the Testaments to the Patriarchs are to be seen as this early. But it is equally possible that he may have heard Jesus give this same reply to similar questioners (see Mark 12.30; Matthew 22.37, and compare 18.18) and cites back His own words. In that regard it was probably Jesus standard reply on the question of the meaning of, and response to, the Law, and one given by Him many times. The text cited comes from an unknown version, and differs from citations in Mark and Matthew. Those are, however, made on different occasions. Here it may, however, simply be a translation of the words of Luke’s source.

The Scribe points first to the Shema (Deuteronomy 6.5), which was repeated twice daily by every pious orthodox Jew, and was borne by many on the forehead in a leather pouch at the hour of prayer, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind.” That was seen to be at the heart of the Law. Then he pointed to Leviticus 19.18, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” If the latter was not seen as a recognised reply for one of the reasons suggested above he may have introduced it in order to lead up to his next question. But the probability was that it was a standard reply and that his real test was to be as to how Jesus would define one’s neighbour. Would He restrict it to those who ‘lived rightly’ among the Jews or would He include some of the outcasts and sinners that He was prone to mix with? His concentration was all on who was to be seen as his neighbour. Perhaps in his self-satisfaction he had convinced himself that his love for God was demonstrated by his life.

10.28 ‘And he said to him, “You have answered right, this do, and you shall live.” ’

Jesus replies that his answer is correct and (in context) that if he does this he will find eternal life. At first this might seem as though Jesus is saying that ‘all he has to do is to do this and he will merit going to Heaven’, but that is not what He is saying at all. For two reasons. Firstly

because both He and His questioner are aware of the impossibility of fulfilling these requirements (for all but Jesus). This was indeed what the more genuine Pharisees did strive after and had failed to achieve (compare Romans 9.31; 10.3), and that is why in their striving for its achievement they had turned them into a nightmare of regulations and a continual quest for ritual purity. By doing so they had lost sight of the emphasis on love and compassion, as Jesus had to point out to them again and again (11.42; Matthew 9.13). If anyone did, they needed deliverance.

And secondly the Scribe's answer is correct because it is a true summary of the Christian life. One who loves God and his neighbour like this will only be able to do so because he knows God (see verse 22), and because he has responded to Him in loving faith. It is this knowledge of God in his heart (resulting from coming to Jesus) that will result in such a love for God. This is in fact Paul's point in Romans 9.30-32. True faith which responds to God and finds forgiveness and eternal life will produce love (compare here 7.36-50), and that love should then grow until it conforms to what is described here. To do this then will certainly reveal that a man has eternal life, because it will reveal the work of God that has taken place in his heart (11.13). But it did not solve the Scribe's problem, for the question still arose, 'but how can I do this?'

Jesus' words were true, and perfectly orthodox. No Jew could have denied them. The Scribe could not fault Jesus on this. However, how to achieve them was another question. For who could possibly show the perfect love for God that was required, and how could it be brought about?

10.29 'But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" '

But the Scribe wanted to justify his coming to Jesus so he asked a crunch question, "And who is my neighbour?" ' He quite possibly saw this as a prelude to a long discussion, and even as a means of tripping Jesus up. If Jesus gave the same reply as a Pharisee, all the 'sinners' who followed Him would be dismayed, if he gave any other reply He would be opening Himself to attack..

There was once a philosopher called Socrates. When his opponents attacked him he would ask them questions and when they answered he would show up their folly. By common agreement he had a brilliant mind. But in point of fact much of what he said was simply common sense which any student could agree with him about. The difference however between Socrates and others was, and this was what made him stand out from everyone else, that no one had thought about it that way until he did. With his simple questions he showed up man's folly. That is why he is famous.

The same is even more true of Jesus, and nowhere more so than here. Here He was facing a man who was strong and firm in his own beliefs, bigoted, present there with Jesus probably in order to criticise whatever He said and prepared to attack Him on it, and who despised sinners (those who failed to follow the Pharisaic rules of cleanliness) and outcasts, and even more hated and despised Samaritans and Gentiles. He probably wanted either to have his own view confirmed, or to debate the question as to whether marginally some few among the 'sinners' might be included in a widening of his idea of a neighbour, or to show Jesus up totally in the eyes of His listeners. What then do you think will be the chance of him saying within two minutes of Jesus beginning to speak that a Samaritan could be his neighbour? That would be impossible. It would require genius.

It should be noted here that we should not just look at Jesus' reply and see it as an illustration from which to draw a conclusion (although it is that). Nor is it simply a varying of the question. Looked at from the point of the crowd it contains a direct reply. The man had asked 'who is my neighbour?' and Jesus answers his question by *getting the man himself to say publicly that the Samaritan was neighbour to the Jew*, and necessarily therefore to all Jews, and

therefore also to him. That was a major reason for it. His aim was to get this proud Scribe to *admit in words* that a Samaritan could be his neighbour in front of the whole crowd. And it succeeded. Jesus did not just leave him to think about it theoretically. He *actually got him to say it*. Now some scholars may not recognise the fact that the Scribe had been made to say that the Samaritan was his neighbour, but the Scribe certainly knew it, as his reluctant reply reveals, and so did the amazed crowd. And then some scholars try to say that the story does not fit the context!

I have had some considerable experience of taking questions from hostile sceptics at Speaker's Corner in London, and had I been faced with this question before Jesus was I would probably have presented a huge number of arguments, all of which would have been dismissed, and we would have finished up with both holding the same opinion as before. Yet in two minutes Jesus left that man admitting in words, and totally unable to get away from the fact, that all his previous conceptions had been completely wrong. If that is not answering the question I do not know what is. The early church would never have come within a hundred miles of thinking of an answer like this. As in the case of the replies of Socrates, it required genius.

But there seems little doubt that as we consider the well known story we may also be expected to draw from it other conclusions which Jesus included in it, such as that it shows us, as it showed the Scribe, how we too should behave, 'go and do the same'. This was his second lesson. But do not see it lightly. Jesus is not just saying, 'Go and do good', He is saying, 'Go and make sure that your whole attitude towards life, and towards sinners, and towards foreigners, and towards the battered of Israel, is different from now on'. The man was facing a revolution in his life.

And we should also note that as well as accomplishing this, Jesus' words did also illustrate for all time the requirement for inter-racial and inter-religious tolerance and compassion from us all, not by forsaking what we believe, but by holding it firmly and yet showing love to all.

But, and herein was the further genius of Jesus, we can see even more from this parable, for it is based solidly on Old Testament references which referred to God's intentions for His people, and its context reveals that that is how we are to apply it. The Good Samaritan was the fulfiller of the Lord's Prayer. For here is a picture of Israel in its need, as bruised and battered by robbers (Isaiah 42.24), and of how its need could be met (the Samaritan is clearly deliberately contrasted with orthodox religion). 'Who gave up Jacob to the spoiler, and Israel to the robbers? Was it not the Lord against Whom we have sinned, in whose ways they would not walk, and whose law they would not obey?'

So in line with His other parables it contains messages below the surface, and He left its lesson to be gathered by those who would see it. But any discerning listener knowledgeable in the Scriptures would soon recognise what it was saying. For this Jew in question clearly stood as a representative of his people as being battered and bruised by robbers (Isaiah 42.24). The priest and the Levite clearly represented the hierarchy and teachers of Israel who could not and would not meet the man's need, and the foreign stranger, the 'Samaritan', represents the unorthodox religious 'outcast' who yet was faithful to God's Law, and especially represents the prophet from out of the way, unorthodox 'Galilee of the Gentiles' (see below) Who had come to seek and to save those who were lost. In the end He represented the Great Physician Who had come to save the sick (5.31), the Provider of 'daily provision'. The One Whom the Judaisers called 'the Samaritan' (John 8.48).

And even further to this Luke no doubt hoped that his readers would gain another lesson from it, and that was that all those 'foreigners' who truly responded to God could become members of the new Israel, and be welcomed as such by Jesus.

10.30 'Jesus made answer and said, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed,

leaving him half dead.”

The picture would be a familiar one to all Jews. There was always a possibility when travelling the mountain roads of Palestine of meeting robbers and bandits, and it was especially so on this road, as it twisted and turned through rocky mountainous country, surrounded on all sides by bandit hide-outs, which descended rapidly to Jericho and provided many good places of ambush. And many a Jew had been found lying in this mountain road, either dead or dying, stripped of all his possessions. Foolish or impoverished was the man who walked it alone. And it is a vivid picture of Israel who had also been stripped bare by robbers. Isaiah could ask the question, “Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, He against whom we have sinned? For they would not walk in His ways, neither were they obedient to His Law” (Isaiah 42.24). And Jeremiah could add that even God’s Temple itself had become ‘a den of robbers’ (Jeremiah 7.11). Being made a spoil and being robbed very much pointed to Israel.

10.31 “And by chance a certain priest was going down that way, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.”

As we see above this verse is central to the chiasmus indicating its central importance. It is thus to be seen as of prime significance in the passage. In the first place it was an example of total lack of compassion and of pure self-interest. The priest saw the half-dead man lying there (note the deliberate connection with the idea of death) and passed by on the other side. And this a priest who served in the house of the Lord, who taught the Law, and who was called on by the Law to love his neighbour as himself including ‘strangers’. But Jesus probably intended us to see more than that. And that is that one reason that the priest passed by on the other side was because he was going up to the Temple to worship, and he thus did not want to be rendered unclean by tending one who was on the way to becoming a dead carcase. He saw his religious purity as more important to him than the man’s need and persuaded himself that he was justified in leaving the man lying there because of the importance of his ritual duties. For it was clear to him that if the man was not already dead, he soon would be. And if he were to touch him he would then be unable to minister in the Temple. This is why he passed by ‘on the other side’. Ritual was to him more important than compassion and a human life.

And again there is in this the lesson that the whole priesthood of Israel had failed Israel, and that that was why Israel was like the victim of robbers. Their concentration on ritual had overridden their ideas of compassion and mercy. Indeed they themselves had become servants in a den of robbers. When it came to the need of Israel, they thus passed by ‘on the other side’.

‘By chance.’ The expression shows that Jesus had no problem with speaking of ‘chance’, that is of random uncontrolled happenings.

10.32 “And in the same way a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side.”

The lesson is doubly rammed home by then speaking of a Levite who did the same thing, for the same reason. Levites were cultic officials and served in the Temple as ‘servants’ to the priests. They too would not want to become ‘unclean’. This is therefore a doubly-emphasised witness to the failure of the servants of the Temple. And the fact that Jesus included only Temple servants as illustrations suggests that He wanted to emphasise the lesson of the corruption of the Temple and those who served in it, and prevents us from seeing this as just a story with one simple point, although it is true that a large number of the officials working in the Temple did in fact live in Jericho. We should remember that in the not too distant future He will call that Temple also ‘a den of robbers’ (19.46).

10.33 “But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was, and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion,”

When Jesus introduced a Samaritan into the story (possibly the Scribe was expecting a Pharisee next) he must have stiffened. He probably did not like the way this story was going. But gritting his teeth he listened on. And Jesus told how the Samaritan as he journeyed, came where the man was and when he saw him was moved with compassion. Note the emphasis on compassion. It was precisely that that Jesus constantly accused the Jewish authorities and teachers of lacking (Matthew 12.7). But this man had compassion, even though he was a Samaritan, (and the fact that he was so is emphasised in the Greek).

(Now to be fair we must acknowledge that this man was an unusual Samaritan. Most Samaritans would have spat as they passed by and have thought that it was a good thing that there was one less Jew. But in all races and religions there are men of compassion, and here was one of them).

It is difficult to see how in one word Jesus could have found a better description of Himself than a Samaritan. It was the jibe thrown at Him by the Judaisers which they saw as an accepted description among them (8.48). Samaritans also believed firmly in the Law of God, and a Samaritan would have agreed with the need to keep Deuteronomy 6.5 and Leviticus 19.18. Yet like Him they were seen as unorthodox. But that was a thought at the back of the parable to be considered later by those who had eyes to see. To this Pharisee the man described was a literal Samaritan.

10.34 “And came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine, and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.”

And the Samaritan took up the man and bound up his wounds, and treated them as best he could with what he had available, with oil and wine. These two items are both well attested as being used for healing purposes. And then he put him on his own ass and bore him to a wayside inn and took care of him.

The picture is all one of someone who is revealing the love of God and a heart full of compassion. And that is certainly how we should first see it, and as the Pharisee saw it. But behind the picture lies the description of the One Who was all compassion, and had Himself come out of compassion in order spiritually to do this very thing.

‘He came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine.’ He sued what mean he had to hand. But we may note that abundance of oil and wine is very much to be an indication of the last days (Joel 2.19, 24). So this one who had come pouring in oil and wine is a symbol of the ‘the last days’. The days of the Messiah are in mind here.

There are also points of contact between this aspect of the story and 2 Chronicles 28.15. There members of the Northern kingdom of Israel (Samaria and Galilee) returned men who had been taken captive to Judah, providing them with food and drink, anointing them with oil, and bearing them on their asses. There too ‘the people of God’ had been cared for by unorthodox people from the north, from Samaria and Galilee. Thus Jesus may well have expected the Scribe and His other listeners, once they considered His words more deeply, to make the connection and see that the Samaritan represented the northern kingdom of Israel including Galilee, and was therefore a picture of the unorthodox, rejected, Prophet of Galilee introducing ‘the last days’.

Here then was a picture for all to consider of the One Who had come as a physician for sick Israel (5.31) in order to make them spiritually whole and provide them with oil and wine.

10.35 “And on the morrow he took out two denarii, and gave them to the host, and said, ‘Take care of him, and whatever you spend more, I, when I come back again, will repay you.’”

In the chiasmus this verse parallels, ‘You shall love God with all your heart --- and your neighbour as yourself’. Nothing could be greater revelation of that than this love that the Samaritan showed for the Jew. He not only paid his costs at the inn for at least a month, but

guaranteed payment for any future costs, and it was all of grace, with no thought of compensation, a fitting picture of God's love offered to Israel through Jesus Christ.

We should note here that this illustration of offering care is then in context followed by one of Mary choosing spiritual food from the Lord rather than literal food, by the Lord's prayer where the bread sought is probably 'Tomorrow's bread' (the bread of life) rather than just literal daily bread, and by an illustration where the neighbour seeking food at night turns out to be a picture of seeking the Holy Spirit. The idea behind all these passages is thus seen as to bring out the search for spiritual truth. Here then is a picture of One Who cares for His own and provides to him what is needful, and the picture of one who receives this blessing.

10.36 "Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbour to him who fell among the robbers?"

And then having revealed the extreme generosity and compassion of the Samaritan Jesus asked the crunch question. "Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbour to him who fell among the robbers?" Notice His tact. He knows that the Scribe is going to find the next few moments difficult. So He does not say, 'who then is your neighbour on the basis of this story?', He says 'who was neighbour to him who fell among robbers?' It will make the reply a little easier. But they are both really the same question, and the answer will be the same.

Had He suggested to the Scribe two minutes earlier that he would admit to a Samaritan being his neighbour he would no doubt have looked at Him as though He was mad, and probably written Jesus off as weirdo, and have stalked off without more ado bristling with indignation. Now he could only look at Him in dismay while his own senses were reeling. The whole of his past rebelled against the answer that he knew that he was expected to give. And even then he could not bring himself to say 'the Samaritan'.

10.37 And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, Go, and behave in the same way."

So he salvaged some pride by saying, "He who showed mercy on him." If we think that was easy for him to say that we do not know human beings. By that he had admitted that a Samaritan could be his neighbour, and that took some doing. True it was a Samaritan of compassion and mercy but that was not the point. The point was that this proud Jewish Scribe had had to admit to a Samaritan being his neighbour. For if he was neighbour to one Jew he was neighbour to all Jews. Even the Scribe would recognise that. In two minutes Jesus had swept away all his religious arguments and all his racial arguments and had consigned them to the dust. Only genius could have accomplished that.

Then Jesus turned to him and said, "You go and behave in the same way." How? By treating men of all religions and races who were in need in the same way, that is as his neighbours. By acknowledging that all good men were his neighbours. By putting aside years of pride and prejudice and becoming a different man. He was demanding a life changing experience

Jesus left the deeper meaning of the story to be thought about by all who heard it. It had not only answered the question as to who his neighbour was, but it had answered his deeper question, how were men to obtain eternal life. For it had shown how men could inherit eternal life by recognising in the Good Samaritan a picture of the One Who came from Galilee seeking and saving the lost, and by putting themselves in His care.

At Home With Martha and Mary (10.38-42).

As Luke is building up to the eventual giving of the Lord's Prayer (11.1-4) we have seen how He has prepared for 'Father' (10.21-22; 11.11-13), and 'Hallowed be your name, your Kingly Rule come' (9.52-10.20). He has also given an example of a man who had forgiven the one who had trespassed against him. We now have the first of two passages which cover, 'give us today tomorrow's bread'. In this first passage Jesus is provided with His daily bread by Martha, but

He speaks also of how much more important it is for someone to obtain Tomorrow's bread, the bread of the Kingly Rule of God, through His words, which was what Mary did. 'Mary has chosen the better part which shall not be taken away from her'.

There is a further contrast here which connects with verse 27. Martha exemplifies loving one's neighbour, but Mary exemplifies one who loves her Lord with heart, soul, mind and strength. Both are required and must not compete with each other.

It is noteworthy that Jesus' name is not mentioned in this passage, when in view of the friendly atmosphere we might have expected it, reference being made to Him continually as 'the Lord'. But He is always 'the Lord' to Martha and Mary. Compare John 11.3, 21, 27, 32, 39. This distinctive feature may suggest that Luke obtained these details from Martha and Mary and has carefully recorded it as it was told to him.

The placing of this account, emphasising spiritual food in contrast with literal food, and following the parable of the Good Samaritan, must be seen as bringing out that the Good Samaritan brought more than just food and comfort to the wounded man, he brought light and salvation.

Analysis.

- a As they went on their way, He entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received Him (38).
- b She had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard His word (39).
- c But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she came up to Him, and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me" (40).
- b But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things" (41).
- a "But one thing is needful, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (42).

We note that in 'a' Martha received Him, and in the parallel Mary receives His word into her heart. In 'b' Mary sits at the feet of Jesus and in the parallel Martha is anxious and troubled about many things. And central in 'c' is that Martha is serving the meal, and seeks that her sister will cease come and assist her and cease sitting at the feet of Jesus, thus putting physical bread before spiritual bread.

10.38 'Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received him.'

The certain village is almost certainly Bethany, which was less than two miles (three kilometres) from Jerusalem (John 11.18; 12.1-3), but Luke deliberately avoids mentioning it so as not to disturb the sequence of the theological 'journey to Jerusalem'. Here lived Jesus' friends Martha, Mary and Lazarus. And here He, and probably His disciples, was received into her house by Martha, certainly for a meal and possibly to stay. Note the stress on the fact that Martha 'received Him'. Luke does not want her seen as anything but responsive to Jesus. She was delighted to see Him. ('Into her house' is a probably a copyist's comment)

10.39 'And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word.'

But while Martha was busy preparing the meal, wanting to give the Lord the best she could, Mary her sister sat at 'the Lord's feet' and listened to His teaching. She not only received Him but also 'heard His word'. Note the use of 'Lord' in what seems such a homely context. She was sat there because He was her Lord, not because He was her friend (although He was both). It represented total submission. Many Jewish teachers would not teach the Law to women, but Jesus knew no such restriction.

10.40 ‘But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she came up to him, and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me.” ’

Martha, however, was finding the burden of so many guests too heavy for her, and very much distracted (too distracted to give time to listening to Jesus even though she wanted to) came to Jesus and pointedly suggested that Mary should come and help her prepare the meal. Indeed she half rebuked Him, even if politely, and she asked ‘the Lord’ to tell Mary to do her duty. No doubt she was suggesting pointedly that after all they would all shortly want their meal.

10.41 ‘But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things,” ’

Jesus replies gently but firmly. The double use of her name, "Martha, Martha", indicates His caring attitude, as such a phenomenon does elsewhere (see 6.46; 8.24; 13.34; 22.31). The Lord sympathises with her for her busyness, and the effort that she is putting in.

But at the same time the narrative draws attention to the fact that the cares of this world are preventing her from seeking what is most important. She is too taken up with what she is doing and letting it get on top of her. ‘Anxious.’ She is overburdened within and too particular. ‘Troubled.’ She is too externally agitated. The idea is that perhaps a simpler meal and more attention to the Lord might have been better. She was so anxious to do the very best for the Lord, that it had become an unnecessary burden to her, when He would have preferred a simple meal and for her to be at peace and heed His words.

10.42 “But one thing is needful (some see it as ‘only one course of food is needful’), for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

He then points out that Mary is busy about something better, ‘the one thing needful’. She has chosen the better part. She has chosen to feed on His word. And that is so important that it must take precedence. It must not be taken away from her. She will have many opportunities to cook and prepare once He has gone, but she will have few to sit at His feet and learn

We must, of course, recognise that Jesus recognised here the deep sincerity in Mary’s desire for His word. For her all idea of food was put on one side because she was hungry for His words. And that was why He replied as He did. It was not giving her an excuse to avoid work in daily living. And it also brought home to all present that while daily work was necessary, as was daily bread, spiritual work and spiritual bread were even more important. For ‘man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord’ (Deuteronomy 8.3)

We should note, however, that there are many places elsewhere where Jesus does teach the importance of doing, not just listening (e.g. 6.46-49). He would have had no time for indolence. The point here is that Mary would have few opportunities to hear Him, so here it was different.

Almost certainly had we been present in that house we would have found that Jesus did later take Martha privately to one side and commend her for all she had done. He would not have left the situation as it is here. But it is so described here so that the important lesson is drawn out. That while daily bread is necessary, receiving His word is more important. Man shall not live by bread alone (4.4). He needs most of all the bread from Heaven.

‘One is needful.’ This may be saying ‘there is only one thing that is absolutely necessary’ (to hear His word) or it may be saying to Martha, ‘only one course was necessary, if you had remembered that you would have been able too listen to Me too’. Mary had recognised this because she was so eager to hear His words. But whichever way that was, the stress is on the importance above all else of hearing His words before anything else.

The Giving of The Lord’s Prayer For Worldwide Evangelisation (11.1-4).

Learning to pray follows aptly on from Mary sitting at His feet, so this follows on the previous passage very satisfactorily. It was quite normal for disciples to seek a guide to prayer from their teachers, and here we find Jesus' disciples doing the same. Jewish Rabbis regularly composed special prayers for their disciples. So Jesus is asked to do the same. His model prayer brings out what we should be emphasising when we pray. It was a pattern to follow, not a rhyme to recite, with its six headings giving a full pattern of prayer. Matthew 6.9-13 fills it out more fully when Jesus provides it at a different time in a different context.

Many pray from a list, but that list is not usually like this. It is usually full of our own near concerns. To us it is our little world that is important. The prayer that Jesus taught, however, emphasised rather the wider concerns of God. Indeed in Matthew, in the context of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6), He points out that we should leave our detailed anxieties in our Father's hand and rather be assisting in establishing the Kingly Rule of God and His righteousness. We should be like Mary rather than Martha, concentrating on things above.

As we have seen this prayer is central to this section. It reveals all that Jesus has come to do and achieve. All His effort is expended towards these ends. He has come to hallow God's name, to bring in His Kingly rule, to feed His people, to bring them forgiveness, and to deliver them from all testing. And His disciples can participate in it with Him, both through their activities and through their prayers. It is Jesus' timetable of events, God's blueprint of what our lives should be.

Analysis.

The analysis is simple consisting of two parts:

- As He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples."
- 'And he said to them, "When you pray, say,
Father, Hallowed be your name. Your Kingly Rule come. Give us today Tomorrow's bread. And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive every one who is indebted to us. And bring us not into testing."

11.1 'And it came about, as he was praying in a certain place, that when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples."

The disciples constantly saw Jesus at prayer. Possibly it would be a little unfair to judge their own prayer lives on the basis of silence (one must hope so), but we read little of such prayer. Here, however, we have the indication that they did pray. And indeed Luke does emphasise that all must pray. So Luke's purpose in pointing constantly to Jesus as praying (5.16; 6.12; 9.18, 28; 11.1) is to bring out His close relationship with, and dependence on, His Father.

Now His disciples, through one of their number, express their concern that they might learn to pray better. They knew that John the Baptist had taught his disciples to pray. They too wanted to learn how to do so.

11.2-4 'And he said to them, "When you pray, say,

Father, Hallowed be your name. Your Kingly Rule come. Give us today Tomorrow's bread. And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive every one who is indebted to us. And bring us not into testing."

This prayer is a little different from the one in Matthew. It is more basic and direct. It is meant for His innermost disciples. Here they can address God directly as 'Father'. The version in Matthew is for wider use by those not quite so intimately involved with Jesus. It therefore slightly mellows down the directness to 'our Father Who is in Heaven', which is more in line with Jewish prayers. It is open for use by more people right from the beginning.

So Jesus gives them a form of words on which to pattern their praying, and even for use as a

prayer. But they were not, of course, just to repeat these words over and over again, for other examples of praying are also given (10.2; 11.5-13; 18.6). However, even then the emphasis on their prayers was to be on the expansion of the Kingly Rule of God. But here that is very explicit. It is a balanced prayer, listed three and three, and very simple, being devoid of all flowery elements. Most men loved, when they prayed, to be verbose. They 'for a pretence make long prayers' (Matthew 23.14; Mark 12.40). Jesus kept it simple, as He regularly kept things simple. But every sentence was powerful. And it is probable that He sought by this means to prevent it becoming simply a recitation. Luke expounds it in the surrounding passages.

'Do not lead us into testing.' This is the only negative aspect of the prayer, and it seems to ask something that is very unlikely, our Father leading us into testing and temptation. That should warn us to consider it carefully. Its significance is really found in taking it in terms of its opposite. Its opposite is expressed in Matthew's version by the next line, 'but deliver us from evil'. What is the position of the one who is not led into testing? He is led into protection, and safety, and care and nurturing. He is watched over and looked after. He is like the sheep in Psalm 23. His life is greatly blessed. That is what we are praying for, to be one of those who are not led into testing, but are nurtured and sheltered by God.

Testing by other means will inevitably come. All good men face testing. This is a principle of Scripture. But we do not want God to be leading us into it. We want Him to be leading us in the right way and to watch over us as our Shepherd (Isaiah 40.10-11). We want Him especially to keep us out of the power of the Evil One

It will be noted that the emphasis in the first half of the prayer is all on the glory of God and the bringing about of His will. This demonstrates that that should be the focus of our praying. In the second half there is the provision for our spiritual need, which will enable the fulfilling of the first half. But none is devoted to pure self-interest. Self-interest and prayer do not go together (Matthew 6). Self-interest is for 'Gentiles' (Matthew 6.7, 32), not for God's people.

We have already noted above how the contents of this prayer are reflected in the surrounding passages.

- Firstly how the Father's special concern for us and something of His nature is revealed, in 10.21-22; 11.11-13.
- Secondly how the dedicated disciples are called and the seventy are appointed in order to hallow God's name and establish the Kingly Rule of God, (see 9.57-10.20), so that as a result of that Kingly Rule the power of Satan will be broken (11.14-26).
- Thirdly how they rejoice over deliverance from the Enemy through being under His Kingly Rule (10.18-20), and instead enjoy the positive power of the Holy Spirit (11.13).
- Fourthly how the provision of 'daily bread' is described in different ways, from 10.25-11.13, finally being revealed as related to the giving of the Holy Spirit.
- Fifthly how the Good Samaritan exemplifies the willingness to forgive others, (as well as the coming of the Kingly Rule of God and the provision of daily bread).
- Sixthly how Jesus is regularly 'tested' (specifically stressed in 10.25; 11.16) so that we can be sure we will be too, although we must pray not to be led into it .

Seventhly how we are kept in the right road of not being brought by God into testing, by being protected from Satan (11.14-26; James 1.13), and by the light shining on us (11.33-35). The believer is not tested by God. He may be tested by life but he walks beneath the shelter of His shield. Rather than testing us He delivers us from the one who is behind the testing we may have to face, so that we are not overcome (see Ephesians 6.10-18).

Now we must all too briefly consider the contents of the prayer in more detail. We will note that there are two aspects to each statement, the present and the eschatological.

'Father.' It is true that the Jews looked to God as their Father, but more as the Father of His whole people, the Father of Israel. Jesus, on the other hand, emphasised to His disciples that they could see Him as their personal Father (11.10-13). Indeed through Him they could come to know the Father (10.22). They could thus pray 'abba, Father' (Romans 8.15-16; Galatians 4.6-7). The very simplicity of His words speaks volumes. It was not flowery or verbose, (in contrast with men's prayers), it was simple and childlike, as is fitting for disciples. 'Abba' was the intimate way in which a Jewish child addressed his father. Here it is in the Greek simply 'Father.'

Do we think sufficiently about this word when we say it? We should remember that we are thereby addressing the Creator of the world, Who made us 'in His image' to have communion with Him. We are speaking to the One Who dwells in light that no man can possibly approach, a light which is unbearable, a trillion times brighter than the largest and most brilliant atomic fireball (1 Timothy 6.16). And yet a light to which we can come (1 John 1.7). We are talking to the One Who holds the whole world in His hand. And we are calling Him 'Father'.

And it goes further than that, for the expression that Jesus used when speaking to God as Father was 'abba'. Among the Jews it was the word that even the smallest child used when he was addressing a loving father. And we can thus address Him as 'Abba, Father' (Romans 8.15; Galatians 4.6) because we have received the Holy Spirit through Whom we have been adopted by the Father as His sons and daughters.

There could be no more powerful word than 'Father'. For where the child has a good father the word 'father' indicates to a child the figure of supreme authority, the figure of the great provider, and a figure also of great love and compassion. Today, sadly, in many families that role has had to be taken on by the mother. And elsewhere God is likened to the perfect mother (Isaiah 49.15). But even then the picture might fail because of the inadequacy of the mother. But what our Father is to us is far better than any fatherhood or motherhood that we can imagine. He is the sum of all fatherhood, of all motherhood. For here the word is being used in the best sense.

But it is not a word to be used by the selfish. When we use it we should be concerned for the things of our Father, not for our own petty affairs. As we approach God as Father we should do so with the recognition that He is the Supreme authority, that He calls us to participate in and be concerned about His affairs, and yet that He is at the same time filled with the greatest love for us that the world has ever known. To use it for self-seeking is to degrade Him.

'Hallowed be your Name.' Never were words less understood than the words, 'Hallowed by Your name'. Usually people who pray them and who think about them see them as meaning, 'Let people have a high opinion of Your Name. Let them worship You. Let Your Name be held in the highest honour.' And that is all good and right. And we should certainly desire it and we should certainly pray it. And it is certainly included in the prayer. This is true in the present.

But in fact the words go far beyond that. They are more positive. They are a prayer for God to reveal His special and unique nature by a powerful eschatological and continuing action. His name reveals what He is, and they thus asking Him to demonstrate what He is, to demonstrate His name. They have in mind the words of Ezekiel in Ezekiel 36.23. 'And I will hallow My great name, which was profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in the midst of them; and the nations will know that I am the Lord, says the Lord GOD, when I shall be hallowed in you before their eyes.' And how will this happen? "I will take you from among the nations --- and I will sprinkle cleansed water (water cleansed by sacrifice) on you and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses --- a new heart I will give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, I will take out of your flesh the stony heart, and I will give you a heart of flesh, and I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in accordance with My commands and to be careful to walk in My ordinances ---" (Ezekiel 36.24-27). That is what we should have in mind when we pray, 'Hallowed be your Name'. The eschatological work of the

Holy Spirit as in the Upper Room, and at Pentecost and beyond (see also 11.13).

So when we pray, ‘Hallowed be Your name’, (‘sanctify Your Name’), we are praying, ‘let Your purposes be fulfilled that will bring about the hallowing of Your name, as what You are is revealed to men. Use your people so that great glory might be yours. Let the nations know the greatness of your name and of what You are. Let them know how holy You are, and *let it come about because of what You do in us Your people.*’ We are praying that God will so revive us, His people, by His Holy Spirit, that we may have such an impact on the world that all the nations will see it. We are praying that what Jesus came to do will be accomplished through us. We are asking God to change us so much that through us the world will come to know Him. Do you really want this to happen? If you do not, do not pray the Lord’s prayer.

‘Your Kingly Rule come.’ This does not mean, ‘Father I am looking forward to all the good things I am going to receive, hurry it along,’ (although sometimes that thought not quite expressed so selfishly might help us in times when we are depressed). Its concern, as with ‘hallowed be your Name’, is rather for the glory of God and the continual extending of His Kingly Rule over the hearts of men. That is why the twelve were chosen. That is why the seventy were appointed. That is why individual disciples were called to follow Him. It was so that they could take part in this great work of extending His Kingly Rule. And it is what Luke and Acts is all about. It is reminding us that our greatest concern should be the spreading of His Kingly Rule over the hearts of men.

This is an expansion on the previous prayer. It is praying that God’s rule over men’s lives might become a reality, and that the world might see that He rules because of the obedience of His people. In Heaven He is undisputed King. Every knee bows to Him. Every tongue acknowledges the supremacy of God, of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Even the highest angel races to do His bidding. There the Kingly Rule of God is constantly displayed. (What an incentive it would be to us if we appreciated that each day). And that is what we are praying for earth in the Lord’s prayer. We are praying that what is true in Heaven might become true on earth. That men and women may be reached by the preaching of the word and might come under His Kingly Rule here and now. It is praying that God will so work that those whom He has chosen may surrender themselves to Him and own His sovereignty over their lives. It is praying that we, like the angels, may race around to do His bidding thinking of nothing else but how we can please Him. And on the other hand it is also praying that all that offends against His Kingly Rule will be removed, will be disposed of, so that His Kingly Rule might be universally established, and God might be all in all.

And yet it also has one eye on the eschatological future. For it is also praying for the final triumph of His Kingly Rule in glory when all things are put under His feet. That is the ultimate goal, and our hearts should be longing for that too.

‘Give us today Tomorrow’s bread.’ At this point in the prayer some people sigh with relief. Here at last, they think, is something practical. At last we can have something for ourselves. And then we can expand on it and make a list of all the things we would like for ourselves, and call them ‘our daily bread’ and hope that we will get them too.

But does it not strike you that on the face of it this prayer is out of place here? It is like Martha, who was concerned about physical food, rather than like Mary, concerned about the food of the word of God. It is like the importunate friend asking for bread, when what He should be asking for is the food of the Holy Spirit (11.5-13). It actually seems to be praying for what Jesus told us in another context that we do not need to pray for (12.29-30). Consider for this Matthew 6.32. There He said in the very context of the giving of the Lord’s prayer (Matthew 6.9-13), ‘do not be anxious about what you shall eat’, and then criticises the Gentiles for being anxious about ‘these things’, which refers to what they eat and drink. He tells us that our Father will provide them without our need to ask for them (Matthew 6.8, 31-32). Would He then in this prayer tell us to ask for food, contrary to all that He said there?

Rather here in 11.9-13 he will tell us that the food that we should be seeking is the Holy Spirit. Surely that then is what we are seeking here. Compare 12.29-30 where He says, "And do not seek what you shall eat, and what you shall drink, neither be you of doubtful mind, for all these things do the nations of the world seek after, but your Father knows that you have need of these things. Yet you seek you his Kingly Rule, and these things will be added to you " His instructions are quite clear.

Of course we can counter this by suggesting that what He allows is that we ask for our basic needs to be met. That we are saying that we can live without most things but we cannot live without food. Is Jesus not therefore saying, we may suggest, 'This at least you may ask from your Father.' But it is strange then that later in Matthew 6 He says, 'your Father knows that you need these things before you ask Him', and criticises the Gentiles for seeking 'all these things' because it demonstrates that they do not trust God fully (Matthew 6.32), for 'all these things' clearly refers back to the eating and drinking in verse 31. And the fact is that in the whole of Matthew 6 He is taking our thoughts away from such earthly things. He is stressing heavenly provision, and warning against seeking earthly treasure (Matthew 6.19-21, 24). For the whole passage gives the impression that we do not need to pray for earthly things because (like any father would) our Father will provide them without our asking, and all we have to do is say 'thank You'.

And some would then say, 'Yes, that is what it is. In the Lord's Prayer we are saying, 'Thank you' and expressing our dependence. And that is why they like to translate the Greek word 'daily'. But that is not the impression gained from Matthew 6. The impression gained from the whole chapter is that it is concentrating on seeking 'heavenly' things, such as heavenly treasure (6.20), God not mammon (6.24), and accepting our food and clothing as and when supplied by God (6.25-31). And while the matter is not fully settled a good amount of opinion favours the translation as 'tomorrow', an opinion backed up by the only ancient version of the prayer that we have in Aramaic. That being so it would seem probable that we are to seek in this another meaning connected with heavenly things, just as Mary was commended for seeking heavenly things when Martha's mind was on food (10.38-42).

Much depends on the meaning of epiousios ('tomorrow'). It occurs only here but would appear to be related to epiousa, 'the next day'. Thus the translation 'tomorrow'. The idea of 'Tomorrow' unquestionably came to be connected with the great Tomorrow, the last days as connected with the Messiah. The Jews were constantly looking forward to the great 'Tomorrow'. And it seems quite likely then that Jesus was teaching them to pray for the bread of the last days, for the bread of that time when the chosen of God would eat at Messiah's table, for He wanted them to know that it was imminent, and indeed some had already participated in it. He wanted them to think in terms of soon partaking in the great Tomorrow. But even more, that they could eat of that bread now. That is why He had come, in order to feed men with the Bread of the great Tomorrow, in order to give them His Holy Spirit now (11.13).

Bread is in fact very much connected with 'the last days', a phrase which in the New Testament includes the life and ministry of Jesus, and this was what the feeding of the crowd had symbolised. And we must remember that to the disciples He had 'brought in' these last days. And in the last days the belief was that the Messiah would give bread from Heaven, as Moses had (compare John 6.31-32 in the context of the feeding of the crowds with bread). And that is why Jesus referred to Himself as 'the bread of life' (John 6.35). He said that He had come to bring God's bread to His people. He had come as God's Bread from Heaven, that men might eat of Him and not die.

Thus we may see here that Jesus' prayer, given for us to pray, should be seen as pointing to a prayer for the final fulfilment of God's purposes, a fulfilment to be achieved 'each day' as we partake of His Holy Spirit. He is saying to His disciple, pray that the imminent approach of

the Kingly Rule of God under the Christ, where you will eat of the bread of God, (which He later makes clear then refers to Himself), may not be delayed, but may be enjoyed now through the coming of His Holy Spirit. Pray that it will come 'today'. It is essentially a prayer that they might almost immediately partake of the fullness of Christ and enjoy life with Him. It was an indication that the Kingly Rule of God was here in which they could daily partake. And they were to pray that they might have their share in it along with all His people. That they should not miss out on what God has given.

So we have 'Tomorrow's bread' available to us today, while at the same time looking forward to the time when we will eat and drink with Him in His heavenly rule.

However, whichever way we take it the prayer is for daily sustenance, whether physical or spiritual, so that we can properly serve God. It is not a suggestion that we can ask for whatever we like.

'And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive every one who is indebted to us.' Central to participation in the Kingly Rule of God is forgiveness of sins (3.3; 5.20; 7.41-50). Without forgiveness we can have no place there. We are thus called on daily to walk in His light and seek the forgiveness of sins (1 John 1.7-10). And He points out that in doing so we must also be those who forgive others. 'Debtors' is a very Jewish way of looking at sin. We must forgive those who are indebted to us because they have sinned against us. Then God will forgive us our debts in that we have sinned against Him (7.41-43). In both cases there is the assumption of repentance. God will forgive us when we repent. We are to forgive others when they repent (17.3-4). And just as God is willing to forgive many times, we must do the same.

The thought is not that we will be forgiven because we forgive. The thought rather is that as already His believing people, and having because of that forgiven others, we are coming as those who have done all the preparatory work necessary for our own daily forgiveness. We have repented and set our lives right, and this is especially revealed in our forgiveness of others. We are therefore ripe for God's mercy to be revealed in forgiveness to us. This is not the initial forgiveness at our first repentance. As God's men we are coming to Him as those who are obedient to His ways. We are praying like this because having once for all been forgiven in the past, we have learned to freely forgive, so that now we have the confidence to come for the daily forgiveness that we need as well. Our forgiving others is an evidence of the fact that we are already His and that our lives have been transformed and that our approach is genuine.

But this forgiveness of sins is itself an evidence of the last days. The last days will introduce a forgiveness of sins that will spread throughout the world (24.47; Isaiah 43.25; 44.22; Jeremiah 31.34). And it is noteworthy that in this prayer of Jesus there is no mention anywhere of God as in any way being restricted to Judaism. It is not a Jewish prayer, it is not a Greek prayer. It is a world prayer, for it is for His disciples who must have a world vision, and it is for all mankind.

'And bring us not into testing.' We should notice immediately the implication of these words. It is that we are being 'brought', we are being 'led', in the way in which we go. They are words of personal care. The Lord is our Shepherd and we are His sheep. And what we are praying is that we will not have to face the tests that the world has to face, and especially the Scribes and Pharisees have to face, under the wrath of God (11.42-51) and away from the flock outside His protection.

But one thing we can be sure of, and that is that this is not a prayer that we will never be tested. For the Scriptures makes clear that testing is one thing that every believer can be certain of (Matthew 7.14; 10.28; John 16.33; Acts 14.22; 20.19; James 1.12-15). To pray not to be tested would be to ask the impossible, because it would be to ask that the Scriptures are not fulfilled. We will be tested by our own desires (James 1.13-14), we will be tested in ways that

are common to man (1 Corinthians 10.13), we will be tested by the activities of God's enemies, sharing His reproach (1 Peter 4.12-13), we will be tested by the Evil One as Jesus was (Ephesians 10.13). And when we are we can be sure of this that God will provide a way of escape (if we are willing to take it) so that we will be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10.13), because He is leading us.

But what we are praying will not happen here is for *God* to bring us into His testing. For when God brings a man into testing he is naked and unprotected. He has no way of escape. He is laid bare in his sin. He is undone. To be led into testing is to be a lost soul. We do not want God to lead us there.

In other words what we are asking is that we may walk continually under God's protection, not having to face what His enemies have to face. This involves us therefore in walking where we know His protection is available. The sheep who deliberately goes out to face the wolf because he fancies a good scrap has lost his right to protection by the shepherd (and demonstrated that he is not a sheep).

So this is rather a prayer that we will be kept from the way of those who are tested by God, the way of the world, that God will walk with us and will never allow us to be tested in the way that cannot be overcome, that He will not bring us into a way in which we are without His protection. Note that the whole idea is that God is leading and bringing. God is here seen as a shepherd. It is spoken by those under His protection.

Of course the believer should certainly never seek for God to test him, for that would be to display arrogance. Those who sought martyrdom were often those who failed in the end. Rather, says Jesus, we should pray at all costs to avoid it. We should pray to be led safely in the ways where God does not test men, the protected way, safe from the trials and tests that God brings on the ungodly, and safe from His judgments.

We will be tested by sin (temptation), we will be tested by God's enemies and we will be tested by the Evil One. In those cases God is not leading us into them, He is bringing us through them (Isaiah 43.2). All these God will keep us in. But we do not want to be laid bare, we do not want to be tested by God, for those whom God tests are without hope. Nothing can protect them from it. They may build what shelters they may, but they will simply be blown away (Isaiah 28.17). And the command that we pray this is the guarantee that God will fulfil it. It is a prayer that we might walk under His umbrella, in the narrow way that leads us safely through all temptations as His own.

Those who pray this are praying to be delivered from evil and the Evil One, as Matthew 6.13 makes clear. Many manuscripts include the words here as well, but as other good manuscripts exclude the words (including p45, aleph, B and f1) it is likely that they have been added by copyists from Matthew. They are, however, quite Scriptural (they are there in Matthew).

For the idea of not being led into testing by God contains within it the opposite notion of being led in the way that is free from God's testing. Prayer for safety and deliverance is intrinsic within the desire not to be tested, for the only way in which we can be 'not led into testing' is by our being protected from it, by our being led in the right way, in the way free from God's testing. Thus we are here asking to be led in the reverse of the God-tested way, in the God-protected way. We are asking God to drive us through the hail of His own missiles and bullets in a bullet-proof car. It goes without saying that we are also declaring by this that we ourselves will not walk into the way of testing. We will avoid all such ways. We will keep our eyes fixed on Him in the not-God-tested way. For the whole prayer is based on our being 'led' and 'brought'.

As we are constantly told elsewhere, testing is inevitable for believers (Matthew 7.14; 10.28; John 16.33; Acts 14.22; James 1.12-15), and sometimes it may seem to overwhelm us. (The bullet-proof car may be surrounded and put under huge pressure). But the believer knows

that he will never be overwhelmed (Isaiah 43.2), for the Lord is his protector (Hebrews 13.5-6). Nevertheless there is in this the opposite lesson that testing must never be sought. That would be folly. But as Jesus makes clear in 10.19-20; 11.21-23, when we are tested we need not fear, for He has delivered from the Evil One.

A Man Seeking His Daily Bread Is Provided For. How Much More Should We Seek The Holy Spirit (11.5-13).

In the chiasmus of the whole Section the first part of this passage parallels Martha's provision of daily bread to Jesus (10.38-42), the second part parallels the free unrestricted giving of the Good Samaritan, and the third the rejoicing in the Spirit and the revealing of Father and Son through the Holy Spirit (10.21-22).

Having given His prayer to His disciples Jesus now illustrates and explains how God provides for His people through prayer. Physical bread is used as an illustration (11.4-8), but it points forward towards receiving the Holy Spirit through prayer (11.9-13). We want to be given bread, that is, we want to receive the Holy Spirit. We have, however, already noted that in the Lord's prayer there is only one thing that we ask to be 'given, and that is 'Tomorrow's bread'. Thus what follows must surely have that in mind, so that in the end what is given as 'Tomorrow's bread' is the Holy Spirit (verse 13).

The story that follows contrasts the unwillingness and reluctance of man to give when circumstances are against him, (even though he does in the end when pressed hard enough), with the bountiful willingness to give of our Father, Who delights to give, and especially to give His Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. It is stressing confidence in God. The idea is that while earthly bread is under the control of man on earth, and may be hard to come by, spiritual bread is abundantly and freely available because of the generosity and love of our heavenly Father. This is the one gift above all that we should desire. This is the food of God which will feed the soul continually, which we should long for above all else (as Mary did the words of the Lord). And it is a gift that God wants to give us in abundance.

The point here is not of God's unwillingness to give, or the need to keep badgering God to get what we want. It is rather of not accepting present conditions as they are, but praying in confident faith until God's provision is enjoyed in full with the sending of His Holy Spirit, and maintenance of His holy power continually within us.

Analysis.

- a And he said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine is come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him." '
- b "And he from within shall answer and say, Do not disturb me. The door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot rise and give you what you want."
- c "I say to you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his unwillingness to take no for an answer he will arise and give him as many as he needs."
- d I say to you, "Ask, and it shall be given you, seek, and you shall find, knock, and it shall be opened to you."
- c "Every one who asks does receive, and he who seeks does find, and to him who knocks it will be opened."
- b "And of which of you who is a father will his son ask a loaf, and he give him a stone? or a fish, and he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion?"
- a "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Note that in 'a' a man wishes to receive gifts and the request is made for three loaves, and in

the parallel man knows how to give good gifts and the request is made for the Holy Spirit. In 'b' the neighbour refuses to give what is wanted because he is in bed with his children, and in the parallel we are asked whether a father will give the wrong things to his children. In 'c' he responds to the asking, seeking and knocking by giving what is asked and in the parallel the same is promised by God. Central is 'd' which lays out the basic principle of prayer.

The Man Who Would Not Take No For An Answer (11.5-8).

11.5-6 'And he said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine is come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him." '

The story begins with a man who has been put in an awkward situation. A friend on a journey arrives late seeking hospitality. He had probably been travelling after sunset in order to avoid the heat of the day. But he was unexpected and the problem is that the household has eaten up all its supply of bread. It has been caught short. And yet not to provide the visitor with a full and satisfying meal would be a grave breach of hospitality. It was something that could not be allowed. So it leaves him with only one thing he can do. Go to his next-door neighbour and borrow some bread. It is awkward because it is late, but the awkwardness of not being truly hospitable is greater. In those days it was almost seen as a crime. So he knocks at the neighbour's door and yells through the door, explaining the situation. He needs 'three loaves' (a completeness of provision) because he has a late-night visitor. We should note his confidence in his neighbour

11.7 "And he from within shall answer and say, Do not disturb me. The door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot rise and give you what you want."

The neighbour is very unwilling. He tells him that he and his family have all settled down on their sleeping mat and are huddled together around the fire on the sleeping platform, and for him to get up will disturb the whole family. Thus he is unable to comply with his request. The picture is vivid and uncompromising.

11.8 "I say to you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his unwillingness to take no for an answer he will arise and give him as many as he needs."

The man is, however, persistent. He will not take no for an answer and keeps on banging on the door. This is not recommended behaviour, it is illustrating a point. And because the neighbour recognises that he will not take no for an answer, he reluctantly gets up and gives him what he has asked for to the full extent of his needs. It is the only way that he and his family will get any sleep.

The lessons are simple:

- If you want 'daily bread' from God with which to feed yourself and others you must ask persistently.
- If you go on asking persistently you will receive it, for God is not unwilling like this man but wants to give it to you.

The story is then applied. It is God's desire to give the Holy Spirit to all who ask Him, and on a continual basis. This equates 'Tomorrow's bread' with the Holy Spirit. But those who would continue to enjoy the new age of the Spirit must be persistent. They must want more and more.

The Certainty of Provision To Those Who Seek Tomorrow's Bread, the Holy Spirit (11.9-13).

The lesson here is that those who want to enjoy God's full provision must be urgent and persistent. There must be no half-heartedness. (It is not God's awkwardness that has to be overcome, it is our indifference). But if they are persistent they can be sure that they will receive it.

11.9 ‘And I say to you, “Ask, and it shall be given you, seek, and you shall find, knock, and it shall be opened to you.”

They must be like the persistent householder. They must ask, yes, they must seek, yes, they must knock. Note the growth in urgency. The man in the parable had asked, then he had pleaded, then he had banged at the door unceasingly. They must be persistent and not take no for an answer. In context this does not apply to prayer for anything we want. It refers to prayer for the Holy Spirit (and in Matthew for the good things of God, the things which result in spiritual blessing). It is the urgency of a man who wants God’s best.

11.10 “For every one who asks does receive, and he who seeks does find, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

And the assurance is given to them that if they do ask it will be given to them, if they do seek they will find, if they do knock the door will be opened to them. God will supply His Holy Spirit. So must they go on praying, “Give us today Tomorrow’s bread.’ For then they can be sure that He will give it. We should note that this is a continual process. We will never have enough of spiritual blessing. It is something that we must continually seek. The more we have the more we should want.

11.11-12 “And of which of you who is a father will his son ask a fish, and he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion?”

And the certainty that we will receive lies in the nature of fatherhood. When a son asks for a fish will his father give him a serpent, if he asks for an egg will he give him a scorpion? Both are inconceivable. The idea is of a mythical son (who does not exist) who thinks that he is receiving an edible eel from his father, and discovers it is a snake. He accepts what seems to be an egg, but it unwinds itself as a scorpion. He has been utterly deceived, and as a result subjected to great harm. Does anyone know of a father who would do such a thing to his son? Of course not!

Here then we have the certainty that they will receive the good things they ask for. They will receive a fish or an egg (the daily food they have asked for, and common foods in Palestine), which in verse 13 turns out to be the Holy Spirit. What they will not be given is spirits of evil, for both serpent and scorpion represent the power of the Enemy (10.19), and the Father will protect them from that (11.14-26). So those who can call God Father, because He has been made known to them by the Son (10.22), can seek His Holy Spirit with the absolute guarantee of success. And they can go on receiving more and more of Him.

The continual cross references in this whole section are interesting and significant, as with the serpent and scorpion here as compared with 10.19. The section has very much to be seen as a whole, interconnecting and arrayed around the Lord’s Prayer.

11.13 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”

And all this is sure, because if we, who are evil give good gifts to our children, how much more certain can we be that our Father, God, will give us, as His children, His Holy Spirit when we ask Him. He wants us to have Him in abundance.

‘If we who are evil.’ Note that we receive these things even though we are ‘evil’, that is, coming short of God’s glory (Romans 3.23). And that all of us are ‘evil’. (Jesus had no illusions about us). It is not of our deserving. Thus we do not have to hold back through a feeling of unworthiness.

This reference to the Holy Spirit gains especial significance in that in the body of Luke’s Gospel mention of the Holy Spirit is deliberately limited so that in 11.20, where Matthew 12.28 has the Spirit of God, Luke has the finger of God. In fact this is the only reference in the ministry of Jesus in the Synoptics to the general giving of the Holy Spirit before the

resurrection.

What then is it referring to? We have already seen above on 11.2 that ‘hallowed be your name’ contains a reference to the giving of the Holy Spirit in Ezekiel 36, thus here this is confirming the fulfilment of that promise. He will give us a new heart and a new spirit. And He will continually cleans and renew them. But as with so much in the Lord’s Prayer it has both a present and future reference. In one sense the present disciples can experience the Holy Spirit as their ‘daily bread’ in their daily lives now, as in John 3.1-6; 4.10-14; 7.37, but its major fulfilment will be in John 20.22 and Acts 2 (compare John 7.38), when the Holy Spirit comes in power (compare 24.49). Then they will experience Him in abundance.

It should be noted that this has nothing to do with a desperate seeking after a special blessing of the Holy Spirit. It has to do with receiving His daily blessing. It is the receiving of our daily ‘bread’. For once the Holy Spirit has come to us in His transforming and saving power, which was the first thing that all should seek, we are to ‘go on being filled with the Spirit’ (Ephesians 5.18). He will be given in fuller and fuller measure. He will be a spring of water welling up to eternal life (John 4.14).

Jesus Has Come As The Stronger Than He And Has Defeated Satan (11.14-23).

In the chiasmus of the whole section this passage is in parallel with Jesus’ description of Satan like lightning falling from Heaven, and of the deliverance of His people from the power of the Enemy (10.17-20). Here the idea is amplified and dealt with in more detail. It is no accident that it follows immediately on the idea of the giving of the Holy Spirit. It is the giving of the Holy Spirit that confirms man’s deliverance from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

In this passage we discover that far from being ‘brought into temptation’ the power of the Tempter is broken by ‘the finger of God’. He has indeed fallen from Heaven. Our accuser has been banished. He no longer holds sway among believers. He has been rendered powerless against them. Restriction has been put on him that prevents his exercising his full power (Revelation 20.2). He may roar on his chain and seek to spring at us, but he is restrained by his handler (2 Thessalonians 2.6-7). And this has been accomplished by the Stronger than he Who has come. The One who is restoring bruised and battered Israel, who had been spoiled by robbers, has also dealt with the Chief Bandit.

The passage may be analysed as follows:

- a He was casting out a demon that was dumb. And it came about that, when the demon was gone out, the dumb man spoke, and the crowds marvelled. But some of them said, “It is by Beelzebub the prince of the demons that He casts out demons, and others, trying Him, sought of Him a sign from heaven (15-16).
- b But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them, “Every kingship divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls. And if Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingship stand? Because you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebub” (17-18).
- c “And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges. But if I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the Kingly Rule of God come upon you” (19-20).
- b “When the strong man fully armed guards his own court, his goods are in peace, but when a stronger than he shall come on him, and overcome him, He takes from him his whole armour in which he trusted, and divides his spoils” (21-22).
- a “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters” (23).

Note that in ‘a’ He has revealed His power and the crowds marvel while His opponents accuse Him and bait Him, and in the parallel He makes it clear that all have an opportunity to be

‘with Him’ but that those who oppose Him are against Him and scattering the flock (the very opposite of which they are claiming to do). In ‘b’ he points out that civil war in Satan’s camp is not feasible, for he would know that it would only destroy his kingship, while in the parallel he points out what has actually happened, he has been defeated by the Stronger than he. And ‘c’ is central and demonstrates that what has happened proves that the Kingly Rule of God has come upon them.

11.14 ‘And he was casting out a demon that was dumb. And it came about that, when the demon was gone out, the dumb man spoke, and the multitudes marvelled.’

The scene here opens with Jesus faced up with a dumb man, rendered dumb by an evil spirit within him. Perhaps the hope of the evil spirit was that by this means he would escape detection. But when the man had been brought to Jesus, Jesus recognised what was at the root of his dumbness and cast out the evil spirit, with the result that the man was able to speak. That Jesus did not see all dumbness as caused by evil spirits is quite apparent elsewhere (1.20; Matthew 15.30; Mark 7.37), but it was seemingly not rare (compare Matthew 9.32; 12.22; Mark 9.17). The crowd watched and marvelled.

11.15 ‘But some of them said, “It is by Beelzeboul the prince of the demons that he casts out demons.’

His opponents were perplexed, but rather than admit that God was working through Him they accused of being in league with ‘Beelzeboul, the prince of the demons’, in other words Satan.

‘It is by Beelzeboul.’ Their decision was that He Himself was possessed (always the easiest way to discredit someone), and not just by any evil spirit but by the great Beelzeboul, prince of demons, himself (compare John 7.20; 8.48, 52; 10.20). The description demonstrates that Beelzeboul was seen as synonymous with Satan. ‘Beel’ probably represents ‘baal’ (‘lord’), and zeboul ‘house’, thus the name means ‘Lord of the house’.

Different manuscripts and versions present the full name differently. It is given as ‘Beelzebub’ in the Syriac and Vulgate versions - probably as taken from the name of the oracular god in 2 Kings 1.2-3, and as ‘Beelzeboul’ in most manuscripts. It is given as ‘Beezeboul’ in only a few manuscripts, but these include weighty ones. The latter may, however, simply have dropped the ‘l’ because ‘lz’ was difficult to Greek speakers.

The correct name may well thus be Beelzeboul. ‘Zeboul’ may represent ‘zebel’ (dung) or ‘zebul’ (dwelling). Thus the name may mean ‘lord of the house (or dwelling)’ (see Matthew 10.25b which seems to confirm this). Or it may be ‘lord of dung’ as an insulting name for Satan. The former would explain the stress on ‘house’ in Jesus’ repudiation. The name Zbl is also found in a Ugaritic text, linked with baal, where it may be a proper name or mean ‘prince’. Matthew 10.25b suggests that Beelzeboul is seen as master over a household of demons (compare ‘Lord of the house’ above). As the narrative goes on we learn that this is a synonym for Satan, as we would gather from him being the prince of the demons.

11.16 ‘And others, trying him, sought of him a sign from heaven.’

Others challenged Him to prove His authenticity by performing some great sign. While one party were accusing Him of consorting with the Evil One, the others were doing the work of the Evil One by being used to renew his tempting of Jesus and by calling on Him to produce a great sign for the people (4.1-13). Even while they were criticising Jesus they were demonstrating who was their master (compare John 8.44). The Jews were famed as being always on the look out for signs (see verses 29-36; Matthew 16.1; Mark 8.12; John 2.18; 4.48; 6.30; 1 Corinthians 1.22). This request for a sign connects with verses 29-36 and supports the unity of the narrative.

So on the one hand were those who simply tried to dismiss Him as being in league with Satan, on the other were those who were more ready to believe if He did some great sign and were

tempting Him to do something spectacular. Neither had regard for the miracles that He had done (which they admitted) or His casting out of evil spirits. But had He performed a sign it would not have resulted in any good. It would have been a seven day wonder, and then they would have wanted more. They really wanted continuous spectacular signs.

11.17 'But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, "Every kingship divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls (literally 'house falls on house')."

But Jesus knew what the majority of them were thinking and pointed out that if what they said was true it would mean that in that evil world which caused such harm there was division within the kingship, and civil war between the factions. They would be destroying each other, house against house. For they were claiming that He had authority over demons and was fighting against them with the connivance of the prince of demons. Such a situation would mean that the combatants could not survive. For division in a kingship always brought desolation, and a divided house always falls.

11.18 "And if Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingship stand? Because you say that I cast out demons by Beelzeboul."

It would indeed mean that Satan was divided against himself, faction warring with faction. How then could his kingship hope to survive? And this was because they said that He cast out demons by Beelzeboul, and was thus demonstrating that he was on Beelzeboul's side against other demons.

11.19 "And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges."

And there was a further question. There were also Jewish exorcisers who cast out demons ('your sons' may signify disciples or younger Rabbis). If He did it by Beelzeboul, what about them? Were they also in league with Satan? Thus they would be judged as false by these whom they saw as respected and holy men.

11.20 "But if I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the Kingly Rule of God come upon you."

On the other hand they should consider the fact that if He cast out evil spirits by the finger of God, then it proved that the Kingly Rule of God was present in Him. That it had come on them unexpectedly. This is not arguing that the fact that evil spirits were cast out proved that the Kingly Rule of God had come. Their 'sons' did similar things and no one suggested that that meant that the Kingly Rule of God had come. All that did was prove that they and He were of God.

What He is saying here is that it is because *He*, as God's Anointed One, was doing it by the finger of God that it proved that the Kingly Rule of God had come. For the admission that He did cast out demons by the power of God when combined with His claims (which His success against demons would confirm) would establish His claims. They could not agree that He cast out demons by the power of God and at the same time deny His claims to be the Son of man, for His success against demons would be evidence that God was pleased with Him and acknowledged His claims. That would then be sufficient proof that the Kingly Rule of God had come.

The phrase 'finger of God' is an Old Testament phrase denoting God's direct action free from any occult methods. The Egyptian magicians used it when they at last had to recognise that Moses was not using conjuring tricks or demonic magic, but that God Himself was acting directly (Exodus 8.19). They recognised that now God had put His seal on things. It was also used of the writing of 'the ten words on the tablet which were 'written by the finger of God' (Exodus 31.18; Deuteronomy 9.10). The finger of God was the guarantee that the words were

His words. Thus here it is a seal of Who and What Jesus is. Matthew translates it as ‘if I by the Spirit of God’ (Matthew 12.28), which is saying the same thing, for the phrase ‘Spirit of God’ always indicates direct action.

As the chiasmus demonstrates, these words are central to the whole passage. Luke’s central point here is that the Kingly Rule of God has come with power in Jesus as He does battle with the forces of evil. This will then be further emphasised in order to demonstrate that Jesus is the ‘Stronger than he’.

11.21-22 “When the strong man fully armed guards his own court, his goods are in peace, but when a stronger than he shall come on him, and overcome him, he takes from him his whole armour in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.”

Jesus then likened Satan to a strong man fully armed who guarded his own possessions. No one touched what belonged to him. They could not. He held his goods, these poor possessed souls, in peace. There may have been a ripple caused by an occasional exorcism, but nothing that really disturbed him. But when a ‘Stronger than he’ comes and overcomes him, He not only defeats him, but strips him of his armour and takes all his spoils for dividing up among His followers. He humiliates him. The clear implication is that Jesus has come as the Stronger than he, not only to do battle with evil spirits, but to totally defeat and humiliate them and their prince. (Compare how shortly He is also greater than Solomon, and greater than Jonah). The battle will be fought and totally won so that Satan and all his forces will be emasculated, and Jesus will be the total victor. As He had said Himself, ‘I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven’ (10.18). That was the first evidence of Jesus’ victory, and commencement of His successful campaign, so that the enemy were on the run. ‘He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in the cross’ (Colossians 2.15). That was when He finally sealed the victory.

No exorciser ever made a claim like this. It was a claim that could only be made by God’s champion, ‘the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace’ (Isaiah 9.6). Let those who sought signs recognise this. What greater sign could there be than this? Thus does Jesus make plain to His adversaries the greatness of His claims, and the presence of the Kingly Rule of God, and to His people the greatness of the protection that He affords them as they pray, ‘do not bring us into temptation’.

Some are puzzled as to how Jesus can be depicted as having overcome Satan, while Satan appears to be on the march more and more. But think of France’s position in the second world war in the last century. It had been overrun by the Germans and was under German control, although there were still pockets of resistance, the Maquis. But then the allied forces came and invaded on D Day, and first they gained their foothold and then gradually Paris was freed. The Germans were on the retreat. The triumphal march into Paris took place. Victory belonged to the allies. But meanwhile the Germans had to be driven completely out of France. But then at last France was free. As far as France was concerned they now had complete victory. However, V2 rockets still continued to be sent up, (the fiery darts of Hitler), and the enemy was still across the frontier, and so the battle had to go on. For had there been any relaxation the Germans might have regrouped and retaliated. And so the fighting continued into Germany and now there were Germans who would not contemplate defeat and they fought all the more fiercely. And this continued until the capture of Berlin. At last war in Europe was over. But France had had its victory long before.

In the same way Jesus came to earth. It was J Day. He then commenced His battle against Satan who had overrun the world, although there were still pockets of resistance called ‘believers’ who still looked to God. And to them He could look for help. He beat back Satan and established the Kingly Rule of God. And within that Kingly Rule of God He gathered the redeemed. They were freed from Satan’s power and living in a free ‘Kingdom’. Victory had been obtained and was now assured. They had been translated from under the tyranny of

darkness into the Kingdom of His Beloved Son (Colossians 1.11).

The war continued as men and women continued to be redeemed from Satan's power (Acts 26.18). Evil spirits were cast out as men and women were delivered, until at the cross a huge victory was obtained. The enemy was finally put to flight, and his forces humiliated. The Kingly Rule of God had prevailed. Firm limits were put on the ability of Satan to act.

But outside that Kingdom the battle still went on. The fiery darts of the wicked one still rained down, and still do. While excluded from wherever the Kingly Rule of God held sway He was now 'the prince of the power of the air'. And this will go on until the King returns to finally defeat Satan once and for all, so that the Kingly Rule of God becomes universal. But meanwhile all in the Kingly Rule of God are safe. Once men and women are in it he cannot greatly harm them there, although he can yell at them over the border, and seek to distress them by guerrilla attacks. He can even surround the camp of the saints. But he cannot enter it. The consequence is that we must choose. Are we with Him or against Him? Have we entered under the Kingly Rule of God, or are we still under Satan's sway? To Whom do we belong? Do we gather with Him, or are we scatterers of the flock? The choice is ours.

11.23 "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters."

He then summarises the situation that this produces. There are those who are with Him, and who with Him gather in the harvest of God's chosen ones (3.17), and there are those who are against Him and who simply scatter those who would be God's grain so that they are lost to the winds. Others see the sentence in terms of gathering and scattering sheep (Ezekiel 34.21 in context; Matthew 9.36; John 10.12; 1 Kings 22.17; Jeremiah 50.17; Ezekiel 34), but the idea is the same. And these Scribes and Pharisees have shown which they are. Who is it now who are showing themselves to be influenced by Satan?

Unclean Spirits Are Out Seeking Men To Possess (11.24-26).

This passage now comes as a warning to men of the danger of being outside the Kingly Rule of God, and especially of seeking to idols and the occult. And it compares such things with what it is like to be in the Kingly Rule of God where men are truly 'blessed'. It is a reminder that while Satan is defeated and on the run, his forces are still active in retreat.

In the chiasmus of this whole Section this passage parallels the sending out of the seventy. While Jesus appointed servants are out seeking to bring men under the Kingly Rule of God, evil spirits are out seeking to possess men for Satan's kingdom. The guerrilla warfare continues. The description is enough to cause a shudder in the heart. It is of eight evil spirits out to possess someone. But they can only do it to those who 'open themselves', either through idolatry or the occult.

- a The unclean spirit when he is gone out of the man, passes through waterless places, seeking rest, and finding none (11.24a).
- b He says, "I will turn back to my house from where I came out." And when he is come, he finds it swept and put in order (11.24b-25).
- c Then he goes, and takes to him seven other spirits more evil than himself. And they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first (11.26).
- b And it came about that, as he said these things, a certain woman out of the crowd lifted up her voice, and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts which you sucked". (The woman is turning Jesus thoughts back to His house, but His house is not swept and put in order. It is still rebellious) (11.27).
- a But he said, "Yes rather, blessed are those who hear the word of God, and keep it" (They are in the opposite of waterless places, and they do find a place of rest) (11.28).

We note here that in 'a' the unclean spirit finds only emptiness and waterlessness and

barrenness. It seeks a satisfactory resting place and finds none. But in the parallel the one who hears the word of God finds fullness, and thirst-quenching and fruit-producing water, and a satisfactory resting-place, for he is 'blessed' by God. In 'b' the unclean spirit decides that his best solution is to return 'to his house from which he came' for he can find nowhere better, but in the parallel while the woman sees Jesus' home as a supremely blessed place, Jesus does not. He knows there is something better, being in the Kingly Rule of God. In 'c' is the central message. Those whose lives are left empty of the Kingly Rule of God can only deteriorate, and sometimes very quickly. Unless when we are freed from the past we make a positive response to God in Jesus Christ we may finish far worse off than we were before. People only go up or down.

11.24a 'The unclean spirit when he is gone out of the man, passes through waterless places, seeking rest, and finding none, he says,'

In view of the context above in verses 14-23 this wandering spirit must be seen as having been cast out. It would not disembody itself, and now it searches for someone else to possess. But wherever it goes it meets failure. It is as though it is in a desert and can find no place to call home. It 'passes through waterless places, seeking rest, and finding none.' Palestine was not the best place for finding people who opened themselves to the occult and to idolatry.

11.24b-25 "I will turn back to my house from where I came out." And when he is come, he finds it swept and put in order.'

So it decides it will go back 'home'. It looks on the body of the once possessed man as its own, although there is a note of uncertainty in the text. It is not sure what it will find. But as the Nuisance who cast it out will have gone, perhaps it will be able to find access. Perhaps the man still follows his own ways and will still be open to possession. And when it returns it finds him absolutely suitable for immediate occupation and the man still involved in idolatry or the occult. He is all ready for it once again to take possession. The man has been cleaned up but there is no other living there. The man has not been 'given the Holy Spirit' (verse 13). He is empty. (He has not heard the word of God and done it - verse 28).

11.26 'Then he goes, and takes to him seven other spirits more evil than himself. And they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.'

So it seeks out some companions (then if anyone tries to exorcise it again it will be able to put up a better fight) and finds seven spirits (a 'divinely perfect' number) even worse than itself, and together they enter and take possession of the foolish man. The lesson up to this point is clear. Once a man's life has been cleansed and put in order, his only hope of continuing like that is to let his life be possessed by the Holy Spirit and to submit to the Kingly Rule of God. Otherwise he may finally turn out to be in a worse situation than he was before.

11.27 'And it came about that, as he said these things, a certain woman out of the crowd lifted up her voice, and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bare you, and the breasts which you sucked." '

'While he was saying these things'. When Luke puts in a connection like this it has a purpose. What follows is to be linked with what has gone before.

A woman in the crowd cries out, "Blessed is the womb that bare you, and the breasts which you sucked." Her view was that Jesus' home is blessed, and His mother is blessed. And in a sense she was right. But the point is being made that neither it or she are as blessed as they should be. (Like Martha she is distracted by much serving). The contrast is made clearly. She is not of those who hear the word of God as proclaimed by Jesus. She has not as yet entered under the Kingly Rule of God by response to the King. Were Jesus to return home He would not find it 'cleansed and put in order'. He would find it still under the old regime. Jesus does not deny to her limited blessing. He simply points out that as yet she has not received the true

blessing.

11.28 ‘But he said, “Yes rather, blessed are those who hear the word of God, and keep it.” ’

This all now leads on to the crunch saying. Those who are truly blessed are those who have responded to the word of God as He has proclaimed it, and who are now keeping it, meditating on it, holding it in their hearts, and living it out in their lives. They are under the Kingly Rule of God. They enjoy true blessing. There is no far of them being open to evil spirits. (The same lesson is in mind here as in 8.19-21).

Jesus Condemnation Of Those Who Seek Signs (11.29-32).

The passage now takes up the reference to those who sought a sign in verse 16, and within the chiasmic analysis of the whole Section parallels the woes on the evangelised cities that have rejected Jesus’ message in 10.12-15. The basic lesson is that because a greater Wisdom Teacher and Prophet is here as contrasted with Solomon and Jonah, those who hear Jesus and seek signs because of unbelief will in the Judgment suffer under the condemnation of those who heard and responded to them.

Note how this connects back to what has gone before, and with what follows. He has brought the word of God for them to keep (verse 28). He has come bringing the Kingly Rule of God and Tomorrow’s bread. He has come offering the Holy Spirit. He has come proclaiming the word of life (10.25-28). Along with the casting out of evil spirits He has come to minister God’s word as it has never been ministered before (verse 31-32, compare how the word and the casting out of evil spirits regularly go together - 4.18; 9.1, 6; Mark 1.27; 6.12-13). And He has come to bring light into the world, separating light from darkness (11.33-36) and to confound the teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees (11.37-52). He is the greatest teacher of them all.

We may analyse it as follows:

- a When the crowds were gathering together to Him, He began to say, “This generation is an evil generation. It seeks after a sign. And there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah (29).
- b For even as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will also the Son of man be to this generation” (30).
- a “The queen of the south will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and will condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will stand up in the judgment with this generation, and will condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, a greater than Jonah is here” (31-32).

It will be noted that ‘a’ speaks of the prophet Jonah and in the parallel we have a double example of those who responded, those who responded because of Jonah and the one who responded because of Solomon (this is the necessary dual witness before the Judgment throne). Central in ‘b’ is the fact that the Son of Man is a sign to this generation.

11.29 ‘And when the crowds were gathering together to him, he began to say, “This generation is an evil generation. It seeks after a sign. And there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah.” ’

We are not told what initially prompted these words before the gathering crowds, probably a further request for a sign. But Luke does not mention it again for it has already been mentioned in verse 16 (in a context where a comprehensive sign is given). Jesus was constantly being pressed to give signs by those who refused to believe the signs and wonders that they saw. But here He describes such requests as coming from an evil heart. If they cannot believe the signs that are revealed before them already then no sign will convince them, for these are the signs of the presence of the Kingly Rule of God. God will therefore at present give no further sign than He has already given them. For any further sign they must be content with

‘the sign of Jonah’. But what was ‘the sign of Jonah?’

When we hear the mention of Jonah’s name there immediately springs to our minds his experience of being swallowed by a great fish. The same applied to Jesus’ listeners. Otherwise why had He, from among all the prophets, selected Jonah?

11.30 “For even as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will also the Son of man be to this generation.”

The crowds knew that Jonah had arrived in Nineveh having spent three days in the innards of a large fish like creature. He had been dead and had come alive. (He also probably looked inhumanly pale and somewhat strange as a result of the chemical action that would have affected his skin, and the account of his emergence from the fish after three days would have added to the effect). Given that he was also dressed as a Hebrew prophet he had come as ‘a sign’ from the dead to the Ninevites. The result was that they had attended to his words and had repented of their sin and idolatry.

In their eyes (and in the eyes of the crowds) here was a man who had come back from a watery grave. All would have heard the word that could hardly have failed to get around that this weird and unearthly looking man who had appeared before them had been ‘dead’ for three days in the body of a great fish. (The reasonable assumption is that Jonah would have told some of them of his experience. Indeed it can hardly be doubted). Thus they would see him as bringing them words from beyond the grave.

We can imagine what happened. Jonah takes up accommodation somewhere in Nineveh. They ask him why his skin is such a strange colour. He explains what had happened to him in his being swallowed by a huge fish and how he had prayed from the world of darkness. They go around telling their associates about this Hebrew prophet who has come back from the watery depths, even from the very dead. Thus soon crowds gather to see him, and awed by his pale and strange looking skin, and the even stranger tale that they have been told, they take careful heed to his words so that God moves their hearts and a great movement of the word of God takes place. He was indeed ‘a sign’ to them.

In the same way Jesus promises that the Son of Man ‘will be’ a sign to this generation. This would suggest that in some way He too would to come back from the dead after three days. This would not have seemed quite so impossible to them as we might think, for they knew that the Scriptures taught what had happened to the ‘son of man’. He had come from the midst of awful persecution and death (7.21-22, 25), in order to make His way triumphantly to the throne of God, so that He might receive Kingly Rule (7.13-14), having necessarily been involved in the resurrection from the dead (Daniel 12.1-2). Like Jonah He too would then become a ‘sign’ (compare John 2.18-22).

Some consider that Luke is referring to Jonah’s preaching as the sign, and that he was suggesting that Jesus meant that His own preaching was similarly a sign, ‘the sign of the prophet Jonah’ signifying ‘the same kind of sign as the prophet Jonah’. Certainly Jonah’s preaching had been hugely successful, and equally certainly Jesus’ teaching was. But successful preaching is never called a sign, and it does not explain why Jesus chose Jonah as His illustration. Other prophets were seen as having been successful. Furthermore it is Jonah himself who is quite clearly called the sign, ‘the sign of Jonah’. For his preaching was successful because the Ninevites saw him as a sign, not the other way round. It also explains Jesus’ use of the future tense when speaking of Himself as a sign. For He had clearly indicated that He was not in the present willing to give any further sign than the ones they continually saw in His preaching and casting out of evil spirits (see Mark 8.12).

And there is no question but that the crowd listening to Jesus would, when thinking of Jonah, think in terms of his awesome experience, and see that as a sign. It was both vivid and memorable. So ‘the sign of Jonah’ gave them a clue as to what to look for. Jesus was

promising that He too would at some stage arrive back from the dead. While it was a sign not yet given, it was a sign that He assured them would be given. He would thus become a sign to His generation. For such a future event as a sign we can compare Exodus 3.12.

The book of Acts undoubtedly reveals precisely that, that the resurrection became a sign spoke of and witnessed to by the Apostles, who saw it as a foundational part of their preaching and a sign of Who Jesus was.

11.31-32 “The queen of the south will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and will condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, a greater thing than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will stand up in the judgment with this generation, and will condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, a greater thing than Jonah is here.”

Jesus then gives two examples of response to the earlier teaching of great men of the past which they should consider, and both stand as a witness to condemn them before God’s Judgment Seat. One is the example of the response to the wisdom of Solomon by the Queen of the south, the Queen of Sheba, the other is the example is of the response of the Ninevites to the preaching of Jonah. While these are not ‘signs’ they are evidence of the genuineness of some who heard and responded to their words, and examples of what His hearers should also be like on hearing the words of someone ‘greater’. They put them to shame because they responded to the lesser light while His hearers neglect the greater light.

The idea of the sign has now moved on to the pointing finger. He will not give them signs but He will give them examples, so that they might be without excuse. From these examples two fingers will be pointing at His hearers on the Day of Judgment, the two witnesses required by the Law, the finger of the Queen of Sheba, and the finger of the whole of Nineveh. For they all paid heed to the words of God’s servants in their day, while the present generation do not pay heed, even though the One present in their day is One Who is a greater thing (neuter) than Solomon, and a greater thing than Jonah. Thus will they be utterly condemned. They are on a par with Bethsaida, Chorazin and Capernaum (10.12-15), for they have not responded to His wonders and signs, and they have not heard the word and kept it (verse 28).

In Solomon Jesus produced the Wisdom teacher par excellence who taught a foreign queen and in Jonah a great prophet who preached to Gentiles after a miraculous deliverance, and He has stated His claim that He is greater than both. He is the sum of both Wisdom and prophecy. Combined with the fact that He is the ‘Stronger than he’ it is a powerful combination. Greater in status and power than the mighty and wise King Solomon whose wisdom all the world extolled, greater in status and power than the remarkable Jonah, Stronger than the powerful Satan. They could be in little doubt about how great He was.

Note how both the accusers of Israel in the judgment will be Gentiles. It seemed clear to Luke that Jesus had selected these examples in order to get over another important message. And that was that God’s message was also for the Gentiles. For in both these cases Gentile audiences had received the word of God, and both had responded to it, so that to Luke the citing of these two would therefore be evidence of the fact that Jesus saw His word as one that was also eventually going to Gentiles. It would support the argument that Jesus’ preaching was not only suitable for Gentiles, but would also specifically reach out to them. Indeed in the light of Acts we may see Luke as indicating by this that the Gentile believers would also one day point the finger at the Jews who rejected Him.

The Light of the Word (9.33-36).

The Jews walk on blindly, seeking signs and coming under the condemnation of these men of old for not responding to Jesus’ words, but in contrast His disciples are to become lamps revealing and receiving the light of God, and are not to be concerned with signs but only with seeking single-heartedly His light through His words. And He promises that if their eyes are

single and are fixed on God then their eye will be like a lamp lit by God (verse 34), and they will thus be filled with His light and themselves become lamps shining out to others (verse 33 compare Revelation 1.12, 20; 2.1).

In the chiasmus of this Section this passage parallels that of the calling of the three unknown disciples who are called to proclaim the Kingly Rule of God (9.57-62). They were called to singleness of purpose. They were called to follow the Lord, and keep their eye on Him, and proclaim the Kingly Rule of God to the world. Here all disciples are called to the same. They are to be a light in the world, because they have received His light, and they are to keep themselves continually filled with His light by their eye being single, and being open to Him and His words. They are thus themselves openly to experience and manifest that light.

The emphasis here is on receiving the light of life (verse 34) and thus themselves becoming a light (verse 33; Matthew 5.16). They will then be openly manifested like a city that is set on a hill, and like a light shining before men (Matthew 5.15-16). And then the emphasis moves to the single eye, through which that light will be continually renewed by the eye being fixed on Him and His words, because He is the light of the world. If the eye is fixed on Him they will be filled with light. If their eye is fixed elsewhere they will receive only darkness. So the burning question is whether that eye will be focused to receive light or darkness. If the eye receives light by being steadfastly fixed on Jesus and His words, and on the Kingly Rule of God, then the whole life will be filled with light, and lived in light, and lived out in light, but if the eye receives only darkness because it is set elsewhere, then life will be lived in the dark (they will be like the Scribes and Pharisees described in the following verses). As Jesus puts it in John 8.12, 'I am the light of the world, he who follows Me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.' Here He indicates that the eye is to be fixed on Himself, while at the same time saying that through it they will receive within them the light of eternal life.

This thought is prominent in the New Testament. God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all (1 John 1.5). Thus those who would have fellowship with God must come to the light. They must let it shine on their lives, revealing their sin, so that they can then come for it to be cleansed (1 John 1.7; John 3.18-21). And God's light has especially come into the world through Jesus (John 8.12; 2 Corinthians 4.4-6). As men see Him and recognise in Him the One Who is God's light, and then respond to Him, His life enters them and they receive the light of life (John 8.12). From then on they are to walk in that light (1 John 1.7) and are to let it be revealed through them (Matthew 5.16). And they are to be sure that it is constantly renewed by their eye being fixed solely on Him and His words. The result will be that they will be filled with light, and their light will shine out to others.

The connecting thought with the Lord's Prayer is that by walking in His light, and ourselves being His lights, and by following Him, we will not be brought by Him into testing, but will be delivered from Evil One. The connecting thought with the previous passage is that those whose eyes are on Him and respond to His word do not come under the condemnation of those of old, and will have no fear of the Evil One, because they walk in light whereas he rules over the tyranny of darkness, and that heeding the words of the greatest Teacher of them all is absolutely vital. The connecting thought with what follows is that the Scribes and Pharisees have their eyes fixed otherwise than on Him, and will therefore suffer the woes that come to those who are in darkness.

Analysis.

- a "No man, when he has lighted a lamp, puts it in a cellar, nor under the corn measure, but on the stand, so that those who enter in may see the light" (33).
- b "The lamp of your body is your eye. When your eye is single, your whole body also is full of light, but when it is evil, your body also is full of darkness" (34).
- c "Look therefore whether the light that is in you is not darkness" (35).
- b "If therefore your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly

- full of light “ (36a).
• a “As when the lamp with its bright shining gives you light” (36b).

Note that in ‘a’ the lamp is to shine out to give light, and in the parallel the lamp with its bright shining gives light. In ‘b’ the body is to be full of light and in the parallel is thought of as being so. Central in ‘c’ is to ensure that the light that is in us is not darkness. We are not to be children of darkness.

11.33 “No man, when he has lighted a lamp, puts it in a hiding place, nor under the corn measure, but on the stand, so that those who enter in may see the light.”

The first principle that has to be established is that every man must light his lamp by following Jesus Christ (John 8.12) and looking to His words, and that that light must then be allowed to shine. ‘Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify you Father Who is in Heaven’ (Matthew 5.16). Every Christian should be putting the lamp of his life where it can be seen. Not in a hiding place where he hides away in embarrassment or indolence, not under a corn measure where he keeps it hidden because he is ashamed of it, but out on the stand where all who come near can clearly see the light. Compare 7.16 where the warning is also given that in the end all will be brought to the light and judged.

For Jesus has come as the Light of the world. Those who follow Him receive the light of life (John 8.12). And that light must be allowed to shine forth to the world. We are to walk as children of light and of the day (7.16; 16.8; Ephesians 5.8; John 12.36; 1 Thessalonians 5.5), revealing the splendour of His glory by life and lip.

11.34 “The lamp of your body is your eye. When your eye is single, your whole body also is full of light, but when it is evil, your body also is full of darkness.”

And how do we light that lamp? The light comes to us from God and from the Lord. And it comes through the window of the eye, which is itself thus like a lamp, for it enables light to shine into our lives. If our eye is single-minded and fixed on Him and His word then our whole body will be full of light. We will be filled with truth and goodness and righteousness and holiness and His light will continually shine into our hearts. We will walk in the light as He is in the light (1 John 1.7), as indeed He is the light (1 John 1.5; John 8.12). But the eye of anyone turns away from Him and His word, and ceases to be single, then the light will be cut off and darkness will fill their lives. The evil of unbelief and disobedience will have possessed them. They will walk in darkness. And their whole lives will be filled with darkness.

11.35 “Look therefore whether the light that is in you is not darkness.”

Thus all must consider themselves carefully, for sadly some may still think that their darkness is light (they have never known any other). The world is full of people who think that they have light when all they have is darkness. They have the light of reason, the light of lesser religion, the light of knowledge, but they do not have the true light. What they have may be relatively good, but they do not have the all important light. They boast in their light but they are blind. Indeed the test is simple. Is their light from the Lord? Is it the light of His word shining in their hearts? Do they hear His voice and follow Him (John 10.27-28)? Or is the light within them false light, the ‘light’ which is Satan’s imitation of true light (2 Corinthians 11.14)? Basically the question is do they hear and see His word and do it? If not the light is a false light, a pale reflection of light. It is darkness.

11.36a “If therefore your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly full of light,”

But if the eye is singly on Jesus and His word, then the whole body will be full of light and there will be no part dark. It will be wholly full of light. And it will shine out to others. And day by day we will walk in that light, and we will continually receive that light, and we will let

that light shine before men. For we ourselves will have become a light. Such indeed will be the light that no darkness will be able to penetrate it. And the one who is so suffused with light will continually come to God's light in Jesus that his light might be constantly renewed, and that it might be clearly seen that his deeds are wrought in God (John 3.21).

11.36b "As when the lamp with its bright shining gives you light."

The whole life will then be bathed in light, just as when in a room the bright shining of the lamp gives you light. We will ever be in God's room with Him, with his light shining on us, and we will be enveloped in the light of Him Who is the light of the world, and in the light of His word. We will walk in the light as He is in the light, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son will go on cleansing us from all sin (1 John 1.7). And when the light reveals our lives to us for what they are, and we are made aware of imperfections that are there, we will then cry for all that is unfit to be removed, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son will do its work. And His cleansing, like the cleansing of the wick, is what will enable us to continue in the light with our eyes firmly fixed on Him and His word. And He will constantly shine on us like a shining light whose beam is ever fixed on us because our eyes are on Him.

The Woeful State of Those Whose Light Is Darkness, And Who Therefore Come Under His Woes (11.37-52).

But sadly there are those whose eyes turn away from the light. Instead of their eyes being fixed on His words they are turned to other words. And those words keep them in darkness, as the next incident reveals. This incident is said to take place in the house of a Pharisee to which Jesus was invited for a meal, but it is clear that there are a good number of Pharisees and Scribes there. This suggests that there were many of them who were still willing to eat with Him and to give His words consideration. But they clearly only did it on sufferance. They were giving Him the opportunity to conform to their ways. When He rather showed them the failings of their ways they were not pleased, and rather than admitting the truth and opening their eyes to His light, they sought to deal with Him. They could criticise each other (and did), but they would not accept criticism from Him. It was necessary for Him to conform Himself to them.

The ways of the Scribes and Pharisees described here were precisely the opposite of His teaching about the light. They illustrated walking in darkness. Instead of seeking for the divine light to shine into men's innermost hearts they turned the searchlight on external practises, and in general ignored the inner heart. Their eye was not opened to the light so that it could enter within. They did not want the light in their inner heart. The Samaritans, with whom they are paralleled in the chiasmus (9.52-56), rejected Jesus because of the physical place to which He was going. They did not consider His inner heart. These reject Him because of the physical things He refuses to conform to. They too do not look at His inner heart. So neither looked at the heart. But in the case of the Scribes and Pharisees this will lead them into woe because of their privileged position. They will be 'brought into testing'.

This is the final passage in the Section of Luke that relates to the Lord's Prayer. In relationship to the Lord's Prayer these are they are who will be 'brought into testing' because their eyes are not fixed on Him. For them there is no protection. All that awaits is judgment.

Analysis.

While in general the chiasmic pattern is held here, the need not to alter Jesus' word patterns and to introduce the two threefold woes, prevented a simple chiasmus. Compare the speech in 6.20-46 where it was even more so.

- a Now as he spoke, a Pharisee asks him to dine with him, and he went in, and sat down to meat, and when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first drenched himself before dinner (37-38).

- b The Lord said to him, “Now you the Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but your inward part is full of extortion and wickedness” (39).
- c “You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also?” (40).
- b “But give for alms those things which are within, and behold, all things are clean to you” (41).
- d “But woe to you Pharisees! for you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and pass over justice and the love of God, but these ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone” (42).
- d “Woe to you Pharisees! for you love the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the marketplaces” (43).
- d “Woe to you! for you are as the tombs which are not visible, and the men who walk over them are not aware of it” (44).
- e And one of the lawyers answering says to him, “Teacher, in saying this you reproach us also” (45).
- d And he said, “Woe to you lawyers also! for you load men with burdens grievous to be borne, and you yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers” (46).
- d “Woe to you! for you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. So are you witnesses and consent to the works of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their tombs, therefore also said the wisdom of God, “I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute, that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation” (47-51).
- d “Woe to you lawyers! for you took away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered” (52).
- a And when he was come out from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press on him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things, laying wait for him, to catch something out of his mouth’ (53-54).

Note how in ‘a’ Jesus ‘comes in’ and the Pharisees concern is that He has not ceremonially washed His hands, while in the parallel He ‘goes out’ and the Pharisees and Scribes are out to metaphorically ‘throw dirt’ at Him. This is then followed by a small chiasmus contrasting outward and inward cleansing (b, c), and a larger chiasmus contrasting the two sets of ‘woes’, one on the Pharisees and the other on the Scribes (d, e).

11.37-38 ‘Now when he had spoken a Pharisee asks him to dine with him, and he went in, and sat down to meat, and when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first drenched (baptizo) himself before dinner.’

It may well be that Jesus had deliberately refrained from ceremonially washing his hands here in order to introduce the subject matter of His speech, for Mark 7.2 suggests that He usually conformed to that requirement (unless Mark 7.2 was a polite way of indirectly hinting that He also had not done so). The point, however, that Luke is stressing is the emphasis of the Pharisee on outward observance. To them it mattered not what inward sins Jesus had brought with Him (like the inward sins of verses 53-54) as long as He was following the correct rituals. (Luke is basically hinting that the attitude of some of the Pharisees was such that they could, as it were, happily connive in the killing of the prophets (verses 47-51), as long as they did it with clean hands).

‘He marvelled.’ This may mean that he said something (but compare 20.26), although not antagonistically (see 4.22; 7.9; 8.25; 9.43; 11.14; 20.26), for Luke does not add ‘within himself’ (contrast 7.39).

The ceremonial ‘washing of the hands’ before eating was one of the tenets of the Pharisees on

which they laid great stress. It was not enjoined in Scripture but was an additional element added by the Traditions of the Elders, the oral Law. It was not strictly a simple hand washing, but a ritual mini-ceremony. They believed that because of the possibility of unknown contamination by persons who were ritually unclean it was necessary to wash both before every meal and in between courses. And this involved a complicated process. The water for washing had to be taken from large stone jars which had been kept 'clean' so that the water itself was kept ritually clean. Such water could be used for no other purpose. First all dirt had to be removed. Then the hands might be held with the fingers pointed upwards and water was poured over them and had to run down to at least the wrist. After this, while the hands were wet, each had to be cleansed, seemingly with 'the fist' of the other, probably by the joint action of rubbing the palm over the fist. But the water on their hands was now unclean so the hands were then held downwards and water poured over them again so that it began at the wrists and ran off the end of the fingers. That was one way of doing it.

Alternately this might all be done by dipping the hands up to the wrist in a vessel containing clean water, again apparently rubbing on 'the fist'. Then the hands would be clean.

11.39 'And the Lord said to him, "Now you the Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but your inward part is full of extortion ('greed') and wickedness." '

Jesus is aware of what the Pharisee is thinking/saying and draws attention to their inconsistency. They cleanse the externals, such as the outsides of cups and dishes, and through their ritual by implication the outside of the body, but they ignore contamination of the inward parts, contamination of the heart of man (compare Mark 7.14-23). There is an outward show of cleanliness, while underneath is a turmoil of greed and wickedness. The light such as it is may shine on the cups and platters to see if they are clean, but not on the heart. Note here that He speaks as 'the Lord', which is fairly common in Luke whose aim is to maintain His distinctiveness from all others.

11.40 "You foolish ones, did not he who made the outside make the inside also?"

Then He gives a gentle rebuke. Such an attitude is foolish for God created all things. To be concerned about the outside and not the inside is to neglect half of creation, and God is equally concerned about both. Indeed He is more concerned about the inward than the outward. For if the inward is right, the outward will soon conform. (The purpose of the laws of cleanliness was in order to encourage an attitude of clean living from the heart).

"You foolish ones." The idea of that those who do not respond to God and His word are 'fools' is mentioned in the book of Proverbs over seventy five times, and in the Psalms over a dozen times, and the behaviour of the fool is well illustrated there, and especially described in Psalm 14. It was a word that among the Jews pointed to one who took little regard of God and his requirements. To these men it should have been a wake-up call. They were behaving as if there were no God.

11.41 "But give for alms those things which are within, and behold, all things are clean to you."

For the important lesson that they need to learn is that if they are clean on the inside everything will be clean to them. If they allow the light to shine within, all will be right. The outward giving of charitable gifts is good, but what is more important is the action of giving from a clean heart, of giving from oneself, then the externals will be clean as well. So it is not the outward actions and the outward giving that reveal cleanness (verse 39), it is the thoughts of the heart and the true giving of themselves.

Some see it as meaning 'give for alms those things which are within your dish', in other words give to the poor, but Jesus was hardly likely to say that giving to charity would make all clean. More was required than that, the response of a true heart.

Three Woes On The Pharisees.

The three woes which now follow are an attack on outward forms, forms on which they laid great stress, and in which they even went beyond what was necessary, while at the same time ignoring compassion and mercy, and the real needs of men and women. He is saying that doing something which professes cleanliness and God-likeness is of no use unless it comes from the heart. These three failures are additional to the failure already mentioned. The threefoldness of the woes stresses the completeness of the woe.

The word translated 'woe' can also mean 'alas'. But we must be careful about watering down Jesus' words. While His heart was certainly grieved at their situation, there is no doubt that His words also carried within them an element of judgment. He was not just negatively concerned, He was positively concerned. If they were not careful they would indeed face the final Judgment under condemnation. They would be brought into testing.

11.42 "But woe to you Pharisees! for you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and pass over justice and the love of God, but these ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

His first 'woe', but second criticism (His first was concerning ritual washing of both person and dishes), is that they are so concerned about the minutiae of tithing (setting aside one tenth of all they receive for the Temple and for the poor), even of items like mint which do not need to be tithed, that they ignore the need for behaving justly and revealing the love of God. It is right that they should tithe. But not that they should treat it as of such prime importance, in contrast with attitudes of the heart, that they see themselves as a result of it as being somehow superior to others. Far more important is it to be just and loving in their dealings with men and women. That is what will make them superior to others (although then they will not think so because they will be humble). They must give of themselves first. Then they may give of their goods.

11.43 "Woe to you Pharisees! for you love the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the marketplaces."

His next criticism is their attitude towards life. There too they reveal their superior attitude, and their contempt for the people of the land. They who are supposed to be exalting God are too busy exalting themselves. When they are given the chief seats in the synagogue they love every moment of it. It makes them feel important and superior. And they encourage it. And they love to be greeted with reverence in the marketplaces as people 'appreciate their superior religious status' and treat them with deferential respect. This is not something limited to Pharisees. It is one of the foundation attitudes of the kingdom of man. But it is in direct contrast with the Kingly Rule of God, where all race for the lower seats, and ask how they can serve others. For in the Kingly Rule of God it is he who humbles himself who will be exalted (14.11; 18.14).

11.44 "Woe to you! for you are as the tombs which are not visible, and the men who walk over them are not aware of it."

The third woe is that they cause others to stumble. To touch a tomb or grave rendered a person 'unclean' and meant a seven day period of cleansing. It was therefore important that tombs were clearly visible. Indeed some time before the Passover all graves in Palestine would be painted white so that Passover pilgrims might not be accidentally defiled and thus unable to eat the Passover. So for someone to be like an unmarked tomb was for him to be a catastrophe to people.

And the Pharisees were like unmarked graves, for they did not warn people away from what was truly defiling, the attitudes of the heart. Thus they encouraged people to think that all was well with them when in fact it was far from well.

We must not be unfair to the Pharisees. The purpose of their multitude of extra ‘laws’ was in order to help people to know what they should and should not do. Where they failed (and failure is inevitable with too many rules and regulations, for people will then begin to look for loopholes, and will ignore the more important attitude that should lie behind their observance) was in that, by doing so, they made people feel that they were satisfying God by what they did to such an extent that they could therefore do what they liked with the remainder of their lives. They bred hypocrites, people who played a part without really being what they should be.

11.45 ‘And one of the lawyers answering says to him, “Teacher, in saying this you insult us also.” ’

The Rabbis who were sitting there were quite happy to listen to His criticism of the Pharisees. They would feel that it was certainly something that they needed, for they saw them as coming far too short of what they should be. But now that it had begun to impinge on their own teaching it became a different matter. Thus one of them took up His comments. He asked Him if He realised that by what He was saying He was on the verge of criticising the Rabbis. By criticising the Traditions of the Elders He was criticising them. But by doing so the ‘lawyer’ only succeeded in bringing Jesus’ fire on them.

11.46 ‘And he said, “Woe to you lawyers also! for you load men with burdens grievous to be borne, and you yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.” ’

Jesus now turned His criticism on the Doctors of the Law. They were no better than the Pharisees, for by their wide list of requirements they put burdens on people which were too heavy to bear, and yet they themselves never even reached out with their fingers to relieve the weight of such burdens, while finding ways of dodging them themselves. This included the thought that they piled up the regulations but rarely retracted any, and that they did not take into account the circumstances that would make their demands far more difficult for ordinary people than they were for them. Their own lives were geared to them. The lives of ordinary people were not. Thus He accuses them of being inconsiderate and thoughtless and making unnecessary demands which were far too heavy. But it also probably includes the thought that while they inflict them on others, they found means of avoiding them themselves by casuistry.

Consider a few examples.

- The limit of a Sabbath day's journey was 2,000 cubits (roughly 1,000 yards or metres) from a man's residence. But if a rope was tied across the end of the street, the end of the street could become his residence and he could then go 1,000 yards beyond that, while if on the Friday evening he left enough food at any given point for two meals that point technically became his residence and he could go 1,000 yards beyond that!**
- One of the forbidden works on the Sabbath was the tying of knots, whether sailors' or camel drivers' knots and knots in ropes. But a woman could tie the knot in her girdle. So if a bucket of water had to be raised from a well a rope could not be knotted to it, but all they had to do was use a woman's girdle, and it could legitimately be raised with that!**
- To carry a burden was forbidden, for the codified written law laid down that, "he who carries anything, whether it be in his right hand, or in his left hand, or in his bosom, or on his shoulder is guilty", but it then added, "but he who carries anything on the back of his hand, with his foot, or with his mouth, or with his elbow, or with his ear, or with his hair, or with his money bag turned upside down, or between his money bag and his shirt, or in the fold of his shirt or in his shoe, or in his sandal is guiltless, because he does not carry it in the usual way of carrying it out."**

Of course we do not do things like that. But our excuses for our sins can be equally fatuous.

11.47-48 “Woe to you! for you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

So are you witnesses and consent to the works of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their tombs.”

Furthermore they associated themselves with the slaughter of the prophets by building them great tombs without being overmuch concerned about what their fathers had done. They honoured the dead prophets, thereby acknowledging the truth of their words, but this did not make them follow the prophets’ teaching in their daily lives or grieve over what their fathers had done, although they did piously say, ‘if we had been alive then we would not have done it’ (Matthew 23.29-31). It was done in such a way that rather than being an act of repentance and mourning, it was almost an act of identification, as though it was something that could be expected. And by it they testified to the fact that they were sons of murderers. And they did it without turning a hair, while themselves being quite ready to do the same if the situation arose. (They would indeed do it with Jesus).

11.49-51 “Therefore also said the wisdom of God, ‘I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute’, that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation.”

In view of what has been said no one should be surprised that that was what God’s wisdom had revealed would happen, and was indeed still revealing would happen in the present day. For God has prophesied (‘said’) through His Spirit (His Wisdom) speaking through Jesus (Matthew 23.34) that the current Apostles will along with the prophets be killed and persecuted. And by this the present generation would be bringing on themselves the blood of all the prophets through all generations, for by it they will be consenting to what had happened to them.

‘The Wisdom of God.’ Jesus is never called this anywhere else, nor is the phrase used. But note its connection back to verse 31. Here is a greater wisdom than that of Solomon. It may therefore be Jesus saying, ‘I am the Wisdom of God’, in contrast with the wisdom of Solomon (compare 1 Corinthians 1.30). On the other hand it is quite possible that Luke uses it as a synonym for the Spirit (as he previously used ‘finger of God’) so as not to name the Spirit (the Spirit is connected to wisdom in Proverbs 1.23) in accordance with his policy of on the whole not doing so (see Introduction). Or it may signify ‘God in His wisdom said ---.’

Others connect it with the words of Wisdom in Proverbs ‘for they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord, they would none of my counsel. They despised all my reproof’ (Proverbs 1.29-30), what is said here simply being Jesus’ free interpretation of that idea. The different way in which He cited it on another occasion (Matthew 23.34) might be seen as confirming this.

‘Said’ (eipen). This tends to exclude the idea of a written source, and there is no source that we know of in which these words are contained, although the idea is contained in Mark 12.4-5. Thus it was certainly in the mind of Jesus at that time.

Jesus then sums up the long line of prophets by citing Abel and a certain Zechariah who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. The place between the altar and the sanctuary was the holiest place in the courtyard of the Sanctuary, thereby accentuating the horror of the crime. Abel was not strictly a prophet but it was clearly here a loose use of the term signifying that his blood cried out prophetically on his behalf. Thus Jesus was citing the first martyrdom and the most heinous one.

We do not know anything about this martyrdom of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah (Matthew 23.35; compare Zechariah 1.1), apart from what we find here, but that is not surprising for our knowledge of the details of Jewish history is strictly limited. Some have suggested that he is the Zechariah the son of Jehoiada mentioned in 2 Chronicles 24.20-22, on the grounds that

Chronicles was the last book in the Hebrew Scriptures, as Genesis was the first, and thus that Jesus was saying ‘all the prophets from Genesis to Chronicles’. However, the Zechariah mentioned there is ‘the son of Jehoiada’, not Berechiah, and does not in any way fit in with this description. (Although ‘son of Jehoiada’ may well mean grandson, for Jehoiada would then have been of great age). It is best that we assume that Jesus knew more about Hebrew history than we do.

11.52 “Woe to you lawyers! for you took away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered.”

The final charge against the Doctors of the Law is that they kept from the people the knowledge of how they could enter the Kingly Rule of God, or the knowledge of the Scriptures. They took away ‘the key of knowledge’ which opened the way to these things. By keeping people’s minds filled with trivialities and with various requirements, and making parts of the Scriptures into nothing better than riddles they effectively silenced the voice of God. They did not want to use the key to enter in themselves, and by their methods they put obstacles in the way of any who would enter in. Thus they were worthy of condemnation.

11.53-54 ‘And when he was come out from there, the Scribes and the Pharisees began to press on him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things, laying wait for him, to catch something out of his mouth.’

When He came out from where He was the Scribes and Pharisees were not happy with what He had said, and they began to badger Him and to try to get Him to say things which would condemn Him. They were laying in wait in order to catch Him, and to get Him to say something that they could use against Him. Any friendliness had ceased. They were out to trap Him.