

The unfolding of your words gives light.

To Seek and to Save

An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke

^{9:1} And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases^a. ² And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing^b. ³ And He said to them, “Take nothing for your journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not *even* have two tunics apiece^c. ⁴ Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that city. ⁵ And as for those who do not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them^d.” ⁶ Departing, they *began* going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere^e.

⁷ Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was happening; and he was greatly perplexed^f, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead,⁸ and by some that Elijah had

^a 9:1 **He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases.** This power and authority were not given as a formula or incantation that we should expect to use (“in Jesus name...”) nor were they apparently permanent. There is no commission to the church as whole to perform such signs and wonders. These apostolic gifts were only available from Jesus.

^b 9:2 **He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing.** This commission was a preparation for what would one day come after Jesus ascended. This was not a different kingdom than the one we proclaim. Certainly the content of the message has changed since Jesus died and rose from the dead, but the human struggle has always been one of lordship. The word “proclaim” is the common New Testament word for preaching. It meant “to herald,” as the messenger of a king would cry out important messages on behalf of his master.

This was a two-part charge: proclaiming the message and performing miracles. Healing was a confirmation that Jesus had sent them, but the primary task of these men was heralding the message of the kingdom.

^c 9:3 **Take nothing for your journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not even have two tunics apiece.** This would have been hard to think about. We very naturally run to the *what-if’s* of such a charge. *What happens if my staff breaks?* (see Mark 6:8 to see that Jesus was talking about hunting up a spare staff). *How will I carry all the things I need? What about lunch?* The challenge to the apostles was to head into their journey quickly without backup supplies, trusting that if the Master who sent them could work miracles He could also provide daily necessities. This is not a commission to us, but it is a lesson to us.

^d 9:4-5 **Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that city. And as for those who do not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.** There were few inns available in first century Palestine, with the possible exception of brothels. The law of Moses called the people of Israel to show hospitality to strangers (Genesis 18:1-8; Leviticus 19:33-34; Deuteronomy 10:18-19). In the kind of world where travelers had few safe options at night, hospitality became that much more important. In

The shaking off of dust would testify that God holds unbelievers accountable for refusing the gospel. The people who refuse to respond to the gospel cannot say they never heard.

^e 9:6 **Departing, they began going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.** Note the precision obedience of the men. They did exactly what they were told to do.

^f 9:7 **Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was happening; and he was greatly perplexed.** This is Herod Antipas, grandson of Herod the Great (birth of Christ). This Herod had been manipulated by his niece/wife into executing John the Baptist (see Matthew 14:1-12).

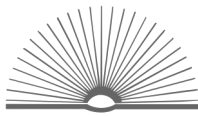
Luke is the only biblical writer who uses the word translated “perplexed” here. It is used in Acts 2:12 of the way people responded to the tongues spoken on Pentecost, in Acts 5:24 of the

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appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen again^a. ⁹Herod said, "I myself had John beheaded; but who is this man about whom I hear such things?" And he kept trying to see Him^b.

¹⁰When the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done^c. Taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself to a city called Bethsaida^d. ¹¹But the crowds were aware of this and followed Him; and welcoming them, He *began* speaking to them about the kingdom of God and curing those who had need of healing^{e, f}.

reaction of the religious leaders to news that the apostles had vanished from prison and in Acts 10:17 of Peter's puzzlement at seeing the vision of a sheet full of unclean animals let down from the sky. All four uses follow supernatural events.

^a 9:7-8 **it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen again.** This might have been quite a spectacle had the rumors been true, but there was something greater going on that most people missed.

^b 9:9 **Herod said, "I myself had John beheaded; but who is this man about whom I hear such things?" And he kept trying to see Him.** Do you notice all the places in this section of Luke this question of Herod is being asked? There could be no more important question to answer correctly. Even demons knew the answer to the question that many of the elite in our day cannot answer. Examples: John the Baptist sent messengers to ask it (Luke 7:20). The other guests of Simon the Pharisee asked it when Jesus pronounced forgiveness to the sinful woman, (Luke 7:49). The disciples asked it when He calmed the storm (Luke 8:25).

Here Herod's curiosity was apparently more for a show than for the hope of eternal life. When Herod finally met Jesus (Luke 23:1-12) he mocked the Lord by having Him clothed in a royal robe before sending Him back to Pilate.

^c 9:10 **When the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done.** Just as the author of Hebrews (13:17) says that elders will render an account of their shepherding, Jesus required an earthly accounting of His short-term ministers.

^d 9:10 **Taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself to a city called Bethsaida.** Bethsaida was located on the northeast shore of Galilee. It is the hometown of Philip, Peter and Andrew (evidently before they moved to Capernaum, John 1:44; 12:21).

^e 9:11 **the crowds were aware of this and followed Him; and welcoming them, He began speaking to them about the kingdom of God and curing those who had need of healing.** Notice that Jesus did precisely what he told the disciples to do and He did it cheerfully.

^f 9:1-11 Many people live very dissatisfied lives because things are not turning out for them as they had hoped. Their career is not what they envisioned. Marriage either eludes them or smothers them. Money is short. Relationships are stormy. Some people become very discontent with the way God is performing because they think they have the right to these blessings.

But wherever the kingdom of God has gone it has done two things: relieved human suffering and brought people into submission to the One who decides when to send human suffering and when to take away. So the real question is not about how your god is performing for you but about whether or not you trust the true God.

What does it look like to trust God? This kind of trust shows up...

1. When His people do what He says. You do this even when His commands do not make sense.
2. When His people refuse to be ashamed at His message. The power of the message (),
3. When His people trust Him to provide necessities for living. If you tell someone that Jesus can save them and turn them into a different person do you think He can be trusted to get you over that financial hurdle or to resolve that struggle in your home?
4. When His people show concern for other people. (Hospitality, God sent you those people)

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