

# Harmony Of The Gospels -- Lesson #9

## The Later Judean Ministry

*Luke 10:1-13:21; John 7:11-10:39*

### I. ***The Coming Of Jesus To The Feast Of Tabernacles (John 7:11-52)***

- A. It has been eighteen months since Jesus last visited Jerusalem, at which time He had healed the crippled man at Bethesda. John here uses the word "Jews" as a designation for the Jerusalemites, who, as enemies of Christ, were to be distinguished from the multitudes who were in doubt about Him, and who are mentioned in the next verse.
- B. As the feast lasted eight days, the middle of it would be from the third to the fifth day. His sudden, open appearances suggests the fulfillment of Malachi 3:1. No one was expected to teach without "letters." When they heard Him teach, they could not restrain their astonishment.
- C. A willing, heartfelt obedience is essential to a true knowledge of His doctrine. Such a disposition makes a good and honest heart in which the seeds of the kingdom must inevitably grow.
- D. If the act of Christ in healing a man was judged as a mere act, it might be considered a breach of the Sabbath. Yet if the nature of the act be taken into account and all the laws relative to it be considered -- in short, if it be judged righteously in all its bearings -- it would be amply justified.
- E. Since He came from God, and they did not know God, they consequently did not know from where He came. As they expected a Messiah who would be supernaturally sent, they ought to have been satisfied with Jesus. However, they had no eyes with which to discern the supernatural.
- F. If we may trust the later Jewish accounts, it was the custom during the first seven days for the priests and people in joyful procession to go to the pool of Siloam with a golden pitcher and bring water to pour before the alter, in commemoration of the water which Moses brought from the rock and which typified Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4).
- G. Nicodemus tells these proud rulers that they were breaking the very law which they praised (Deuteronomy 1:16; Exodus 23:1).

### II. ***The Woman Caught In Adultery (John 7:53-8:11)***

- A. The woman had probably been brought to the rulers for trial, and they had seen in her case what appeared to be a promising means of entrapping Jesus. They reasoned that He could not set aside the law of Moses and clear the woman without so losing the confidence and favor of the people and frustrating His claim to be the Messiah.

- B. They insisted on an answer, hoping that He would so explain away the seventh commandment as to encourage them in breaking the sixth.
- C. Under the law, the witnesses were to cast the first stone (Deuteronomy 17:7). Jesus maintained and vindicated the law, but imposed a condition which they had overlooked: the one who executed the law must be free from the same crime.
- D. The woman did not ask for forgiveness, so no words of pardon are spoken (cf. Luke 12:14). The narrative shows how Jesus could deal with the malice and impurity in a manner so full of delicacy and dignity as to demonstrate the divine wisdom which dwelt within Him.

### III. ***After The Feast Of The Tabernacles In The Temple (John 8:12-20)***

- A. No man can bear testimony of His own nature, for he knows neither its origin nor its end (cf. John 5:31). The Jews could not judge as to Christ's nature -- that He was the source of light and life -- because of their ignorance of Him. There are truths about deity to which deity alone can testify, and as to the truth of which deity alone is fully competent to judge.
- B. Jesus contrasted His spirit with theirs. They came upon Him eager to condemn, but He had come not to condemn, but to save (John 3:17).
- C. The Father had borne witness to the Son by the prophets, including John the Baptist, by His voice at Christ's baptism and the transfiguration, by the works wrought by Jesus and by the very nature of the life manifested by our Lord throughout His entire ministry.

### IV. ***The Pharisees Attempt To Stone Jesus (John 8:21-59)***

- A. Seeking their Messiah as an earthly and not as a spiritual deliverer, they would not find Him, and therefore would die unforgiven. Hence, they could not come to the land where Jesus went, since the unforgiven cannot enter there.
- B. Jesus had made their sins the ground of separation between Him and them. To this Jesus replies that they are now separated from Him by their sinfulness, and they shall die unless delivered from it through their faith in Him.
- C. The tender manner in which He addressed them convinced many that He was filled with the spirit of loving good will, and they believed Him. Among these converts were some of the Jewish leaders, who had been opposing Him.
- D. Discipleship is an abiding condition -- a life, not an act. Freedom consists in conformity to that which, in the realm of intellect, is called truth, and in the realm of morality, law. The only way in which we know truth is to obey it, and God's truth gives freedom from sin and death.

- E. Outwardly and carnally they were Abraham's seed, but they were not so inwardly, for he was the friend of God (James 2:23). Yet they were enemies of Christ, even seeking to kill Him, because they were so corrupt that His words were distasteful to them.
- F. By their hatred of the truth and their desire to commit murder, which are from the devil, they show that they are spiritually derived from him. As children of the devil they were used to his flattering speech; therefore, they rejected the bitter truth of Jesus which convicted them of sin.
- G. "My day" means the mediatorial manifestation of the Messiah. Abraham saw it by faith in the promised seed. "I was" would simply have expressed priority, but "I am" indicates timeless existence. It draws the contrast between the created and the uncreated, the temporal and the eternal (cf. Exodus 3:14).

V. ***Jesus Heals The Man Born Blind (John 9:1-41)***

- A. The question of the disciples in vs. 2 had reference to the doctrine of transmigration of souls, which claimed that the man sinned in some preexisting state. However, Jesus found a third alternative to their dilemma. His blindness had come upon him as part of God's plan for his life; it was part of the providential arrangement by which God governs the world.
- B. The pool of Siloam was probably called Sent because its waters are sent from the Virgin's Fountain through a tunnel cut through the hill Ophel.
- C. The cause for division was clear. One party stressed Jewish tradition and judged Jesus a sinner because He had violated it. The other party stressed the miracle and argued that one who could do such could not be a violator of God's law.
- D. The Pharisees wanted the blind man to confess that he and Jesus had conspired to work a pretended miracle. All he could say was that there was no deception about gaining his sight.
- E. In Jewish estimation, Moses stood next to God. To forsake Moses for another prophet was to commit apostasy. This reviling was a severe test, but the man withstood against it. The Old Testament contains no record of such a miracle. The case stood alone as a marvel of power.
- F. The progress in his spiritual understanding of Christ is marked by his descriptions: "A man that is called Jesus" (vs. 11); "He is a prophet" (vs. 17); "of God" (vs. 33); "Son of God" (vs. 35); and, lastly, "Lord" (vs. 38). This progression illustrates the man's movement from darkness to light, both physically and spiritually.

## **VI. *The Parable Of The Good Shepherd (John 10:1-21)***

- A. The sheepfolds of the Near East are roofless enclosures, made of loose stone or surrounded by thorn bushes. They have only one door, and Jesus, the true shepherd, came in the appointed way, thus indicating His office as shepherd.
- B. In the Near East, sheep are not driven, but led, and each sheep has and knows its name. The mingled flocks are separated by the calling voices of the several shepherds. The control of the Pharisees was not of this nature.
- C. Vss. 11-14 set forth the perfect self-sacrifice through which the blessings of Christ have been obtained for us. Shepherds were not, as a rule, owners of the sheep, but they were expected to love and care for them because of the nature of their task.
- D. Our Lord's relationship to His flock is one of mutual knowledge and affection, and is far removed from the spirit of a hireling. The knowledge existing between the disciple and the Master springs from mutual love. This is the same kind of knowledge which exists between the Father and the Son, though it is not of the same quality, being infinitely less full and perfect.
- E. Jesus shows that His death was voluntary, and with the resurrection which followed, it was in full and perfect accord with His original commission from the Father. His defenders referred to His previous miracle and argued, as He did, that one possessed by a demon could not perform such a miracle.

## **VII. *The Mission Of The Seventy (Luke 10:1-24)***

- A. Luke tells us of the journey through Samaria to Jerusalem, and John has told us what occurred at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. We learn from John also that Jesus was at the Feast of Dedication (10:22). The first feast was in October and the latter in December. Jesus evidently spent time between these feasts, making a tour of that area and sending the seventy before Him, teaching people as He had in Galilee, by sending out the twelve.
- B. The instructions given to them are similar to the instructions given earlier (Matthew 10:5-15; Mark 6:8-11; Luke 9:2-5). The report of the seventy is more joyful than that of the twelve, for the sayings of the latter on their return were overshadowed by the news of John the Baptist's death.
- C. In their successes, Jesus saw Satan falling from lofty heights with the swiftness of lightning. The overthrow of Satan was then in progress (John 12:31; 16:11). The call to rejoicing in the supreme blessing of assurance of heaven is one of Jesus' great sayings, though the disciples may also rejoice in spiritual victories.

### VIII. ***The Parable Of The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)***

- A. The lawyer wished to try the skill of Jesus in solving the intricate and difficult question as to how to obtain salvation. Looking upon Jesus as a Sabbath-breaker and a despiser of tradition, the lawyer no doubt expected that Jesus would lay down some new rule for obtaining salvation.
- B. The lawyer quoted two great laws which comprise all other laws. With him, the law was simply a matter for speculation and theory, and the word "do" was very startling. Jesus had exposed the lawyer as one who merely theorized about the law and Himself as one who advocated the doing of the law.
- C. The road between Jerusalem and Jericho, which was about eighteen miles in length, was noted for robberies and Jerome records that the road was called the "bloody way."
- D. The lawyer saw the picture of his own life in the priest and the Levite, for he saw in them those who knew the law but did not practice it. The small amount of cash left by the Samaritan indicates a poverty which made his charity the more praiseworthy. All that he had was subservient to the law of God.
- E. Jesus showed that the law was not for speculation but for practice. All the laws and teachings of God are to be interpreted generously (Matthew 5:43-44), and are to be embodied in one's life (Matthew 7:24-27).

### IX. ***Jesus, The Guest Of Martha And Mary (Luke 10:38-42)***

- A. The village of Bethany was on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, less than two miles from Jerusalem.
- B. Sitting at the feet was the ancient posture of pupils (cf. Acts 22:3). Martha honored Jesus as a guest, but Mary honored Him as a teacher.
- C. The "good part" is an allusion to the portion of honor given to the principal guest at a banquet. Its use shows that Jesus had food in mind when He used the expression, "one thing is needful" and that He was contrasting spiritual nourishment with physical.
- D. The Lord's rebuke is intended to reprove the fretfulness which attempts many unneeded activities and ends in worry and faultfinding. There are important human needs, but what is most "needed" goes beyond even these.

### X. ***Jesus Teaches About Prayer (Luke 11:1-13)***

- A. It was customary for the rabbis to give their disciples forms of prayer, and John the Baptist seems to have followed this practice. The language is different from Matthew 6, but the ideas are the same. Evidently the disciples were slow to learn Christ's teaching about prayer.

- B. The custom of the land in the Near East made hospitality so obligatory that the greatest inconvenience and deepest poverty did not excuse one from practicing it. Friendship should have prompted the man to supply his friend.
- C. If a selfish man can be won by persistence, much more can a generous God, whose reluctance is never without reason and whose continual desire is to bless. Idle repetition of prayers is forbidden, but persistence is encouraged.
- D. While Matthew 7:11 has the general term "good gifts," Luke specifically mentions the Holy Spirit, who was "promised" (cf. Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4).

**XI. *Second Blasphemous Accusation Of League With Beelzebub (Luke 11:14-36)***

- A. It is perfectly natural that the blasphemous accusation made in Galilee and probably more than once (cf. Matthew 9:34), should be repeated a year or so afterward in Judea or Perea and that Jesus should make substantially the same argument in reply.
- B. Our Lord does not here give the solemn warning that such an accusation is really blaspheming against the Holy Spirit, and is unpardonable (cf. Luke 12:10). And the subsequent occurrences are quite different in the two cases. In Matthew 12, He afterwards goes out by the lakeside and gives the great group of parables, presently explaining some of them to the disciples in a house, and then crosses the lake to Gerasa, etc.
- C. Here in Luke 11, He eats breakfast with a Pharisee, and utters such solemn woes against the Pharisees as are found only in the closing months of His ministry, and then gives to the vast multitudes a series of instructions completely unlike the great group of parables. So it is unsuitable to identify this occurrence with that of Matthew 12.
- D. The woman in vs. 27 is the first on record to fulfill Mary's prediction (Luke 1:48). Jesus does not deny the fact that Mary was blessed, but corrects any false idea which would regard to her by pointing to the higher honor of being a disciple which was attainable by everyone.

**XII. *Jesus Severely Denounces The Pharisees And Lawyers (Luke 11:37-54)***

- A. The Pharisee marveled at this because the tradition of the elders required them to wash their hands before eating, and, if they had been in a crowd where their bodies might have been touched by some unclean person, they washed their whole bodies. It was a custom which exalted pride and self-righteousness.

- B. Since God made both the inner and the outer, a true reverence for Him requires that both parts alike be kept clean. Jesus furthermore commended the care of little matters, but nevertheless rebuked the Pharisees because they were as careless about big matters, such as justice and the love of God, as they were careful of herb seed.
- C. Jesus pronounced three woes upon the Pharisees for three sins: (1) Hypocrisy, shown in pretending to be very careful when they were really extremely careless; (2) excessive vanity in loving the honor given to them by men; and (3) corruption of the public morals.
- D. Lightfoot supposes that the scribe was one who copied the law of Moses, while a lawyer expounded the oral law or traditions of the elders. However, the terms could very well be used interchangeably. The scribe intimated that Jesus had spoken hastily, and his words are a suggestion to Jesus to correct or modify His hasty speech.
- E. The lawyers were not in fellowship with the prophets, but with those who murdered the prophets; hence Jesus pictures the whole transaction from the killing of the prophets to the building of their sepulchers as one act in which all concurred, and of which all were guilty.
- F. Abel's murder is described in Genesis 4:1-8, the first historical book of the Bible, while that of Zechariah is described in 2 Chronicles 24:20-22, the last historical book of the Old Testament.
- G. A true knowledge of the scriptures was a key which opened the door to the glories of Christ and His kingdom. The lawyers not only could not open the door for themselves, but confused others in their efforts to open the door as well.

### **XIII. *The Parables Of The Rich Fool And The Wise Steward (Luke 12:1-59)***

- A. Many fearing the upcoming persecution of the disciples would attempt to conceal their faith, but that would be vain, for one could not even trust his own family to keep silent about what was said even in the inner chambers of the home. Bold speech would be best.
- B. It would be a time of fear, but the fear of God must dominate the fear of man. Whatever they were called upon to do they could do because of God's special care and providence.
- C. Someone in the multitude, seeing the authority and justice of Jesus, thought it would be wise to appeal to Him to assist him in getting his brother to properly divide the inheritance. Jesus laid down the general laws of justice and generosity, but He did not enforce these laws by any power other than love.
- D. A clear view of the limitations of the power of possessions quenches covetousness; and Jesus gives such a view in the parable of the rich

fool. The rich fool said only a few words, but it revealed his character. He was selfish as is shown by the use of "I" six times in his speech.

- E. To some the coming of Jesus will be like that of a master whom they have served more or less faithfully. To others His coming will seem like that of a robber who comes in suddenly and deprives them of all that they possess.
- F. The greater the powers and opportunities entrusted to us, the greater the service which the Lord requires of us. Ignorance does not entirely excuse, for we are stewards and it is a steward's duty to know his master's will. There is a guilt of ignorance as well as of transgression. The parable pointed to those who listened with delight to Jesus, but were careless about knowing His meaning.
- G. Jesus came to conquer peace by overcoming evil with good; a conflict in which the good must always suffer. His warfare was not, as the people supposed, a struggle against the heathen, but against the evil within them and around them. So long as evil abounded, these unhappy divisions would last.

#### **XIV. *Teachings Concerning Repentance And The Parable Of The Barren Fig Tree (Luke 13:1-9)***

- A. The Jews thought that extraordinary misfortunes translated into extraordinary wrongdoing. Sacrifice was intended to cleanse guilt. However, the Jews erred in interpreting this event.
- B. It was true that the Galileans suffered because of sin, for all suffering is the result of sin. It was not true that the suffering was a punishment for unusual sinfulness. History does not record Pilate's actions spoken of here, but he was cruel toward the Jews and had contempt for their religious views and rites.
- C. The fig tree "used up" the ground by occupying ground which the vines could have had, and by interfering with their light by its very dense shade. The use of dung was a common method of inducing fruitfulness.
- D. Those to whom Jesus spoke had been called to repentance by the preaching of both John and of Jesus, and had ample time and opportunity to bring forth fruits of repentance, and therefore deserved to be destroyed; however, they would still be allowed further opportunity.

#### **XV. *Jesus Heals A Crippled Woman On The Sabbath (Luke 13:10-21)***

- A. The use of the word "spirit" in vs. 11 indicates that the curvature of the spine which afflicted this woman was attributed to a demon.
- B. Too cowardly to openly rebuke Jesus, the ruler reprimanded the people, and thus indirectly rebuked the Lord.

- C. Their hypocrisy appeared in two ways: (1) They were disguising their hatred toward Christ under a pretended zeal for the Sabbath; and (2) their zeal for the Sabbath was not sincere, for they disregarded their Sabbath rules when they infringed on their own interests, but applied their Sabbath rules strictly where others were concerned.
- D. Jesus presented three contrasts, each of which made His action better than theirs: (1) He had blessed the woman instead of an ox; (2) He had loosed the woman from a disease instead of from a comfortable stall; and (3) He had relieved a disease which had lasted eighteen years instead of one of a few hour's duration.
- E. The people rejoiced not only in the miracle, but in the wisdom which silenced the rulers. This triumph which they rejoiced in was only a slight foretaste of the victories to come.

**XVI. *The Jews Try To Stone Jesus At The Feast Of Tabernacles (John 10:22-39)***

- A. The Feast of Dedication, now known as Hanukkah, was kept in honor of the renovation and purification of the temple in 164 B.C., after it had been desecrated by the Syrians under Antiochus Epiphanes (2 Maccabees 1:20-60; 4:36-59; 10:1-8; Josephus *Antiquities* 20.9.7).
- B. The previous conduct of the questioners shows that the question in vs. 24 was asked for the purpose of committing Jesus to an open declaration which might be used as an accusation against Him.
- C. Jesus was the Christ of the Old Testament, but not the Christ of Pharisaic hopes. Had He assumed the title of Christ in their presence, it would have led them to false expectations. By His declarations and works Jesus had repeatedly proven His claims to be the true Messiah to all.
- D. Vss. 27-29 are taken by Calvinists to show the doctrine of "once saved, always saved." However, it must be taken in context with Romans 8:38-39, and both passages must be interpreted in light of Hebrews 6:4-8. We cannot be taken from God against our will; but our will, being free, may choose to leave Him. We cannot be protected against ourselves in spite of ourselves.
- E. Jesus demanded that His claim to be divine be tested by His life. However, the Jews insisted on judging Him by His words without taking His life into account.
- F. If it was not blasphemy to call those gods who remotely represented deity, how much less did Christ blaspheme in taking unto Himself a title to which He had a better right than they, even in the subordinate sense of being a mere messenger? The Jews regarded the scripture as the final authority. Jesus asserted this view by stating that the scripture could not be broken; that is, it could not be undone or set aside.