

THE SEVENTY SENT FORTH: GREAT PURPOSE LUKE 10:01–16

Introduction

This passage tells the Christian labourer how he is to work and tells the hearer how he is to treat the labourer of God.

- I. Jesus appointed seventy disciples to prepare the way for Him (v. 1).
- II. First, pray for more labourers (v. 2).
- III. Second, go into an antagonistic world (v. 3).
- IV. Third, trust God and sense the hour's urgency (v. 4).
- V. Fourth, guard the message — do not force it upon people (vv. 5-6).
- VI. Fifth, accept compensation, but do not seek luxury (v. 7).
- VII. Sixth, be accommodating and adaptable (vv. 8-9).
- VIII. Seventh, walk away from rejecters (vv. 10-15).
- IX. Eighth, know that the Christian labourer represents the Lord (v. 16).

I. *Luke 10:01 Forerunners and Witnesses of Jesus Christ*

Jesus appointed seventy disciples to prepare the way for Him. The number seventy is disputed, for some very good manuscripts say seventy-two were appointed. No matter which number is adopted, the number is held to be symbolic just as the appointment of twelve apostles is said to be symbolic. The twelve apostles are said to symbolize...

- The twelve patriarchs.
- The twelve tribes of Israel.
- The twelve leaders of the tribes.

The seventy are said to symbolize...

- the nations of the world (see Gen. 10 where seventy names are listed; seventy-two in the Septuagint Greek Version of the Old Testament). The point in the symbolism is that the gospel is to go into all the world.
 - the seventy elders who saw the glory of God (Exo. 24:1, 9).
 - the seventy elders of Israel (Num. 11:16f).
 - The seventy palm trees at Elim (Ex. 15:27). (Note there were also twelve wells of water at Elim said to represent the twelve apostles.)
 - the great Sanhedrin, the ruling body of the Jews, which had seventy members.
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Whatever the case may be, the verse does point out four significant things.

1. Jesus had many disciples, many more than just the twelve often pictured. There were at least seventy disciples who followed Jesus so closely that He could send them out as witnesses for Him. Peter spoke of the witnesses as “men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us” (Acts 1:21; see 1:15).
2. Jesus sent them out two by two for mutual encouragement and help.
3. Jesus saw a tremendous need, a need so great that a great corps of witnesses was needed.
4. Jesus sent the seventy forth as forerunners. They were to prepare the people for His coming (see Tit. 2:12-13).

Thought 1. All four points are applicable to us. Think them through. How many of us follow Christ so closely that He can send us out as witnesses for Him?

II. *Luke 10: 02 Prayer for Labourers*

First, pray for more labourers (See Mt. 9:37-38). This was the very first duty. There were not enough labourers because the need was so overwhelming. Jesus’ vision is one of a great harvest. All men everywhere are harassed, fainting, weary, bewildered, helpless. They are as sheep without a shepherd. But note a critical point: the Lord’s vision is not only worldwide: it involves the changing of every human life on the globe (1 Pet. 3:9; 2 Cor. 5:17). (We must always be praying diligently for labourers.) Jesus gave four reasons.

1. There was a great harvest of precious souls to be reached with the gospel. The number was staggering, and the vast majority were without Jesus, reeling to and fro under the weight of the problems of a sinful and dying world.

John 4:35-36 “Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.”

Gal 6:9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

2. The labourers were few, very few.
3. The need was urgent: the crop was ripe, ready for *harvest*. Some wanted the *gospel*, the answer to life. They were actually ready to be reaped, wanting purpose, meaning, and significance in their lives. They might not know what was causing the longing and aching within their hearts; they might not know how to identify it, but they were ready to listen and grab hold of the answer. And Jesus was the answer.
4. God was the One who had to send forth labourers. He was the Source of labourers, and prayer was the method He used to send them forth.

Thought 1. Note a crucial point. A generation's concern determines how well that generation gets along under God's care. A generation that longs for God — that seeks after God to send forth labourers — will have labourers and see a good deal of righteousness prevail during its life. A generation that ignores God finds immorality and ungodliness, injustice and evil getting worse and worse. The answer to a solid generation, to a moral and just generation is prayer — prayer for labourers to be sent forth to reap the precious harvest of souls. If voices are not proclaiming love and morality and justice, then sin and death will reign.

Mark 4:29 *“As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”*

Psa 126:5-6 *Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.*

Hosea 10:12 *Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.*

III. **Luke 10:03 The Threat of Persecution**

Second, go into an antagonistic world. The disciple is sent forth as a sheep in the midst of wolves (see Mt. 10:16). Being commissioned by Christ assures persecution. Christ sends His disciple forth in the midst of a world that *will* oppose the gospel: He knows that the disciple is to be persecuted. Therefore, the disciple...

- must know and expect persecution. He must not be caught off guard when it comes.
- must know that his persecution is only “light and momentary troubles” in comparison with the glory that lies ahead. In fact, “our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that outweighs them all” (2 Cor. 4:17).

Thought 1. Every believer must know that he will be looked at askance and suffer some abuse, ridicule, and rejection.

Note two points.

1. The threat or danger of persecution. Jesus said that some men would be as wolves...
 - protecting their territory, snarling and putting down the messenger of God, trying to scare him away from trying to tame the world.
 - growling and threatening the believer who opposes the way of the world.
 - hungry and ready to hunt down, attack and consume.
2. The spirit of the Christian labourer. He was to be as a sheep: meek, harmless, and non-combative.

Acts 20:28-31 *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.*

John 15:20 *“Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.”*

John 16:1-4 *“All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you.”*

Phil 1:29 *For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him.*

1 Th 3:3 *So that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them.*

2 Tim 3:12 *In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*

1 Pet 4:12-16 *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.*

1 John 3:12 *Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous.*

Rev 2:10 *Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

Mat 10:17 *“Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues.”*

IV. *Luke 10:04 Trust God for Necessities*

Third, trust God and sense the hour's urgency. The charge was twofold.

1. Trust God. They were not to carry a money-bag (purse, ballantion) or a traveller's bag (*pera*) or two pair of sandals. They were to trust God for provisions, not worrying about money for food, housing, or clothing (Mt. 6:24-34). Worrying about such things would be cumbersome, taking away precious time that should be spent in ministering. Also, they were preaching a message of faith and trust in God. They needed to live what they were preaching and become a living picture of the dependency that God wants from every man.

Mat 6:33 "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Phil 4:11-13 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Psa 37:3, 5 Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this.

Psa 115:11 You who fear him, trust in the LORD — he is their help and shield.

Psa 118:8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man.

Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

Isa 26:3-4 You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal.

Isa 50:10 Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.

2. Act now, the hour is urgent. They were not to waste time by stopping along the way and carrying on needless conversation. Such time was to be spent in ministry or prayer. Their mission was focused upon another world that lasted forever, a world into which every man was to eventually enter. Man desperately needed to sense the urgency and commitment necessary to enter the Kingdom of God. This world and its needless affairs were not to be engaged in by the Christian labourer. (Note: all affairs are not needless, but so many often are.)

John 9:4 "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work."

Eph 5:16 Making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

Col 4:5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

Psa 90:12 Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

V. *Luke 10:05–06 Peace*

Fourth, guard the message, do not force it upon people. Three points were stressed by Jesus.

1. The message of the labourer was peace...

- the peace with God.
- the peace of God dwelling within a person's heart.
- the peace between men.

Rom 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rom 10:15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Eph 2:13-17 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

Eph 6:15 And with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

2. The labourer was to proclaim peace to whatever house he entered. If "a man of peace," that is, the head of the household, was a man of peace, then the message of peace was to be continued. But if the message of peace was not accepted, then it was to be taken away. The disciple was not to proclaim the message of peace to anyone who was not willing to receive it. Neither the messenger nor the message was to be forced upon anyone.

Mat 10:12-15 "As you enter the home, give it your greeting. If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town."

3. The method Christ used was *house evangelism* (See *Home Evangelism*, Lk. 9:4).

LUKE 09: 04 HOME EVANGELISM

“Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town.” Luke 09:04

The method Christ chose for evangelizing was the method of home evangelism (see 10:5f). Note this, for it should speak loudly and clearly to us. The disciple was to carefully investigate and search out a receptive family and home. He was to make that home the centre for ministry. Note several things about this method.

- a. It emphasizes the family, making it the very hub of ministry.
- b. It stresses stability, security, and settledness. Nothing on earth is to be any more secure and stable than the family. By placing the centre of ministry in the home, the Kingdom of God becomes secure and stable.
- c. It centres preaching and ministering in the community, right where people live and walk. It makes the presence of Christ visible to all in day-to-day living.
- d. It serves as the centre from which the message can move out in an ever-widening circle, spreading from family to family.

Thought 1. The most ideal form of evangelism is probably this method given by Christ: a selected home and family serving as the centre of witness within a community or town. The early church was definitely centred in the homes of committed believers (Acts 5:42; 12:12; 16:40; 20:20; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Phil. 2). □

VI. *Luke 10:07 Accept Compensation*

Fifth, accept compensation, but do not seek luxury. There were three things being stressed.

1. “The worker deserves his wages”; therefore, he should be given compensation and taken care of (1 Tim. 5:18). Scripture says the worker is really worth double compensation and such appreciation should be expressed to him (1 Tim. 5:17). He is never to be taken advantage of. He is to be looked after by seeing that he has a house, food, and drink — all the necessities of life.

1 Cor 9:14 *In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.*

Gal 6:6 *Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.*

Phil 4:14 *Yet it was good of you to share [give] in my troubles.*

1 Tim 5:18 *For the Scripture says, “Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,” and “The worker deserves his wages.”*

1 Tim 6:17-18 *Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.*

2. The worker was to accept compensation. He was not to be self-conscious or embarrassed in receiving payment for his work.
3. *However*, he was not to seek luxury, going from house to house and person to person seeking more and more of the better things of life. *The worker was to live in simplicity, giving all that he had beyond his own needs — giving all to meet the needs of others.* He was to seek to meet the needs of men, not to secure the things of this world. What a contrast of value: things vs. people. How mixed up men allow their values to become.

Col 3:1-2 *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*

Rom 8:5-6 *Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.*

Heb 11:13-16 *All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country — a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.*

Heb 11:24-26 *By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.*

VII. Luke 10:08-09 Be Accommodating and Adaptable

Sixth, be hospitable, accommodating and adaptable. Jesus gave three charges that will help His messenger reach those to whom he goes.

1. Identify with the people. This is the point Jesus was making. He simply used the most sensitive and basic thing to stress its importance, that of food. If necessary, God's

messenger was to change his customs and habits to reach the people. He was to accommodate and adapt himself to the people he was trying to reach, even down to the food eaten. The people were to see that he accepted and received them into his life and heart.

Titus 1:8 Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.

Heb 13:1-2 Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.

1 Pet 4:9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

Mark 12:31 “The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” (see Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8)

Rom 13:10 Love does no harm to its neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.

Rom 15:2 Each of us should please his neighbour for his good, to build him up.

2. Minister to the people. The messenger was to minister to the people’s physical needs, even to the point of healing the sick.

Mat 20:28 “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

John 20:21 Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

Acts 20:35 “In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

Rom 15:1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

Gal 6:2 Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

3. Proclaim the Kingdom of God. Note: the message was given by Christ; it was not created in the mind of the messenger. Note also that the kingdom was near people, right before them. The opportunity to receive the kingdom was present, right then and there (See *Kingdom of God*, Mt. 19:23-24).

Mat 10:7 “As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’”

Mat 4:17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

Luke 4:43 But he said, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.”

Luke 8:1 After this, Jesus travelled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him.

Luke 9:2 And he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

Luke 16:16 “The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.”

Luke 21:31 “Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.”

Acts 1:3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts 20:25 “Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again.”

Acts 20:25 They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.

VIII. Luke 10: 10–15 Rejection of Messengers

Seventh, walk away from rejecters. This, of course, protected the messenger from harm, at least to some degree. It also served as an immediate warning to any who rejected, perhaps causing them to think about the matter more deeply and changing their minds and hearts toward Jesus. Jesus discussed three classes of rejecters.

1. There would be towns that would reject Him (vv. 10-12). The messenger was to symbolize God’s rejection of them by shaking the dust off his feet. This was a silent testimony that God was doing just what they wanted, leaving them alone to walk through life as they desired. They were to warn rejecters (Lk. 9:3-5). If a community or city did not receive their witness and if a home could not be found that would receive them, then the disciple was to leave.

- a. He was not to force the issue or create a bad situation either for the rejecters or for himself. There was to be no tongue-lashing, accusation or divisiveness created.
- b. He was simply to leave; and as he left, he was to give a *silent* testimony against them. He was to shake the very dust from his feet. This was a symbol of serious judgment. It meant that not even the dust of that place was worthy of the gospel of God, much less the people. The place and its people were *left* to themselves just as they had wished. They were left *without God* and His glorious news of salvation, so they were to be left alone to govern their own lives just as they had willed. God would *abandon* them to their own way and choice of life.

The reason for God's judgment was that they rejected the Kingdom of God. The kingdom came near them; the opportunity was there, but they rejected it. They shut their doors to God. Their judgment was, therefore, to be greater than Sodom's (See *Sodom*, Mt. 11:23).

2. There would be those who *only professed* to be God's people. These were illustrated by two towns that were heavily populated by Jewish people who professed to be the people of God. Yet they *only professed*. They rejected God's Son, despite the mighty works done among them. Therefore, they were to be judged. Their profession was profession only. Therefore, their judgment was to be greater than the judgment which was to come upon the heathen. Why? Because they had the opportunity to accept Christ, an opportunity that the heathen never had (Tyre and Sidon). Note the degrees of judgment taught. (See Mt. 11:20-24; Rom. 2:11-15.)
3. There would be those who had a constant witness. These were to receive the greatest judgment of all, hell itself. Capernaum was the *chosen* town and headquarters of Christ (Mt. 9:1), yet they rejected Christ. (See Mt. 11:20-24.)

Thought 1. Judgment is definitely coming, and everyone who rejects the Lord Jesus Christ will be condemned.

Mark 8:38 *"If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."*

Luke 12:48 *"But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."*

John 3:19 *"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."*

Rom 2:5 *But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.*

Rom 14:12 *So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

2 Th 1:7-8 *And give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.*

1 Pet 4:4-5 *They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.*

Jude 1:14-15 *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."*

Deu 24:16 *Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin.*

Prov 29:1 *A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed – without remedy.*

Jer 7:13-15 *While you were doing all these things, declares the LORD, I spoke to you again and again, but you did not listen; I called you, but you did not answer. Therefore, what I did to Shiloh I will now do to the house that bears my Name, the temple you trust in, the place I gave to you and your fathers. I will thrust you from my presence, just as I did all your brothers, the people of Ephraim.*

Ezek 18:20 *The soul who sins is the one who will die.*

LUKE 10: 13 WOE

Not a call for vengeance, but an expression of deep regret, of warning (see 6:24). □

LUKE 11: 23 SODOM

Sodom and Gomorrah: these two cities and their citizens are used as examples of the worst sinners (Deu. 32:32; Isa. 1:10; Eze.16:46; Mt. 11:23-24; Lk. 10:12-13; 17:29; Rom. 9:29; 2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 7; Rev. 11:8). The cities were destroyed by fire (Gen. 19:24-25) and are said to be "an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 7). Note four things about Sodom in the Bible:

1. Sodom is a symbol of the depth of sin and judgment.
2. Sodom could have been forgiven its sin if the people had repented.
3. Sodom was judged and destroyed because of sin. It would not have been destroyed if its people had repented.
4. Sodom and its people will answer for much in the day of judgment, but not for having neglected and rejected Christ. □

IX. *Luke 10:16 Messengers Represent Christ*

Eighth, know that the messenger represents the Lord. This stresses two critical points.

1. The messenger's position and message were of the highest value. The messenger represented Christ and was to be given the most serious hearing possible. He was counted as though Christ Himself were speaking.
2. The rejection of the messenger was the most serious offense. It was counted as the rejection of God Himself.

Mat 10:40 "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me."

Mat 18:5 "And whoever welcomes a little child [believer] like this in my name welcomes me."

Mat 25:40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' "

Acts 9:1-4 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

1 Cor 8:12 When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. ■