

PREGO PLUS: BACKGROUND NOTES
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C

Psalm 65 (66)

This psalm of praise and thanksgiving has two distinct sections.

First, the psalmist gives praise for all the work God has done for all the earth, and for the nation of Israel; then he praises God for what he has done for him personally.

This testimony of God's intervention: '*Come and hear ... I will tell what he did...*', addressed to all who hear, is typical of thanksgiving psalms.

It is in fact possible that the psalm in its current complete form results from two different psalms being joined together.

The psalmist is not petitioning the Lord, or asking him for a favour; rather, he is praising him *because* of what he has done for us.

He looks at present reality through the lens of what God has done for the people of Israel at crucial moments in their history, such as the crossing of the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus (Exodus 14): *He turned the sea into dry land*; and the crossing of the River Jordan: *They passed through the river dry shod* (Joshua 3: 14–17).



Gospel Luke 10: 1–9 (shorter version)

The commissioning of the seventy-two disciples

This episode only appears in Luke's Gospel. It gives us a snapshot of the life of itinerant preachers/healers in Jesus's time. They are to announce the Good News to towns and places before Jesus himself visits them on his way to Jerusalem.

The Lord appointed seventy-two others

Some manuscripts mention 70 rather than 72 disciples. The number appears to reflect the number of nations as listed in the book of Genesis (Genesis 10: 2–31).

They go in pairs

This will ensure their safety and also provide mutual support. It gives people an example of Christian love. Moreover, Jewish courts used to require two people to give witness before their testimony could be accepted (Deuteronomy 19:15).

I am sending you like lambs among wolves

Jesus expects hostility. The disciples will be defenceless. However, the expression could also be seen as announcing a new era of peace and reconciliation, as in Isaiah's text: 'The wolf lives with the lamb' (Isaiah 11: 6).

Carry no purse, no haversack, no sandals

This instruction stresses the urgency of their mission. It may also be designed to differentiate the disciples from the Cynic philosophers who were teaching in the region and who always had a staff and a haversack.

Salute no one on the road

Jesus is not asking the disciples to be discourteous. They have to concentrate on their mission, remain focused and not be delayed by chatting to people.

Peace to this house

This is a traditional Hebrew greeting. Beyond that, however, peace has the power of spreading to those around, hence the reference to 'a man of peace' living in that house.

Take what food and drink they have to offer

Traditional rules of hospitality would expect people to invite visitors for a meal. Guests would entertain their hosts with tales of their travel. Here the disciples would have the opportunity to speak of the coming of the Kingdom of God and to cure the sick. Jesus reminds them that strict Jewish dietary laws no longer apply. They will not become unclean by going into a Gentile's house and by eating their food.

