

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
LLL. God's Required Righteousness For The Wise And Learned
(Luke 10:25-37)

I. Introduction

- A. "Perhaps because of Christ's condemnation of 'the wise and learned'" back in Luke 10:21, a learned scribe tried to test Jesus (Luke 10:25). (J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 298).
- B. Luke 10:25-37 records the conversation between this expert in the Mosaic Law and Jesus, revealing God's required righteousness for the wise and learned, or for anyone else. We view this passage for our application:

II. God's Required Righteousness For The Wise And Learned, Luke 10:25-37.

- A. Though the well-known Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-35 on the surface teaches that one should help others in need, Jesus gave it for a much deeper lesson on the righteousness God requires for the wise and learned in Judaism to gain eternal life.
- B. A Hebrew expert in the Law tested Jesus, asking, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25 KJV) The term "Master" was "Luke's equivalent of a Jewish Rabbi" (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 234) and he wanted to justify himself (Luke 10:29), so the scribal expert was approaching Jesus with false motives, and with the errant assumption that he as an expert in the Law could inherit eternal life by good works!
- C. Understanding the scribe's false motives and knowing that the Law was given not to justify man, but to expose his need to be justified as a gift of God (cf. Romans 3:19-24), Jesus led the man back to the Law to convict him of his need for God's gracious mercy. He asked the law expert, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" (Luke 10:26 ESV)
- D. The lawyer gave a good answer, replying that Deuteronomy 6:5 required man to love the Lord his God with his whole being, and that Leviticus 19:18 required him to love his neighbor as himself, Luke 10:27. Hebrew expert for Judaism in the life of Christ, Alfred Edersheim (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, 1972, vol. II, p. 236), claims that this correct answer did not reflect what Rabbinic Judaism in Jesus' day taught, that this scribe had likely heard Jesus state this answer on a previous occasion (cf. Matthew 22:36-40), and that he was trying to use Jesus' own teaching to trip Him up into making an errant statement!
- E. Since the scribe had answered correctly in agreement with Jesus' own teaching, Jesus answered that he had answered well, that if he heeded these Old Testament Scriptures, he would live, Luke 10:28.
- F. The man's reply "should have been to ask, 'How can I do this? I am not able. I need help.' Instead, he tried 'to justify himself,' that is, to defend himself against the implications of Jesus' words. So he tried to move the focus off himself by asking, 'And who is my neighbor?'" (Luke 10:29; Bible Know. Com., N. T., loc. cit.)
- G. The Judaism of Christ's day drew a contrast between the Hebrew people and Gentiles with the view in self-pride that they were innately more righteous than Gentiles rather than the Biblical view that God in His grace had separated them from the godless pagan Gentile world (Edersheim, *Ibid.*). Jesus soundly critiqued this outlook by means of the Parable of the Good Samaritan He then gave in Luke 10:30-35:
 - 1. In the parable, a certain Hebrew man left Jerusalem for Jericho, and on the way thieves came upon him, stripping him of his clothing, wounding him and leaving him half dead, Luke 10:30.
 - 2. Later, a Hebrew priest came down the road, and seeing the wounded fellow Hebrew, instead of helping him, he passed by him on the other side of the road, Luke 10:31.
 - 3. A Levite then came by, he went over to look at the man but then he passed by on the other side, Lk. 10:32.
 - 4. Finally, a despised Samaritan, a half-Hebrew and half-Gentile with a compromised religion came by, and spotting the man, he felt compassion on him, he addressed his wounds, he placed him on his own donkey and then brought him to an inn and took care of him, Luke 10:33-34. He paid the inn keeper money to continue to care for the man, promising to bring him more money when he returned that way, Luke 10:35.
- H. Jesus then asked the law expert which of the three men who passed by the wounded man was a neighbor to him, and the lawyer answered, "He that showed mercy on him." (Luke 10:36-37a KJV)
- I. Christ then told the lawyer to do likewise, what was designed to show the lawyer his inability to be such a loving neighbor, and thus to lead him to see his need for justification by God and not by himself, Luke 10:37b.

Lesson: *The righteousness that God demands of the wise and learned, or for anyone else, is a righteousness that cannot be achieved by human works by sinful, mortal humans, but a righteousness given by God through grace.*

Application: *May we firmly hold to the Gospel of salvation by God's grace rather than by human good works.*