

**Luke 10:17-24**  
**Aug 11, 2019**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: Try not to give a “spiritual” answer. What sorts of things bring you joy? [Let people engage]

**Transition:** What if I told you that every answer given was acceptable! Joy is a feeling, and feelings just are. And the Lord wants us to experience joy. But...Jesus is going to offer a shift in thinking here. The seventy two disciples have returned with great zeal and excitement about what they were able to accomplish. Let’s listen to how Jesus coaches them, and then we’ll have something to apply in our own lives. Let’s begin.

**BOOK:**

<sup>17</sup> The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”

<sup>18</sup> He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. <sup>19</sup> I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. <sup>20</sup> However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

<sup>21</sup> At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.

<sup>22</sup> “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

<sup>23</sup> Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. <sup>24</sup> For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.”

**Process Observations/Questions:**

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

- This passage is a reminder that Jesus isn’t interested in His children being prideful.

Q: What did you least like about this passage? Or, what made you uncomfortable? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn’t understand? [Let people engage]

- “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” [Physicality – may mean that Jesus was there when He saw Satan cast out of heaven; it may mean that Jesus knew that the deathblow to Satan and all of his powers had been struck; It may also mean that Jesus

was warning His disciples about pride. Satan became prideful, and he was cast out of heaven quickly!]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

**LOOK:**

Jesus cautions us not to “go on rejoicing” over any spiritual victories we have, but rather rejoice because our names have been written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. The greatest miracle of all is still the salvation of a lost soul.

**Close in Prayer**

**Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, pp. 210-211). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

*Jubilation* (vv. 17–24). There is a threefold joy here: the joy of service (Luke 10:17–19), the joy of salvation (Luke 10:20), and the joy of sovereignty (Luke 10:21–24).

We can well understand the joy of the Seventy as they returned to report their victories to Jesus. He had given them power and authority to heal, to cast out demons, and to preach the Word, and they were successful! In the midst of their great joy, they were careful to give God the glory (“in Thy name”).

They had seen individual victories from city to city, but Jesus saw these victories as part of a war that dethroned and defeated Satan (note Isa. 14:4–23; John 12:31–32; and Rev. 12:8–9). As believers, we are weak in ourselves, but we can be “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might” (Eph. 6:10ff). Each victory is important to the Lord, no matter how insignificant it may seem in our eyes. Satan will not finally be judged until Jesus casts him into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10), but God’s people can today claim Christ’s Calvary victory by faith (Col. 2:15).

But the enemy will not give up! Satan would certainly attack Christ’s servants and seek to destroy them. That is why our Lord added the words of encouragement in Luke 10:19. He assured them that their authority was not gone now that the preaching mission had ended, and that they could safely tread on the “old serpent” without fear (Gen. 3:15; Rev. 12:9).

The Lord cautioned them not to “go on rejoicing” over their victories but to rejoice because their names had been written in heaven. (The verb means “they have been written and they stand written.” It is a statement of assurance. See Phil. 4:3; Rev. 20:12–15.) As wonderful as their miracles were, the greatest miracle of all is still the salvation of a lost soul. The Greek word translated “written” means “to inscribe formally and solemnly.” It was used for the signing of a will, a marriage document, or a peace treaty, and also for the enrolling of a citizen. The perfect tense in the Greek means “it stands written.”

But our highest joy is not found in service or even in our salvation, but in being submitted to the sovereign will of the Heavenly Father, for this is the foundation for both service and salvation. Here we see God the Son rejoicing through God the Holy Spirit because of the will of God the Father! “I delight to do Thy will, O my God” (Ps. 40:8).

Jesus was not rejoicing because sinners were blind to God’s truth, for God is “not willing that any should perish” (2 Peter 3:9). He rejoiced because *the understanding of that truth* did not depend on natural abilities or education. If that were the case, most of the people in the world would be shut out of the kingdom. When the Twelve and the Seventy were preaching, they did not see the “wise and learned” humbling themselves to receive God’s truth and grace, but they saw the “common people” trusting the Word (Luke 7:29–30; 1 Cor. 1:26–29). **In His sovereign will, God has ordained that sinners must humble themselves before they can be lifted up** (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:6).

Christ’s ambassadors were indeed privileged people. They were able to see and hear things that the greatest saints in the Old Testament ages yearned to see and hear but could not. The Messiah was at work, and they were a part of His work!

**Martin, J. A. (1985). *Isaiah*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 233)**

(2) The return of the 72. 10:17–20. When the messengers came back, they were excited that **even the demons** had submitted to them in Jesus' name. This was true because of the **authority** Jesus had **given** them. They had such authority because Satan's power had been broken by Jesus. He answered them, **I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven**. Jesus was not speaking of Satan being cast out at that precise moment, but that his **power** had been broken and that he was subject to Jesus' authority. However, Jesus said the cause for their **joy** should not be what they could do in His name but in the fact **that** their **names** were **written in heaven**. The personal relationship of a believer with God should be the cause of his joy. The authority given to these workers and the promise of no harm from **snakes and scorpions** was given for this particular situation.

(3) Jesus' rejoicing in the Spirit (10:21–24; Matt. 11:25–27). 10:21–24. **Jesus** was **full of joy through the Holy Spirit** (cf. the joy of the 72, v. 20). Luke frequently mentioned the Holy Spirit's ministry in Jesus' life. The three Persons of the Godhead are clearly seen: Jesus **the Son** was doing the Father's will in the power of the Holy Spirit. Each had a specific function (vv. 21–22).

The people who were following Jesus were not the important people of the nation; they were not considered **the wise and learned**. They had become like **little children** to enter into the kingdom, and thus they knew **the Son** and **the Father**. The disciples were living in an opportune day which **many** Old Testament **prophets and kings** longed to see—the day of the Messiah.

**Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (p. 1534). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.**

**10:18** Jesus was probably speaking metaphorically here. His point was that the ministry of the 72 was an assault on Satan's authority.

**10:19** Though Paul escaped harm after the bite of a viper (Acts 28:3–6), Jesus was speaking hyperbolically. Snakes and scorpions stand for the power of Satan. And though Christians have been harmed by many things, Jesus promised that they are ultimately kept by the power of God (see Ps 91:13).

**10:22** The similarity of this saying to the language and theology in Jn has led many scholars to reject its authenticity. But the saying has been shown to have an early Palestinian origin, and the conclusion that it goes back to Jesus seems assured, especially since everyone agrees that Jesus referred to God as His Father (2:49; see Mt 10:33; 11:27; 18:10). Thus, we have confirmation here of the basic historicity of John's picture of Jesus, someone who understood Himself as uniquely related to God and as exclusively mediating a relationship with God.

**Stein, R. H. (1992). *Luke* (Vol. 24, pp. 309-314). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.**

## **Context**

In contrast to the mission of the Twelve (9:1–6), the return of the seventy(-two) follows immediately. The joy of the returning disciples (10:17) and Jesus' teaching on rejoicing (10:20) form an inclusion, between which are sandwiched two sayings concerning the fall of Satan (10:18–19). In Luke they become a commentary on the mission of the seventy(-two) and, like the mission, also point forward to the later ministry of the early church in Acts.

## Comments

**10:17 With joy.** Joy is a characteristic of salvation (1:14; 2:10; 8:13; 15:7, 10; 24:41, 52). Both the noun and the verb occur more frequently in Luke than in Mark and Matthew.

**Even the demons submit.** The power to cast out demons is not specifically mentioned in 10:1–16, but it can be assumed that 9:1–2 was true of the mission of the seventy(-two) as well. Luke probably excluded it simply for the sake of abbreviation. Note how the themes of the coming of God’s kingdom (10:9) and the defeat of Satan/demons (10:17–18) are brought together in 11:20.

**In your name.** This phrase should be understood not as a magical incantation but as another way of saying “by the power of Jesus” (Acts 19:13), “for Jesus’ sake” (21:13), or “the Christian message” (Acts 4:17–20). Here the emphasis is on Jesus’ power.

**10:18** The difficulty of this verse argues in favor of its authenticity.

**I saw.** The verb “saw” can mean an ordinary physical experience (14:29; 21:6; 23:35, 48; 24:37), a gift of foresight or insight (Acts 27:10; John 4:19; 12:19), or have a symbolic meaning. Here it could refer to the fall of Satan seen by the pre-existent Son (Isa 14:12). It is more likely, however, that it refers symbolically to what the exorcisms performed by the seventy(-two) meant. Their casting out of demons demonstrated the defeat of Satan (cf. Luke 11:20–22). The tense of this verb, an inceptive aorist, is better captured by translating it “I was seeing.” Luke understood each exorcism by the seventy(-two) as demonstrating the defeat of Satan.

**Satan fall.** “Satan” is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew term used to describe the archenemy of God and humanity (Job 1:6–12; 2:1–7). It is usually translated into Greek by the term “devil,” though in Luke-Acts “Satan” is also used. Although Isa 14:12 may refer to the original fall of Satan, most references tend to refer to his future fall or defeat.

**Fall like lightning from heaven.** There are two ways of translating “from heaven”: adjectivally (“fall as lightning-from-heaven”) or adverbially (“fall from heaven like lightning”). The second is more likely. “Lightning” indicates not brightness but the suddenness of the fall. In the exorcisms of the seventy(-two), Jesus saw Satan’s defeat resulting from his coming.

**10:19 I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions.** These were both well-known symbols for evil. The snake is a symbol for Satan in Gen 3:1–15; 2 Cor 11:3; Rev 12:9, 14–15; 20:2. For a parallel to Luke’s statement, cf. Ps 91:13; *T. Levi* 18:12—“Beliar shall be bound by him [the Messiah], and he shall give power to his children to tread upon the evil spirits” (cf. also *T. Simeon* 6:6; *T. Zebulon* 9:8). The perfect tense of the verb (“have given you authority”) refers to the authority already given to the disciples (cf. 9:1), not to some future authority such as in Acts 1:8. It is likely, however, that Luke’s readers would include Acts 1:8 as well.

**Power of the enemy.** Satan’s power is described in Luke 11:21–22.

**Nothing will harm you.** Compare 21:18; Acts 28:3–6 (and Mark 16:18 for those who accept the longer ending of Mark). This can also be translated “he will hurt you [in] nothing,” but the NIV translation captures better the original flavor. The Greek form, a subjunctive of emphatic negation, indicates in the strongest possible way that the enemy will not harm Jesus’ messengers in any way whatsoever.

**10:20 However, do not rejoice.** This picks up the “joy” of Luke 10:17 and points out that their true joy should arise not from missionary accomplishments but from their eternal salvation.

**That your names are written in heaven.** This metaphor for eternal salvation is found in the OT, the intertestamental literature, and the NT. “Are written” is a divine passive meaning *God has written your names in heaven*.

## The Lukan Message

This passage continues the theme of the mission of the seventy(-two) and thus, by extension, the future mission of the church. But there is also a strong witness to the realization of the OT promises concerning Satan's defeat in the messianic age. The Satanic power is broken. Because of his exorcisms, Jesus can assure his audience that God's kingdom has come (11:20). The exorcism of demons by Jesus' messengers is another witness to the realization of God's kingdom. Jesus saw in each one Satan's overthrow. Luke understood, as did Paul, that Jesus disarmed and conquered the powers and authorities of Satan's domain (11:21–22; cf. Col 2:15). Satan's defeat brings joy, the eschatological joy of God's triumphant kingdom.

A warning against self-exaltation is also present in this passage. Even as earlier the disciples were warned against thinking that greatness lies in being served by others (Luke 9:46–48), so here Jesus gave another warning against the kind of attitude that boasts in what one has done for God, or, more piously, "in what God has done through me." An example of this can be found in 2 Cor 11, where Paul denounced the boasting of his opponents. To Paul it was preferable to "boast of the things that show [his] weakness" (2 Cor 11:30). In a similar way Luke reminded Theophilus not to boast in his accomplishments for God. Rather he was to "boast in the Lord" (1 Cor 1:31), who has written his name in the book of life.

## Context

These verses, along with the preceding, cast additional illumination on the relationship between Jesus and his disciples. They not only were his representatives (Luke 10:16), with their names written in the book of life (10:20), but they had been uniquely blessed (10:23–24) by the gift of the Father's revelation (10:21–22). The present passage completes the description of the responsibilities and privileges of discipleship begun in 9:51. The disciples' elevation to a position of privilege, over their contemporaries (10:21–22), and even to one surpassing their predecessors (10:23–24) is described. The present passage is tied to the preceding one by the time designation "at that time" (10:21), the reference to "joy" in the same verse (cf. 10:20), and the mention of the disciples in 10:23. Parallels to these verses are found in Matt 11:25–27; 13:16–17.

## Comments

**10:21 At that time.** Compare 2:38; 12:12; 13:31; 20:19; 24:33; Acts 16:18; 22:13.

**Full of joy through the Holy Spirit.** Compare Luke 1:47, where the same verb is used. This expression displays again the connection between Jesus' mission and his anointing by the Spirit.

**I praise you.** Jesus rejoiced in God's actions, which are now described. The focus of his praise may be on the hiding itself, the revealing, or both. Probably, in light of the emphasis of Luke 10:22, it is on the revealing.

**Father.** The Greek here is *patēr*, but the Aramaic behind this is *Abba*. While the Hellenistic Jewish literature of Jesus' day did use *Abba* as a form of address for God (cf. 3 Macc 6:4, 8; Sir 23:1, 4), it was unusual, and it is not found at all in the OT. Its frequent use by Jesus as a favorite term of address for God is unique. It was once popular to think that the best English equivalent was "Daddy" because children used it to address their fathers. It is now evident, however, that *Abba* was also the way adults addressed their fathers. As a result, *Abba* is best translated "Father."

Whereas *Abba* was certainly not a formal expression of address, neither was it a childlike one. See comments on 11:2.

**Lord of heaven and earth.** Compare Acts 17:24; cf. also Tob 7:1–8; Jdt 9:12.

**You have hidden these things.** “These things” can refer either to the following material, i.e., Jesus’ unique status as the only Son (Luke 10:22) and the disciples’ privileged relationship to God through Jesus (10:23–24) or to what has preceded, i.e., the presence of God’s kingdom and Satan’s fall (10:17–18). The latter is more likely. The verb “have hidden” can have an active meaning, as in the case of Pharaoh (Exod 7:3; cf. Mark 4:10–12), or a passive or concessive sense, in which God has permitted the arrogant to remain in their sin-induced blindness.

**From the wise and learned.** The exact meaning is unclear. Suggestions include: the arrogant; the intelligentsia (cf. 1 Cor 1:19–25); the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes; Jesus’ opponents (Luke 19:47); or the objects of the woes in 6:24–26. The phrase is found only once in Luke-Acts, so certainty about its meaning is not possible. **Probably it refers to the “wise and learned” of this world who have rejected the gospel.** Like Jesus before him, Luke observed their rejection of the good news of God’s kingdom and exulted in the reversal now taking place (cf. 1:51–52). God permitted the sin of arrogance to blind them so that these things remained hidden. **God was beginning to destroy the wisdom of the wise and frustrate the intelligence of the intelligent** (1 Cor 1:19).

**And revealed them to little children.** In the Matthean parallel the term “little children” refers primarily to believers in general, such as tax collectors and sinners (Matt 11:19; cf. also 18:2–6, 10–14), but in Luke it refers to the seventy(-two) (Luke 10:17, 19–20). Neither Matthew nor Luke used it to refer to immature Christians, as Paul did in 1 Cor 3:1.

**10:22 All things.** This includes not only “these things” of Luke 10:21 but also Jesus’ authority and power and his authority to judge the world.

**Have been committed to me by my Father.** The Father, as “Lord of heaven and earth” (10:21), has placed all things under Jesus’ command.

**No one knows who the Son is except the Father.** The only other place in the Synoptic Gospels where the term “Son” is used in this absolute sense is Mark 13:32. Jesus’ sonship is qualitatively different from ours, not just quantitatively. This is made clear by Luke’s use of “no one.” Jesus’ status is unique. The Father’s knowledge of the Son should not be interpreted as referring to a divine election of him (cf. Amos 3:2; Jer 1:5) because the Son “knows” the Father in the same way.

**And no one knows who the Father is except the Son.** This forms a chiasmus with the preceding verse: Son-Father-Father-Son.

**And those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.** The only way to a saving knowledge of God is through Jesus. Compare Acts 4:12; John 14:6.

**10:23 To his disciples ... privately.** This qualification is somewhat unexpected because no crowds have been mentioned, but Luke may have added it in order to indicate that the beatitude that follows is for believers only. See comments on 6:20.

**Blessed.** Compare Luke 1:45; 6:20–22; 7:23; 11:28.

**Are the eyes that see what you see.** The parallel in Matt 13:16 reads “your eyes” and refers to the disciples’ privilege of being eyewitnesses. Luke may have intended to broaden the group to include his readers. If so, the term “see” means not so much physical seeing as understanding that God’s kingdom has arrived (10:17–18), that Jesus possesses a unique relationship to the Father, and that he alone is the way to salvation (10:22). Compare 8:10; 9:27.

**10:24 For I tell you.** Compare Matt 13:17 in which “the truth” (literally *Amen*) is added.

**Many prophets and kings.** The saying underscores both the disciples’ privilege and the importance of the events taking place. A new era in redemptive history has dawned. God’s

kingdom has come! Matthew 13:17 reads “many prophets and righteous men.” By his choice of expressions, Luke may have been alluding to Isa 60:3 and 52:15 (cf. 1 Pet 1:10–12).

**See what you see ... hear what you hear.** Luke’s readers, and the reader today, share in this experience of God’s saving rule when they hear the gospel message.

### **The Lukan Message**

The elevated Christology in this passage is evident. While Jesus’ unique sonship is taught elsewhere in the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 13:32; Matt 24:36; 28:19), Luke’s emphasis here on the “nature” of the Son of God is reminiscent of Johannine Christology (John 3:35–36; 5:19–30; 10:15; 17:1–5). This passage has in fact been called “a Johannine thunderbolt.” Like John, Luke taught that Jesus is uniquely the Son of God, with an exclusive relationship with God. John described this more fully in his teaching concerning the incarnation.

There is also a strong emphasis on the realization of God’s kingdom. The disciples had witnessed a unique event. They lived in the time of fulfillment. What prophets and kings of past generations had longed and yearned for had come to fruition. The new age had begun. The law and the prophets were until John, but now the kingdom had come. Furthermore, this was revealed to the disciples by the Messiah, God’s Son. There was also a great upheaval, for the kingdom was not coming to the wise and powerful but to babes who received the kingdom like little children (Luke 18:17). What Mary proclaimed in the Magnificat was now being accomplished. God brought down the proud and exalted the humble (1:51–53).

**The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Lk 10:17–24). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.**