

***The Report and Return of the Disciples (10:17–20)***

***10:17 The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."***

***10:18 And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning."***

***10:19 "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you."***

***10:20 "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."***

The Seventy were sent on an impossible mission; they were to proclaim the gospel to a world that lies in darkness and has Satan as its god (2 Cor. 4:4). The people who heard their message were blinded to it (2 Cor. 4:4); they were enemies of God (Ro. 5:10), enslaved to sin (Jn. 8:34), spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1), unable to hear truth (Matt. 13:15), and unwilling to come to Christ (Jn. 5:40). They were people who loved the darkness rather than the light (Jn. 3:19). For the disciples, or for anyone, to pull someone from the clutches of Satan and the bonds of sin and darkness, to raise them to life, to open their eyes and ears so truth can be received would require immense power beyond natural human ability – but the disciples found that power in the name of Jesus (10:17). Upon returning from their mission, the first thing they reported to Christ was, "even the demons are subject to us *in Your name*."

The "name of" someone represents the person and their authority. At the name of Jesus the demonic world bowed. In the name of Jesus the disciples invaded the kingdom of darkness, broke the hold of demonic powers, and set the captives free.

In response to their enthusiastic report Jesus said, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning" (10:18). "Was watching" is an imperfect tense verb, indicating a continuous past action. There is no way of knowing if this was a vision, a prophetic statement, or just a remark. It is also difficult to know exactly what this means; however, the simplest explanation is that Jesus was watching Satan's kingdom rapidly being dismantled as people came to faith through the ministry of the Seventy. As Bock says, the power displayed by the disciples "pictures Satan's fall and the presence of initial fulfillment of the kingdom" (Bock, 1014). Ellicott similarly states, "While they were working, their Master had been following them in spirit, gazing, as it were, on each stage of their victorious conflict. Their triumph over the demons was the beginning and the earnest of a final conquest over Satan as 'the prince of the demons.'" Thus, Messiah's coming had signaled the victory of God over Satan and his hosts. Satan would be defeated at the cross and his influence completely removed at Christ's return (Jn. 12:31, 32; Col. 2:14, 15; Rev. 12:10; 20:1-3).

Jesus then told the disciples, "I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you." This imagery comes from the OT. It is figurative language *that describes God's protection*. For example, in Deuteronomy 8:15 it says, "He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water" (contrast Num. 21:6-9; 1 Ki. 12:11, 14; Isa. 11:8). Psalm 91:13 says, "You will tread upon the lion and cobra, the young lion and the serpent you will trample down."

However, as Ellicott says, “the parallelism between this promise and that of Psalm 91:13 shows that the literal meaning falls into the background, that the serpent and the scorpion are symbols of spiritual powers of evil. A merely literal interpretation lands us in two serious difficulties: (1) that it represents the treading on serpents as a greater work than casting out demons; and (2) that it implies that serpents and scorpions, as such, are not part of God’s creation, but belong to the power of the Evil One.”

Whether Jesus’ use of scorpions and serpents is intended to be figurative of spiritual forces or is simply a vivid OT way of describing God’s protection may be debated, but all agree that the real kernel of the promise lies in the last words, “Nothing shall by any means hurt you.” As representatives of Christ, acting under His authority, the disciples had nothing to fear. There was no threat that could oppose them. 2 Thessalonians 3:3 says, “the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.” James 4:7 says, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

The seventy had given up their lives, their comfort, their money, and any hope of worldly esteem when they followed Jesus, but in return they found joy. But Jesus did not want the disciples to simply rejoice in the power they had over demons. Though it was an honor to work miracles, the believer’s “chief” joy is in being numbered among the people of God, and having a title to everlasting life.

The command to rejoice is a present tense imperative in Greek and speaks of continually rejoicing; “are recorded” (a perfect tense) speaks of a past action with remaining results. We might paraphrase this as “Keep rejoicing that your names have been permanently recorded in heaven!” Not only were they going to enjoy the power of God in this life, they were going to enjoy the blessing of God forever.

Once again, the Bible places supreme value upon knowing God in Christ and entering the kingdom of heaven. Following Christ is worth giving up everything (Lk. 9:57-62) while rejecting Him is more offensive to God than the sins of the most wicked OT cities (Lk. 10:12-14). Paul said, “I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ” (Phil. 3:8). Knowledge of being with Christ and in the presence of the Father for eternity should be a constant source of joy.

### ***Jesus' Thanksgiving and Blessing for the Seventy (10:21–24)***

***10:21 At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.***

In verse 20 Jesus told the disciples to rejoice in their salvation, then in verse 21 Jesus rejoiced in their salvation with them. He expresses His joy as thanksgiving and praise to God.

A single Greek verb, (ἀγαλλιάω; *agalliao*), is translated as “rejoiced greatly.” It has the idea of overflowing with joy. Bock (1009) calls this “eschatological rejoicing, that is, rejoicing tied to fulfillment (Lk. 1:14-15, 44, 47; Acts 2:26, 46; 16:34).” It's the joy of the end. It's the joy of fulfillment. It is the kind of jubilation one has when the goal that was longed for is reached. When Jesus pondered the names of the Seventy written in heaven He was contemplating their final destiny, the goal of their salvation; in

verse 21 He rejoiced in it. But He was not simply rejoicing that they were saved, He rejoiced in the way that God administered salvation to them. That is, God had chosen to reveal the glories of the Son and bestow the benefits of salvation upon babes, instead of the wise and intelligent.

“Infants” is figurative for those without position and power. They are the opposite of “the wise and intelligent.” They are those who in their weakness must be helped by God (Lk. 1:51-54; Ro. 1:22; 1 Cor. 1:26-31; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; Ja. 2:5; 4:6; Dan. 2:26-30). The manner in which God saved people brought pleasure to Himself (Jesus said, “this way was well-pleasing in Your sight”), and Jesus found joy in seeing the Father’s pleasure being expressed.

“The verse is important on four levels. It shows (1) God’s sovereignty in salvation, (2) the intimacy of the relationship between Jesus and God, (3) the privilege of the disciples’ participation in this salvation, and (4) the praise to God that should result in gratitude for the position the disciples have” (Bock, 1011).

***10:22 "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."***

10:22 is a record of one of the strongest Christological statements in the Bible. Verse 21 revealed the Father’s sovereign authority in salvation. In verse 22 we learn that both the Father’s total authority and the revelation of the Father reside in the Son. In other words, Jesus turns His attention from the authority of the Father in bestowing the blessings of salvation to the authority He Himself has.

This verse can be broken down into four movements of thought:

First, although the verse primarily emphasizes Jesus’ authority in salvation and revelation, Jesus says He possesses *all* authority. This compliments the Great Commission given in Matthew where Jesus declares, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18). Even so, the fact that Jesus’ authority was “handed over” to Him shows that He is subject to the Father’s direction and the mediator of the Father’s blessings. The words “handed over” are used in relation to Jesus’ authoritative position as the Messiah (Buchsel, TDNT 2, 171).

Secondly, Jesus says that no one knows who the Son is except the Father and no one knows who the Father is except the Son. The Father holds the key to knowing and revealing the Son. The Son holds the key to knowing and revealing the Father (Jn. 1:18). In verse 21, it was the Father who revealed the Son to the disciples. When Peter declared Jesus to be the Christ, Jesus said, “flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, *but My Father who is in heaven*”(Matt. 16:17). However, in verse 22 Jesus says that He reveals the Father to whomever He wills to reveal Him. When Philip asked Jesus to show him the Father, Jesus replied, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (Jn. 14:9).

Thirdly, Jesus draws the conclusion that because the Father is only known by the Son, the Son is the only one who can reveal the Father.

Lastly, Jesus is sovereign over salvation. He decides to whom He will reveal the Father.

Suddenly, the Father and the Son's roles appear to be reversed. In verse 21 and 22 the Father is the Revealer; in verse 22 Jesus is the Revealer. However, each reveals the other in a slightly different manner. The Father reveals the identity of the Son through the gospel; the Son reveals the Father through His person.

***10:23 Turning to the disciples, He said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see,***

***10:24 for I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them."***

When Jesus finished praising God, He turned to the Seventy and rejoiced. Jesus was joyful because their names were recorded in heaven. He rejoiced that God had revealed to them that Jesus was the Messiah. He rejoiced that they had been blessed with the ability to see.

God had opened the door of eternal life to them. They had come to know Christ whom the Father had revealed, and the Father whom Christ had revealed. They had eyes that could see what generations before them had only longed for.

In Hebrews 11, God lists many OT believers who were not able to see what those in Christ have seen. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets were all righteous people who never saw God's promises come to completion. Hebrews 11:13 says, "All these died in faith without receiving the promise."

Similarly, 1 Peter 1:10-12 says,

*"As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things into which angels long to look."*

When it was revealed to the prophets what would take place, they sought to know who these things were referring to, and when and how they would come to pass (compare Dan. 9:2; 12:6-13; Hab. 2:1-4). The angels also looked on with a wondering eye. But it was revealed that the prophecies were not for them. The prophets were mere servants passing along promises that were intended for us!

Prophets, kings, and even angels, didn't know what we know.

May God help us to appreciate the glory of the salvation that is ours. "Oh how blessed we are!"