



THE GOSPEL OF  
**Luke**

**SESSION OBJECTIVE: LUKE 10:17-24**

To understand more about the supernatural power of Christ that is present in sharing the Gospel.

## Prioritized

There is a common emphasis in evangelicalism on God's power. Whether it's in the more charismatic circles and the emphasis is on the (specifically) supernatural spiritual gifts or it's the belief that God is going to change things for the better in the country I live in through a game of political chess, the power of God is highly sought after and desired. And while it is good to revel in the glorious reality that God is limitlessly powerful, Jesus warns His disciples in Luke 10:20 to not rejoice in the power of God, but that God has brought salvation to them. In other words, Jesus is telling them (and by extension us) to celebrate the gift giver, not the gift itself.

## Authority

Verse 17 begins with the return of the 72 disciples that Jesus had previously sent out to proclaim "that the kingdom of God has come near" (Lk. 10:11), and they are seemingly surprised at the kind of authority they were able to demonstrate, specifically towards demons. Below is a breakdown of Jesus' response to them.

### **LIKE LIGHTNING**

One of the most exciting, albeit difficult to interpret, passages in the text for Session 39 is in verse 18, when Jesus said: "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." The initial inclination of the reader might be to assume that this is referring to some moment long ago when Satan, a once angelic figure, fell from heaven and became the great antagonist to the biblical narrative. However, careful consideration must be given here

to make sure we understand Jesus' words in the proper context. Some commentators apply Jesus' words to Isaiah 14:13-15 to suggest that Isaiah 14 is indicative of Satan's original fall. There are some strengths and weaknesses to this. Some of the early church fathers made the same assumption. However, the interpretative methodology of the patristic age took a great deal of liberty in making these kinds of connections that are made nowhere else in the Scripture. That doesn't mean it's an incorrect interpretation, but it doesn't mean it's right either. The problem with applying Isaiah 14 to the original fall of Satan is that Isaiah 14 speaks about the effects that the fall of this "day star" (Is. 14:12) has on the nations. However, Satan was already clearly bound in serpent form in the garden (Rev. 12:9), before there were any nations, meaning his fall clearly took place before such a time as is described in Isaiah 14. It is far more likely that if Isaiah 14 refers to Satan's fall, it's his future fall, not his original fall.

More than that, we have to consider the context of what is happening. Jesus makes this statement in response to the disciples statement: "Even the demons are subject to us in your name" (Lk. 10:17). Jesus is connecting the casting out of demons to the fall of Satan. More than that, the word "Fall" is in the imperfect tense, which indicates that this falling was something that took place over the course of time, again, presumably during the missionary efforts of the 72 disciples. David Garland summarizes this well: "What is happening is not simply the expulsion of random demons that they might come across in their travels but the beginning of the complete overthrow of Satan's rule. The disciples only see the battle picture from the limited perspective of their hand-to-hand combat in the trenches. They have charged into the line of demons and routed them in various skirmishes. Jesus sees the whole war map."<sup>1</sup> In other words, Satan's rule began to fall under the ministry of Jesus and His disciples. This fall would be culminated in his heavenly expulsion from Michael the archangel after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus (Rev. 12:5-9). His final fall and eternal torment in hell will occur after the millennial reign of Christ (Rev. 20:7-10).

The point of this discourse is to reveal that the proclamation of the Gospel is an advancement upon enemy territory. It's an act of war. When people believe the Gospel, are freed from demonic torment, and are connected to the never-changing grace of God, it is a blow the enemy, and this kind of ministry is possible because Jesus has granted the authority to do so. The mention of "serpents and scorpions" are not only real threats to people who traveled itinerantly in sandals, but they are also symbols of evil. The serpent is the means by which we are first introduced to Satan in Genesis 3. Disciples of Jesus have been given authority to do what we are not capable of doing in our own power.

### **REJOICE RIGHTLY**

Jesus then warns the disciples to not make too much of these acts of war, but instead to be more concerned with and celebratory of the fact that "your names are written in heaven." Salvation is the source of our joy, not the benefits of it. When disciples lose sight of this, their focus becomes blurred and their mission charts off course. Believers should take courage that Christ is "with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20), but ultimately find satisfaction in that Christ came to us to begin with when we couldn't come to Him (Eph. 2:1-4).

## **How to Know God According to Jesus**

In verses 21 and 22, Jesus prays "in that same hour" as when the 72 disciples returned. The content of His prayer is an exposition on how someone can know God the Father and God the Son (and by extension, God the Holy Spirit). He begins by saying that the people who understand spiritual things only understand them

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<sup>1</sup> David E. Garland, *Luke*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 429.

because it has been revealed to them by the Father, and the reason why it was revealed to them is not because they were “wise and understanding” but rather “little children.” This means that while faith and belief require wisdom and knowledge, they are not made possible by wisdom and knowledge. In other words, before one can have the wisdom of God and learn the knowledge of God, all of it must be revealed to them by God, and that revelation is given on the basis of child-like faith, not worldly wisdom and understanding. This is akin to the Proverbs’ insistence that “the fear of the LORD is the beginning” of both “knowledge” (Prov. 1:7) and “wisdom” (Prov. 9:10). Wisdom and knowledge have their genesis point at “fear” or humble reverence, which could be seen as “child-like” in posture.

Beyond that, Jesus says that “all things have been handed over to Me,” indicating that He is in charge of revealing Himself to whom He chooses: “No one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him” (Lk. 10:22). This means that to know God the Father or Jesus, it must be revealed by God the Son first. This explains why God’s people are regularly referred to as “elect” (Lk. 18:7; 2 Tim. 2:10; Titus 1:1) or “chosen” (Col. 3:12; 1 Th. 1:4; Rev. 17:14). They are called such because they have been elected or chosen by Christ to know the Father and the Son.

## Fulfillment

Verses 23 and 24 demonstrate how Christ is the fulfillment of a great number of Old Testament prophecies, and how those who prophesied such prophecies were themselves not even fully aware of what Jesus would be like. He says: “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it” (Lk. 10:23-24). Many people in the past longed to know what the Messiah would be like, but they died before He came. Now, these rejects and cast aways are more “blessed” than the revered prophets and kings of old because they have seen and beheld what their predecessors did not.

## What About Now?

One major takeaway is that sharing the Gospel is both a spiritual act of war against Satan and empowered by Christ. The weapons of our warfare are not “of flesh and blood” (Eph. 6:12). Another takeaway is that knowing who Christ is granted to us by Him (not of our own accord), and it is a privilege that even the prophets and kings of the Old Testament did not enjoy.

## Study Questions

### Day One

1. Read Luke 10:17. Who returned? What were they saying? Why was this a big deal?

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2. Read Luke 10:18. How did Jesus answer them? What does this verse mean? (Hint: See above notes)

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### Day Two

1. Read Luke 10:19. What is significant about “serpents and scorpions?” (Hint: See above notes)

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2. Read Luke 10:20. What should we rejoice in? What should we not rejoice in?

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### Day Three

1. Read Luke 10:21. In whom did Jesus rejoice? What did He begin to pray?

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2. Read Luke 10:22. In your own words, summarize this verse.

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### Day Four

1. Read Luke 10:23. To whom did Jesus turn towards? What did He say to them?

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2. Read Luke 10:24. Who desired to see what they saw?

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## Week 39 Discussion: Gospel Power

One of the major themes of this passage is the need for Christ’s power to go on mission to proclaim the Gospel. This doesn’t mean leaving the country (although it can), but can also be situational. Talk as a group about how sharing your faith makes you feel, and how you can more deeply rely on Christ’s power and not your own.

1. Icebreaker: Do you often share the Gospel? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think more people don’t share the Gospel?
3. How does Christ’s promise to “be with you always” (Matt. 28:20) give you courage to share your faith?
4. When was the last time you invited someone to this Bible study? How did it turn out?
5. Have you ever considered that inviting people to believe the Gospel is an act of spiritual war?
6. How can the church help equip you to more consistently share your faith?

## Takeaways:

1. The seventy two disciples returned from their mission and were amazed that even demons fled from them in Jesus’ name.
2. Jesus teaches them that the Gospel mission is act of war that brings the downfall of Satan’s kingdom.