

Sermon Study for Circuit Pastors' Conference
Circuit 10 - Northwest District - The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
Christ Lutheran Church, Meridian, Idaho
10 September Anno Domini 2002

The Minor Festival of St. Michael and All Angels
Three Year Series - Part A
29 September Anno Domini 2002

Luke 10:17-20

The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your Name!" And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." [RSV]

◆ Isagogics for The Gospel of Luke

- **Author** - Other than higher critics, the overwhelming consensus is that the author is the beloved physician named Luke who, beginning at Acts 16:11-17, met up with Paul. After remaining in Philippi and apparently remained there for seven years. Luke then accompanied Paul on Paul's last journey to Jerusalem and was with Paul in his last imprisonment (2 Timothy 4:11). As such, Luke was an eye-witness of many events and records these in his other extant work, The Acts of the Apostles.
- **Time** - The date of the Gospel is AD 65-69 (Franzmann). Those infested with higher criticism will date it much later. (Those offended by the preceding remark are directed to C. S. Lewis' essay *Fern-seed and Elephants*.)
- **Place** - Neither the Scriptures nor the ancient histories reveal this. (Perhaps it is safe to say that Luke wrote the Gospel along the Way.)
- **Occasion** - In his Gospel, Luke sought to write an orderly account and historical narrative of what took place from visit of Gabriel to Zachariah to the Ascension of the Risen Christ.
- **Recipient** - Theophilus (Luke 1:1).
- **Sources** - The apostles, particularly Paul and possibly Peter, were sources. Luke likely spoke with the Mary, the Mother of our Lord in gathering information, particularly concerning pre-natal and infancy narratives of John and Jesus. It seems that Luke must have spent some time with genealogical and historical records.
- **Purpose** - That the reader (Theophilus in particular and others in general) might "know the truth concerning the things (*λογων*) of which you (Theophilus) have been informed (*κath'ηκουσθησθε*)" (Luke 1:4).

- **Content -**

1. Infancy Narratives & Temptation (1:1 - 4:13)
2. Jesus' Ministry in Galilee (4:14 - 9:50)
3. Journey to Jerusalem (9:51 - 19:27)
4. The Days in Jerusalem (19:28 - 21:38)
5. Jesus' Suffering, Death, Resurrection, Ascension (22:1 - 24:53)

- **Canonicity of Luke** - The Gospel is one of the homologoumena; that is, it is agreed upon by all as being accepted and confessed in the church as the Word of God.

♦ **Biblical Context of Luke 10:17-20 -**

The Gospel reading for St. Michael and All Angels follows a pivotal point in the Lucan account of Jesus' journey to the cross, the tomb and His Ascension. The Transfiguration (Luke 9:31) has taken place and Jesus now turns in the direction of the holy city and to the cursed place outside the gates of the city, Golgotha. *When the days drew near for Him to be received up, He set His face to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51).*

This is now the second exodus of Christ to the promised land with His Church (see the account in 1 Corinthians 10:4 and also the textual variant for Jude 5). In the first exodus, Moses is Christ's undershepherd who leads the Church in the direction of the promised land. Moses (whose mediation brought the Law) and his generation do not arrive. In the second exodus (*exodon autou* - Luke 9:31) Christ leads His little congregation to the portal of paradise; that is, to the cross and the tomb. Christ (Whose active obedience and passive mediation fulfills the Law) and His Church will arrive. Along the way, Jesus invites others to join Him on His exodus journey that they may participate in the major episodes of His Life; that is, to be baptized into Christ's death, be raised with Him (Romans 6:1-11) and *reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12).*

Jesus is also preparing His undershepherds for the work of the Ministry of the Word that had been announced before the Transfiguration (Matthew 16:15-20); will be instituted on Easter evening (John 20:19-23); will be repeated to the eleven disciples at His Ascension (Matthew 28:16-20); begun by them Pentecost (Acts 2); and will be continued since by Christ by means of His called servants of the Word (Acts 1:1). The preparation for the disciples on Jesus' exodus journey to Jerusalem involves a limited call with the specific authorization in only those towns that receive them to heal the sick and proclaim that *the Kingdom of God has come near to you (Luke 10:9).* In the towns that do not receive them, they are to proclaim the coming day of God's wrath (Luke 10:11-12). [Note that in Luke 9:1, Jesus sent out the Twelve and Luke calls them apostles at their return.]

The authority to do, to declare and to announce the Day of Grace and the Day of Doom is from the eternal, incarnate Son of God. The authority for and reality of such Law and Gospel preaching is given in the verse preceding our text: *He who hears you hears Me, and he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him Who sent Me (Luke 10:16).* This Father-to-Son-to-disciples theme is repeated by Jesus in His rejoicing prayer to His Father (Luke 10:21-22).

♦ Liturgical Context of Luke 10:17-20 -

- **29 September — The Feast of St. Michael and All Angels**

Michael (whose name means "who is like God") is the only angel commemorated in the calendar of the Lutheran church year, September 29th. There are Lutheran Churches bearing the name of St. Michael. (Are there churches named after Gabriel?) The angel Michael, is often termed "archangel," no doubt because he is the angel that led the other angels into battle and defeated Satan and his fallen angels, with the Old Testament and the Epistle readings two of the bases.

- **Psalm of the Day — Psalm 103** (see the Introit)

- **Old Testament Reading - Daniel 10:10-14 & 12:1-3**

And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, give heed to the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you." While he was speaking this Word to me, I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your mind to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, so I left him there with the prince of the kingdom of Persia and came to make you understand what is to befall your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come."

"At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the Book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever."

- **Epistle Reading - Revelation 12:7-12**

Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world - he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the Kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the Blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Rejoice, then O heaven and you that dwell therein! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows his time is

short!"

- **Introit**

Bless the Lord, ye His angels,

That excel in strength:

That do His commandments,

Hearkening unto the Voice of His Word.

Bless ye the Lord, all ye His hosts:

Ye ministers of His that do His pleasure.

Bless the LORD, O my soul;

And all that is within me, bless His Holy Name.

Glory be to the Father and to the (†) Son and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, now and forever. Amen.

Bless the LORD, O my soul; (*Psalm 103:1, 19-22*)

Amen.

- **Collect**

O everlasting God, Who hast ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order, mercifully grant that, as Thy holy angels always do Thee service in heaven, so by Thine appointment they may help and defend us on earth; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end.

Amen.

- ♦ **Exegesis of Luke 10:17-20**

verse 17

~Upestryan de. oi`ebdomh,
konta İduoÐmeta. caraj le,
gontej(Kurie(kai. ta. daimo,
nia upotassetai himih en tw/
ononati, souA

~Upestryan — This is a word used almost exclusively by Luke (16 of 17 times in the New Testament - Paul in Galatians 1 uses it once). The shepherds *returned* in 2:20, as did Mary and Joseph in 2:45. Likewise the Emmaus disciples (24:33) and the Ascension disciples (24:52 & Acts 1:12) *returned to Jerusalem*. A synonymn seems to be a phrase like *eiselqwn palin eij* (Mark 2:1). The root word is *upostellw* and means to withdraw, stow away or draw back. The verb form of this root word is used by Paul to describe what Peter did in Galatians 2:12 - *For before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.*

seventy [-two] — There is one significant variant. Whether the number sent out was seventy or seventy-two is unknown. There is support for both: 70 [P^{45.75} B D etc.] — 72 [a A C L W etc.]. Those who favor the parallel of Moses' selection of seventy elders (Numbers 11:16) prefer the former, while those who find that (mss) carry weight might prefer the latter. What we do know is that 35 or 36 pairs were sent out.

verse 17

~Upestreyañ de. oi`ebdomh,
konta İduoð meta. caraj le,
gontej(Kurie(kai. ta. daimo,
nia upotassetai hmiñ en tw/
onomati, sou

meta. caraj — The joy that they were experiencing was the result of the authorized exercise of power over ta. daimonia the demons.

Kurie — *Lord* is the form of address that is used here and connects with, and is an acknowledgement of, obedience (upotassetai) and Jesus' Name (en tw/onomati, sou). *Master* or *Rabbi* is not used for they were not sent to teach.

~Upotassetai — refers to being placed into an order, under the authority of, and in the obedience of another. In the Name of the Lord Jesus, the demons were obedient to these disciples when they spoke the Word of the Lord. To be subject to can be a horrible experience. The 7 sons of Sceva in Acts 19:13-16 presumed to use the Name of the Lord Jesus either without a Call and therefore, without the authority to speak the Word were assaulted by an evil spirit and abused and driven much in the way that one might treat a rented mule. ~Upotassetai may be a blessed and wonderful state to live in, as our Lord did when He was twelve years old in *Luke 2:51 — And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient (upotassomenoj) to them; and His mother kept all these things in her heart.*

en tw/onomati, sou — The use of the Name of the Lord Jesus implies the authority to use His Name. Use of the Name without the Call from Christ to do so, as well as the consequent authority to do so does not result in the intended outcome. The use of the phrase “in the Name of Jesus” or “in the Name of the Lord” is neither a magical phrase nor a guarantee that the Lord is present, listening or active when the words are uttered. The example of the sons of Sceva in Acts 19 is a demonstration of the point. Other examples of the use of the phrase *in the Name of Jesus* include the Mormon dedication of a temple; the prayers encouraged by the teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses; and those who tack on the phrase while praying in the midst of the Pantheon.

That God neither hears such prayers nor promises His gracious Presence at such gatherings and invocations of the gods is demonstrated by the Word of the Lord when Jesus said concerning the Last Day — *On that Day many will say to me, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name (ouvtw/ sw/onomati), and cast out demons in your name (tw/ sw/onomati daimonia), and do many mighty works in your name? (tw/ sw/onomati)” And then will I declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers” (Matthew 7:22-23).* [Note that there were three things claimed to have been done. This is parallel to what the seventy were authorized to do in the Name of the Lord Jesus.]

[**An aside** — What do you make of the contemporary use of adjectives like “precious” and “strong,” as “in the strong Name of Jesus”? Do such words reflect a theology of glory? Do they limit or distort the Name? Scripture does not have either of these words as an adjective to the Name. The LORD, in the Old Testament, does use the word “holy” preceding “Name.” For example, in Psalm 30:4 the people of God are called to, *Sing praises to the LORD, O you His saints, and give thanks to His Holy Name.* But would you ever baptize someone saying, “I baptize you in the *strong* Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”?]

verse 18

ειπεν δε αυτοις(Ἐgewroun
ton Satanah wj astraphn
ek tou/ouranou/ pesonta

Ἐgewroun — Jesus replies to them and uses an imperfect verb that indicates a continuous action. “While you disciples were about those activities of your Call and as the consequent blessings of the same were taking place, *I was watching* Satan fall from heaven like lightning.” This is still the situation today as Jesus’ sent ones, in His Name, make disciples by means of Word and Sacrament. The Lord is watching Satan fall like lightning. Later in the Gospel, the Word of the Christ will be recorded — *I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:10)*

Satanah — This is the first use of the name, Satan, by Luke in his Gospel. Before it has been the Devil. The defeat in Luke 10:17-20 is repeated in Luke 11:14-23 when the strong man (Satan) is cast out by the Stronger Man and in Luke 13:10-17 when Jesus heals *a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years.*

wj **astraphn** — “Like lightning” describes the suddenness as well as the speed with which Satan was cast to the earth.

ek tou/ouranou/— That Satan was, at one time, in heaven is demonstrated in the opening chapters of Job. *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them (Job 1:6).* See also Job 2:1.

pesonta — This is an aorist participle. This denotes a completed action. Satan is defeated, cast down and will not be permitted to present himself in the Presence of the LORD again. The Ascension of the Incarnate Son of God is the final Word on this for the Devil and the other fallen angels.

verse 19

idou. dedwka umin thn
exousian tou/patein epanw
ofewn kai. skorpiwn(kai.
epi. pasan thn dunamin tou/
ecqrou(kai. ouden umaj ouv
mh. adikshai

idou — *Behold* introduces a major event or announcement. *And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His Name Jesus (Luke 1:31).* “*And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.*” *And Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your Word” (Luke 1:36-38).* “*Fear not; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy” (Luke 2:10).*

dedwka — This is first person, perfect indicative form of the verb, **didwmi**, and denotes an action taken and continuing to the present. As the disciples stood there, they had been given and still had, at that point in time, the authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and the power (**dunamin**) of the enemy.

exousian — Authority is given to the men subordinated to the Lord Jesus; that is, to those in His sub-mission (**upotassw**). Notice these two words — authority and submission — with respect to the Lord and His disciples, are positive and good. Notice also, as in the military, authority is delegated and responsibility is not. Jesus is still responsible for the efficacy of His Word.

verse 19

idou. dedwka umih thn
exousian tou/ pateih epanw
ofewn kai. skorpiwn(kai.
epi. pasan thn dunamin tou/
eqrou(kai. ouden umaj ouv
mh. adikshsh

ofewn kai. skorpiwn — Serpents bespeak of devils and demons. Scorpions have the sting of death. Neither Death nor the Devil were able to do anything to the disciples during the mission they completed. Speaking of the Serpent looks back to the promise in the Garden of Eden when the Seed of the woman would crush the Serpent's head (Genesis 3:15); and looks forward to the day of the cross not only when the devil is defeated, but when sin, death and its sting are dealt with; and looks beyond when the pastors of the Church drown the old Adam in Baptism and heal the sin-sick soul in Absolution. Professor Art Just, in his commentary on Luke, states that in “Ezek 2:6, thorns and scorpions are metaphors for the rebellious people to whom the prophet is called to minister” (p. 439).

thn dunamin tou/ eqrou/— The power of Satan is the lie, enmity and death. The disciples are called to proclaim the truth, to declare peace with God and to announce Life in Jesus’ Name. They have Jesus’ Word on this.

ouden umaj ouvnh. — Here is a triple negative denoting absolute certainty in these matters. Nope, nothing, nada ... they have Jesus’ Word on this.

adikhsh — This is a subjunctive form of **adikew** which means to act unjustly, to wrong or to injure.

verse 20

plhn en toutw| mh. cairete o
ti ta. pneumata umih upota,
ssetai(cairete de. oti ta.
onomata umwh eggegraptai
en toij ouranoijs

plhn en toutw — “Nevertheless” or “notwithstanding this” introduces a point that Jesus will make in reply to the natural inclination to experience joy over what the disciples have done.

mh. cairete oti ta. pneumata umih upotassetai — Or said another way, “Do not rejoice that you possess and have demonstrated *authority over* the spirits.” This authority has been delegated to the disciples. They did not earn it, deserve it, merit it or acquire it. Therefore you servants of the Word, you are not to rejoice over the truth that spirits are subject to you.

cairete de — As in its previous use in this verse, rejoice is a plural imperative. This second use could be termed an evangelical imperative in that the truth that follows will enable all of you to rejoice. “Rather than *rejoice* in what you have done in My Name, *rejoice instead* in what I am about to say.”

oti ta. onomata umwh — This is a plural indicating “your names.”

eggegraptai en toij ouranoijs — This is one of the most beautiful phrases in all of Scripture. First of all, it is a passive, denoting something that you do not do. Second, it is a perfect indicative, denoting something that has already happened and continues to be in effect. That it is a singular *your* with the plural *your* (umwh) is noted without comment. Your name has been written or enrolled in the heavens ... where the LORD God is ... that is now where Satan is not.

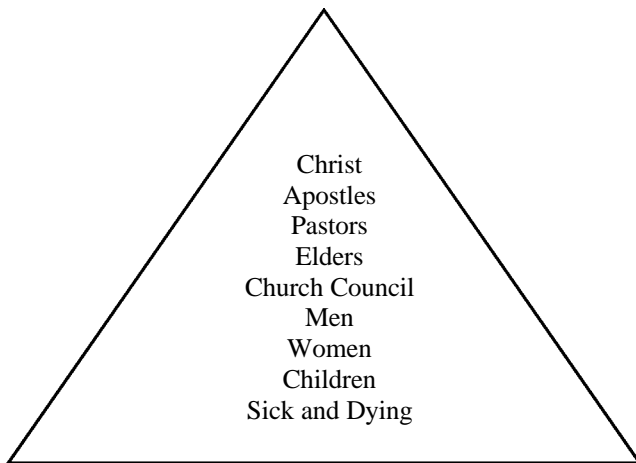
◆ Major Doctrines and Themes

● **Theology of Glory versus Theology of the Cross**

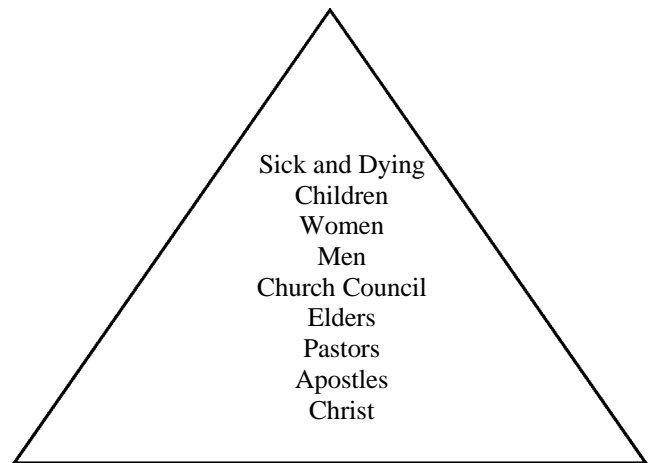
The disciples were manifesting a characteristic representative of the Theology of Glory ... joy at their effective use of what God authorized them to do. Jesus tells them to rejoice that their names are written in heaven and that this is because of Christ's election, Incarnation, active obedience in fulfilling the Law, substitutionary atonement for original sin and all sins, the Resurrection and His Ascension and Enthronement.

● **Authority and Subordination**

This couplet is manifested in one of two ways — Theology of Glory or Theology of the Cross. The former is the way of the world, the latter is the way of the Church. (This difference will be evident to us as the new strain of American Civil Religion is not only manifested in arenas, stadiums and worship centers, but especially as it flexes its muscles via the Law. This mutation will tolerate everything except the Gospel. The One, Holy Church will be purified and strengthened as She confesses and suffers the consequences of confessing the pure doctrine of Christ's Cross in this world.)



Authority and Submission according to
The Theology of Glory



Authority and Subordination according to
The Theology of the Cross

Consequently, it's not that one ought not to aspire or to ascend to a position higher than one ought or than one is permitted. For example, men ought not attempt to rise to the office of apostle in order to exercise power and have the glory of being an apostle. (For example, in Acts 8:18-19 — *when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, "Give me also this power, that any one on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."*) Rather, one ought not to descend to an office of service lower than one ought or is called to serve. (For example, pastors are not to descend to the office of being an apostle. According to the Word of God, they are not qualified [see Acts 1:17-22]. Also, women are not to descend to the office of being a pastor. According to the Bible, they are not qualified.)

[An aside: Incorporate into this discussion the contemporary terms as “lay minister” and “servant leader.”]

● **The Use of the Name of God**

As discussed in the exegetical portion of this sermon study, the efficacious invocation of the Name of God is due neither to magical incantation nor man's attachment, but according to the promise and authority of the LORD, specifically in preaching and teaching the pure Word of God, administering the Sacraments instituted by Christ.

Thus He tells the apostles in Luke 10:19: "Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you. For I have placed into your mouth the Word which is My Word, and have given you the Baptism which is My Baptism; and through these I want to demonstrate My almighty power."

Sermons on the Gospel of St. John - Luther's Works
by Martin Luther
Volume 24, Chapters 14-16
Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House

- **Justification by the Grace of God through Faith in Christ**

The Good News of this pericope is verse 20 — that the names of the disciples have been written in heaven. The writing or enrollment of names in heaven is God's doing. *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God -- not because of works, lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:8-9). Indeed, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus. Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On the principle of works? No, but on the principle of faith. For we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law (Rom. 3:23-28).*

- **The Election of God**

This took place in eternity with the election of the saints of God whose names have been *written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8 KJV)*; that is, whose names have been *written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world (Rev. 17:8)*. This gracious truth became effective in time: *For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom He predestined He also called; and those whom He called He also justified; and those whom He justified He also glorified (Romans 8:29-30)*. In other words, the Son of God *was destined before the foundation of the world but was made manifest at the end of the times for your sake (1 Peter 1:20)*.

Therefore, *blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. He destined us in love to be His sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His Blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished upon us (Ephesians 1:3-8)*.

Three references from the Lutheran Confessions ...

The Word of God, however, leads us to Christ, Who is "the Book of Life" in which all who are to be eternally saved are inscribed and elected, as it is written, "*He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world*" (Eph. 1:4). [*The Formula of Concord XI, 7*]

Our election to eternal life does not rest on our piety or virtue but solely on the merit of Christ and the gracious will of the Father, who cannot deny himself because he is changeless in his will and essence. Hence when his children become disobedient and stumble, he arranges to recall them to repentance through the Word, and through it the Holy Spirit wills to effect their conversion in them. If they return to him in true repentance through a right faith, he will always show the same old fatherly heart to all who tremble at his Word and cordially return to him, as it is written, “If a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man’s wife, may he receive her again? Would not that land be greatly polluted? You have played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, says the Lord” (Jer. 3:1). [*The Formula of Concord*, XI, 75]

Moreover, when people are taught to seek their eternal election in Christ and in his holy Gospel as the “book of life,” this doctrine never occasions either despondency or a riotous and dissolute life. This does not exclude any repentant sinner but invites and calls all poor, burdened, and heavy-laden sinners to repentance, to a knowledge of their sins, and to faith in Christ and promises them the Holy Spirit to cleanse and renew them. This doctrine gives sorrowing and tempted people the permanently abiding comfort of knowing that their salvation does not rest in their own hands. If this were the case, they would lose it more readily than Adam and Eve did in paradise — yes, would be losing it every moment and hour. Their salvation rests in the gracious election of God, which he has revealed to us in Christ, out of whose hand “no one can pluck” us (John 10:28; 2 Tim. 2:19). **Hence if anyone so sets forth this teaching concerning God’s gracious election that sorrowing Christians can find no comfort in it but are driven to despair, or when impenitent sinners are strengthened in their malice, then it is clearly evident that this teaching is not being set forth according to the Word and will of God but according to reason and the suggestion of the wicked devil.** [*The Formula of Concord* XI, 89-91]

Or, stated in other ways by others ...

An examination of the Scriptures reveals the fact that the aim of all true ministers has been to train their hearers so that they could declare themselves children of God and heirs of salvation. When Christ said to His disciples: “Rejoice because your names are written in heaven, (Luke 10,20, He evidently called upon the to rejoice in the certainty of their salvation. Paul writes to the Corinthians: *Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Cor. 6, 11.* Peter writes to the Christians living in the dispersion: *Ye were as sheep going astray; but ye are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. 1 Pet. 2,25.* John says to his spiritual children, including himself in the statement: *Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. 1 John 3,2.* Nowhere in the Holy Scriptures do we find the apostles treating the members of their congregations as if they were uncertain regarding their standing with God; their treatment of them is always such that one can see they presuppose that their members, spite of their weaknesses and blemishes, are dear, beloved children of God.

The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel
by C. F. W. Walther
28th Evening Lecture, page 392 (Dau)

Therefore he that neither hears nor follows the voice of chrsit but persists in sins without

repentance and does not seek to be reconciled with God in Christ through faith, who likewise does not obey the Holy Spirit but resists - let him neither think nor say that he is among the elect (Jn 8:47; 10:26), though one should not finally despair of the salvation of such a person, since God can call and convert him even at the sixth, or ninth, or even the eleventh hour. Therefore let us never cease to exhort and admonish such through the Word, in the hope that perhaps God will give them repentance to acknowledge the truth, that they may recover themselves from the snares of the devil, by whom they are held captive at his will (2 Ti 2:25-26). But he that perseveres in sins unto the end without repentance is certainly not elect but is among the rejected and damned.

Ministry, Word, and Sacraments - An Enchiridion
by Martin Chemnitz (trans. by Luther Poellet)
page 91

See from the law how justly God's wrath is expressed against thy sins, and repent thereof; see from the gospel how graciously God's mercy is extended to thee because of Christ's merit, and by faith make it thine own; comprehend the true nature of faith and exhibit it in thy godly conversation; recognize in thy cross the fatherly chastisements of God, and bear it with patience; and then, at length, thou mayst begin to discuss the doctrine of predestination. The apostle pursues this method; let the true disciple of the apostle follow it also.

In respect of this mystery three things are always to be observed: the mercy of God who loves us, the merit of Christ who suffers for us, and the grace of the Holy Spirit who calls us through the gospel.

Sacred Meditations
by Johann Gerhard
pages 131-132

Thus God reveals His will to us through Christ and the Gospel. But we loathe it and, in accordance with Adam's example, take delight in the forbidden tree above all the others. This fault has been implanted in us by nature. When Paradise and heaven have been closed and the angel has been placed on guard there (cf. Gen. 3:24), we try in vain to enter. For Christ has truthfully said: "No one has ever seen God" (John 1:18). Nevertheless, God, in His boundless goodness, has revealed Himself to us in order to satisfy our desire. He has shown us a visible image. "Behold, you have My Son; he who hears Him and is baptized is written in the Book of Life. This I reveal through My Son, whom you can touch with your hands and look at with your eyes."

Lectures on Genesis - Luther's Works
by Martin Luther
Volume 5, Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 26-30
Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House

Baptism (I)

As he that sees a dark and shady grove,
Stays not, but looks beyond it on the sky;
So I when I view my sins, mine eyes

remove

More backward still, and to that water fly,
Which is above the heav'ns, whose spring and rent
Is in my dear Redeemer's pierced side.

O blessed streams! either ye do prevent
And stop our sins from growing thick and wide,
Or else give tears to drown them, as they grow.

In you Redemption measures all my time,
And spreads the plaster equal to the crime.

You taught the Book of Life my name, that so
Whatever future sins should me miscall,
Your first acquaintance might discredit all.

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"Rejoice in What God Has Done!"

Luke 10:17-20

29 September Anno Domini 2002

The Feast of St. Michael and All Angels

written by Pastor Michael L. McCoy
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Emmett, Idaho

Grace, mercy and peace to you in the Name of the Father and of the (†) Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dear Baptized,

In 1887 Lord Acton wrote a letter in response to the doctrine of papal infallibility declared a few years earlier. The British historian scribed: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men." In these latter days when here and there an obsessed gollum slinks across the countryside seeking the precious that he lost and hanging close to the one now in possession of it - one who is increasingly possessed by it, well we behold that Lord Acton was a prophet who knew the words and acts of men. Still, when compared with the doctrine of original sin revealed in Holy Writ, Lord Acton was an optimist.

Then there is God Who knows the hearts and thoughts of man, or as He revealed the truth to us through Moses, that the LORD knows *the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Genesis 6:5)*. If one thinks this does not apply to him or her, behold what the Holy Spirit wrote through the hand of the Apostle John, *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8)*.

Put power into the hands of such inclined men and then authorize its use. The corruption is likely to begin from the get-go. Then, when the intended and desired results occur as the power is exercised over time, well, one end or the other of us fattens; that is, one's hat size increases or one gets too big for one's britches. Either way, it is not a healthy situation for the queen, the bishop or a pawn.

But who would even think of handing out such power and authorizing its use? God did; that is, Jesus did. Prior to the Gospel reading for this Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, Jesus sent out around seventy of His disciples. They were authorized to do three things in His Name - announce the Lord's peace, heal the sick, and, for those towns that received them, say, *The Kingdom of God has come near to you (Luke 10:9)*. Announce blessing and woe, to friend and foe. *He who hears you hears Me, and he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him Who sent Me (Luke 10:16)*.

During the course of the activities of this temporary mission, demons would, as a result, be cast out. So, mighty miracles abounded as these men went about the activities that they were sent to do. Power to heal ... authorized to proclaim God's peace ... called to announce the advent of the Kingdom of God ... and as a result, demons were cast out by those disciples!

The Gospel reading is the sermon text. Please listen to Luke 10:17-20 and ...

... Rejoice in What God Has Done!

The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your Name!" And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Thus far the Word of the LORD our God.

The disciples return to Jesus. They are excited and enthusiastic about what they have done in the Name of the Lord. Now what they have done is most certainly a wonderful thing, especially to those who are the recipients of such blessings. A disciple speaks the Word in the Name of Jesus and someone is healed of an awful condition. That person is blessed; there's no denying it. Another disciple proclaims God's peace to those assembled in a house; each one who trusts such Word of God has what was promised, namely, peace with God! Another disciple sent by Christ makes the announcement, *The Kingdom of God has come near to you*. The hearer of that Word of Truth is filled with hope and peace. This is what the Lord has done through the mouths of His disciples. They are excited and they are enthusiastic about what they have done in the Name of

the Lord. The disciples return to Jesus.

With what might we compare this?

We could compare it to being a parent. You become a mother or a father and you want what is best for your unborn child. So you make sure that this little one gets fed properly - with both the physical vitamins and nutrients entering the body through the placenta, and the Word in liturgy, song and confession of the Church entering the soul through the ear.

Yikes. There is a lot to do. So you do this and then you do that. I mean, you work hard at making certain that there is a healthy child born into your family. Then, with the strength and provisions that God provides, you strive to have the child baptized as soon as possible. You carry your baby into the House of God as soon as possible. In your arms you bear your baby to the front of the Church. You do what is needed to bring that infant to the gracious waters of Holy Baptism and this is what you have done.

We could also compare what happened with the disciples with the calling to be a pastor; in particular Christ's undershepherd here in this congregation. The Lord has called me and the Call extended to me from the Lord through His Church has authorized and obligated me to preach and teach the Word in its truth and purity, to administer the Sacraments as Christ instituted them, to visit the sick and the dying, to admonish the erring and the delinquent, to ...

Yikes. There is a lot to do. So I do this and I do that. I mean, I work hard at making certain that this sermon properly distinguishes Law and Gospel so that those who come to the Divine Service and enter into the Presence of the Lord may hear the Law that accuses the old sinful nature of each one and the Gospel that comforts those who are sorry for their sin and look to Christ in faith. I prepare the holy space for the holy time and then await the moment when that mother and father bring that infant to the front of the Church. Then, with the authority and obligation that Christ gave those men to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching, I follow in that apostolic train and I baptize the infant in the Name of Jesus; that is, in the Name of the Father and of the (†) Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Do you realize what those parents and I have done? We have done what was necessary for the soul of this child to be healed. This child has been made a

disciple by being baptizing. You continue to bring this child to this house of prayer so that I might continue to do what I have been called to do - to announce that the Kingdom of God has come near and to proclaim peace to this child and to all sons of God in the Absolution, doing so in the Name of Jesus; that is, ...

"Upon this, your confession, I as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the Name of the Father and of the (†) Son and of the Holy Ghost." (*The Lutheran Hymnal*, p. 16).

Yes! Alright! Isn't this great? Parents, great job. Pastor, you dun good. There are high-fives here and attaboys there. We've done all of this in the Name of Jesus. I wonder what Jesus will say? Come on, let's return to Him and tell Him what has happened. *"Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your Name!" And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; ..."*

Hmmm. Jesus puts a bit of a damper on us when we rejoice in what we have done in His Name. Now, let's understand something here, the baptism of infants and the announcement of forgiveness are great and wonderful, particularly for the recipients of God's grace. We are glad that this has taken place and we sing "Hallelujah!" and give thanks to God. You and I do not receive the forgiveness of our sins, eternal life and salvation because we are the instruments by which others receive this Good News. Rather, it is by the grace of God through faith in Jesus that these blessings are ours. Jesus said, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10).

Jesus replies to the disciples' report, *I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you.* There are a number of reasons why and we consider just a few of them.

First, the emphatic and continued rejoicing in the spirits being subject to you becomes a First Commandment issue. The focus and appeal of power over the demons appeals to our old sinful nature that seeks to tell everyone what "I" have done, thus displacing the LORD as God with the god of self ... the Ego-maniac who seeks all the glory ... the glory that is due only to the Lord.

The second reason follows quickly upon the first; that is, upon the discarding of the First Commandment, the Second Commandment is broken. The Name of Jesus is invoked and/or attached in ungodly places or ways. For example, in Acts 19 *some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to pronounce the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, mastered all of them, and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded"* (verses 13-16). Also, the Name of Jesus is attached in the dedication prayers of the LDS Temples of the Mormon god. Members of the anti-Christian cult, Jehovah's Witness, are instructed to pray in the Name of Jesus. But the JW Jesus is not the Christian Jesus.

For anyone, but especially a pastor, to give the impression or say that all worship the same god or that the LORD is one among many others gods, or that the God's Name may be attached as the heart desires, ... well, "he that teaches and lives otherwise than God's Word teaches, profanes the Name of God among us. From this preserve us, Heavenly Father" (*Small Catechism*, Lord's Prayer, The Meaning of the First Petition).

The Apostle John is reported to have fled a building because a heretic named Cerinthus was inside. In other words, the faithful flee from such heretical houses of worship where other gods are acknowledged, confessed and invoked. We believe, teach and confess that those pastors and preachers who despise God's Word deserve, "not only to be refused food, but also to be chased out by dogs and pelted with dung" (*The Large Catechism*, Preface). In other words, the faithful do not permit false preachers to spout lies or to speak false doctrine, whether in the church or in the civic arena.

The third reason why one ought not rejoice that the spirits are subject to you goes to the very heart of the Truth ... the article upon which the Church stands or falls ... that salvation is by the grace of God alone through faith alone in Christ's Person and Work. No one, not even you, are saved by what you do, *for no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law, since through the law comes knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20)*. Salvation is because of what God has done. Jesus said it this way, *Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.*

Ah, dearly beloved, here is the Gospel ... the Good News that enables you to "Rejoice in What God Has Done!" Consider what God has done.

- Behold the Enthronement of Jesus the Christ in heaven for you where all the angels say before our God and the Lamb, *Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen (Rev. 7:12).*
- But before the Enthronement of Jesus, the Son of Man, He Ascended into heaven for you from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead; that is, the living and the dead. He ascended in order to prepare a place for you in His Father's House. He promised, *and when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going (John 14:3-4).*
- But before the Ascension of Jesus, the Son of God rose again from the dead for you, and has promised through the voice of His Easter angel, *Fear not; for I know that you seek Jesus Who was crucified. He is not here; for He has risen, as He said (Matthew 28:5-6).*
- But before the Resurrection of Jesus, the Lamb of God atoned for the sins of the world; that is, He poured out His Blood for you and offered Himself for you, preaching from the pulpit of His cross, *It is finished (John 19:20).*
- But before the Crucifixion of Jesus, the Redeemer of the world kept His own Law perfectly for you ... indeed, in thought, in word, in deed ... *for we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One Who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).*
- But before the Active Obedience of Jesus, the LORD God Almighty was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of Jewish virgin for you. The angel, Gabriel, said to her, *Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you! (Luke 1:28)* and thus *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father (John 1:14).*
- But before the Incarnation of Jehovah, the Word spoke in the beginning, *"Let there be light"; and there was light (Genesis 1:3).*

- But before the Creation of all things visible and invisible, God took counsel in Himself and elected those whom He would finally have with Him in eternity.

Therefore, *blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. He destined us in love to be His sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His Blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished upon us (Ephesians 1:3-8).*

In other words, as Jesus said to His elect, *Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.* Rejoice that the Author of Life, in eternity, wrote your name in the Book of Life; that is, inscribed your name in Christ.

Rejoice that your name has been written *in the Book of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8 KJV).* The stylus is the cross. The ink is the Blood of the Lamb slain for the world. The inkwell is that fountain filled with Blood in which you were baptized.

Dearly beloved, rejoice in what God has done! The Holy Spirit creates true faith through the hearing of God's Word, as the apostle testifies, *Faith comes from the hearing of God's Word (Rom. 10:17)* when it is preached in sincerity and purity. Therefore no one who wants to be saved should burden and torture himself with thoughts concerning the secret counsel of God, if he has been elected and ordained to eternal life. With such thoughts the troublesome adversary is accustomed to tempt and vex pious hearts. On the contrary, they should listen to Christ, Who is the Book of Life and of the eternal election of all God's children to eternal life, and Who testifies to all men without distinction that God wants all men who are laden and burdened with sin to come to Him and find refreshment and be saved. According to Christ's teaching they are to desist from sin, repent, believe His promise, and trust in Him completely and entirely. And since we are unable to do this by our own powers, the Holy Spirit wills to work such repentance and faith in us through the Word and the Sacraments. And in order that we may see it through and abide and persevere in it, we should implore God to give us His grace, of which He has assured us in Holy Baptism, and not doubt that according to His promise He will give it to us" (*Formula of Concord XI, 69-72*).

That which was ordained in eternity became yours in time, when you were brought to faith in the LORD your God, when you were baptized into Christ. In the early 1600s, a pastoral poet and theologian named George Herbert wrote of this connection between your Baptism and the Book of Life. It is included as a bookmark in your bulletins. Please listen to his poem and know that you have eternal life and salvation because, as was first declared in your Baptism ... you are forgiven in the Name of the Father and of the (†) Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Baptism (I)

As he that sees a dark and shady grove,
 Stays not, but looks beyond it on the sky;
 So I when I view my sins, mine eyes remove
More backward still, and to that water fly,
Which is above the heav'ns, whose spring and rent
 Is in my dear Redeemer's pierced side.
 O blessed streams! either ye do prevent
And stop our sins from growing thick and wide,
Or else give tears to drown them, as they grow.
 In you Redemption measures all my time,
 And spreads the plaster equal to the crime.
You taught the Book of Life my name, that so
 Whatever future sins should me miscall,
 Your first acquaintance might discredit all.
 George Herbert (1593-1633)

Therefore, dear Baptized, "Rejoice in What God Has Done;" that is, "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven. Amen.