

Ascension Sunday 2025 – I Saw Satan Fall – *Luke 10:1-24*

Introduction – On Ascension Sunday we commemorate the coronation of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the point where God formally bestowed upon Jesus all authority in heaven and on earth. It was a powerful transfer of authority and administration over the entire cosmos and particularly for humanity. Ever since the curse upon the serpent (Gen 3:15) we awaited this good day. Christ's death procured the forgiveness of our sins by His propitiation. Christ's resurrection declared Him to be the Son of God with power and our justification before God. Christ's ascension and coronation removed the prince of the power of the air from a heavenly throne and placed Jesus on the throne at the right hand of God where He reigns in all authority.

We also follow Him to Heaven, where He is now seated. If we are united with Him in His death, we are also united with Him in His resurrection (Rom. 6: 4). We are crucified together with Him (Gal. 2:20), buried with Him (Col. 2:12), raised with Him (Eph. 2:6), and we ascend together with Him to be seated in Heaven (Eph. 2:7). We have been co-crucified, co-buried, co-raised, co-ascended, and co-seated. And our passage, the sending of the seventy disciples into every city, was a preview of all that was going to change in heaven which would effectively change the earth. Think of the Lord's Prayer as we study this – *“thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”*

The Seventy (vv1-11) – Jesus had already sent out His Twelve (the new Israel) to declare the kingdom of God (9:1-2). Now, he sends out an additional seventy – why seventy? Luke is declaring the salvation of the world in the work of Jesus, and the seventy may represent the New Humanity (Gen 10 is known for its list of the seventy nations of the world). When Israel went into Egypt, there were seventy descendants of Jacob among them (Ex 1:5), and later there are seventy elders who share the Spirit with Moses (Num 11:24f).

Instructions – They were sent out two-by-two, providing the proper witness to their testimony upon each city. Jesus declared the harvest was great, and that many laborers were needed for the ministry (v2). At the same time, preaching this kingdom presents great dangers, as in sending lambs among wolves (v3). They also went, as the twelve, dependent upon the Lord's providential care (v4). They went with a message of peace, if it would be received (vv5-6), and could faithfully receive support from those who would care for them (v7). There may already be a hint of transition in the need to be concerned about “cleanliness” regulations (v8). Their message was one of a new kingdom, a new way, and it would be verified with miraculous healings (v9). Even so, some cities would reject them, and they were to shake the very dust off their feet in judgment upon such unbelief (v10-11).

The Sense – There is a sense of urgency in these instructions from Jesus. The time has come to repent and turn to the Lord of this new kingdom (Acts 17:30). There is a sense of single-mindedness; the disciples are not to see this time as a traveling vacation but rather as a focused time of lambs among wolves. There is also a sense of quiet certitude as these 35 teams go from town to town, village to village, knowing that God's sovereignty is at work through them.

A Worse Day than Sodom (vv12-16) – The Lord despises sexual perversions that mutilate mankind's image bearing; the story of wicked Sodom is well known. Yet, it will be even worse for the cities that refuse to hear and obey the declaration of the kingdom of God. Jerusalem, as a city, refused to believe on Jesus, and is later judged as the new Sodom (Rev 11:8). If a person, a city, or a nation, has not taken seriously the preaching of the Word of God, it would be better for them in the Judgment Day if they were the city of Sodom. How seriously should we take this Word?

And Chorazin, and Bethsaida (and Woodinville, Bothell, all of Seattle) – This warning is first of all time-sensitive; Jesus is giving the last chance message, but then these cities will be left to the devastating judgment that the Romans will bring within a generation. Capernaum is singled out; she has been exalted by the presence of Jesus, but, like Babylon, she will be brought to Hades (v15, Isaiah 14:12-15). Our cities and our nation need to hear as well – to whom much is given, much is required.

I Saw Satan Fall (vv17-20) – The disciples return overjoyed at the authority they have and the success they have seen. Jesus rejoices with them, for He sees the fall of Satan in the preaching of the kingdom. Earlier Jesus had told Peter that *“upon this rock I will build my church”* referring to Peter's testimony, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”* (Matt 16:16). The seventy go out preaching this message and Jesus sees a crack in the gates of Hades. He knows, for Satan, it is over. John reveals that this was accomplished in the ascension of the Son of God (Rev 12:5-12).

The New Testament declares the defeat of Satan (John 12:31f, Heb 2:14, 1 John 3:8). This binding of Satan does not completely cease his activity (1 Pet 5:8), but it does mean that he is no longer able to prevent the spread of the gospel (Rev 20:3). Satan has now fallen and is close enough for his head to be crushed (Rom 16:20).

Nevertheless (v20), Jesus instructs them and us to rejoice all the more that our names are written in heaven. The glory is not as much that the enemy has been put down, but that the Jubilee, the redemption, the deliverance, has come.

Extreme Joy (vv21-24) - When Jesus “rejoices,” Luke chooses a strong word meaning “to be filled with delight, to be extremely joyful.” In other words, Jesus cannot contain His joy. And this is a joy from His spirit (or Holy Spirit) - this is the song of the Trinity.

Extreme Sovereignty - Jesus rejoices that God has hidden these things from some, from the so-called wise and prudent (in context, the scribes, Pharisees, Herods, and Pilates of the world). He rejoices that the Father reveals these things to little babies (whether physical or metaphorical). He rejoices in the Father’s perfect and absolute sovereignty over the most important events and decisions in the lives of men and women. We need to see this clearly: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, all love, rejoice, and delight in the doctrines of grace.

Extreme Fellowship - (v22) Rejoicing in the Spirit, Jesus shows forth the glorious, united fellowship that the Triune God shares and the privilege we have to be brought into this fellowship. One of many applications of this: Father, Son and Holy Spirit delight that you are here, that the Father has chosen you, the Son has redeemed you, and the Spirit has imparted life to you.

Extreme Blessing - Do you realize what you have been given? Do you realize what kings would have paid to have the revelation you have (1 Pet 1:10-11)? When we come here, we come to renew this covenant, that is, to hear these words again and again - Jesus is rejoicing over you. Jesus has defeated Satan. Jesus has brought His Jubilee to the earth. Go and tell the world.

Dave Hatcher - Ascension Sunday, May 31, 2025 (a similar sermon preached in 2006)
