

Reasons Jesus Rejoices, Part 6

Luke 19:10

Many who lived in the first century, they were present to see the things that Jesus did. They heard what Jesus said. They witnessed the events of his life and ministry. Many were present to experience his miracles. Some of them experienced those things first-hand, as recipients of his supernatural miracles of mercy. Lepers were cleansed. Lame were made to walk. Blind to see. They were there. It's one of the warning passages in Hebrews that makes that so significant.

Hebrews 6:4 to 8, identifies many of those people, those "who have once been enlightened, those who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit and tasted in the goodness of the word of God, the powers of the age to come." Many of those partook of all that and yet did not believe.

Jesus is here, not identifying the eyes as the organ of unaided physical vision. He's not talking about mere visual

perception, here. The ability to see and bear witness physically, of what you actually saw, that's not actually unimportant. It is necessary for giving a faithful account of the facts of history, as recorded in the New Testament. But those witnesses to the facts, they become an eyewitness to the truth, because God had given them spiritual perception. So, they saw the facts, the bare facts, but then they had those facts, interpreted to them by the Holy Spirit.

That spiritual perspective, on all that they had seen, and heard, and experienced makes them eyewitnesses, and it's not just of a true representation of the facts. That is, it's not just an accurate accounting of history, record of history. The issue is a right interpretation of those facts, a faithful narrative of the meaning of history.

You know who else saw all these miracles, never denied them? The Pharisees. What was their interpretation of the facts? Can't deny the miracles. The power's there. It's coming from somewhere else. Not from God, it's from Satan. Kill him. That's what they came to the conclusion, because their eyes were not

open to see the truth. None of this gospel preaching and gospel miracles was united with the essential element of faith.

So, when Jesus said here, "Blessed are the eyes that are seeing what you are seeing," and when he spoke these words to his disciples in private, he's making the distinction between his disciples, who truly see, and the rest, who see things without the benefit of spiritual perception. So, for the unbelieving crowds, all they see are uninterpreted facts, and they completely miss out on the real meaning. Which means they completely miss out on salvation. They come to other judgments based on their own presuppositions, based on their own assumptions, based on their own biases.

Remember what we said, at the beginning. These with eyes to see, ears to hear, "to them it has been given to know the secrets of the Kingdom of God," and notice the passive voice, "it has been given." By whom? Who's the giver of these secrets? It's Jesus Christ, isn't it? Verse 22. It's Jesus Christ, the eternal son of God, who is the giver of this sight.

Christ possesses divine knowledge by virtue of his divine essence, by virtue of his sovereign authority, by virtue of his office. He has the prerogative to give the knowledge of God. It's a knowledge that's been the exclusive privilege of the members of the trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But Christ has opened the door, and he's brought in those whom he wants to.

Only Jesus knows who the Father is as well as anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. That privilege comes to those, and only to those, who are the blessed recipients of divine grace. So, these disciples to whom Jesus speaks privately, they are recipients of divine grace.

They've been blessed not only to see with physical eyes, to be there on the occasions of his life and ministry, his miracles, his power, his words, his teaching with authority, power. They also have the blessing of understanding, of having spiritual perception that results in their salvation. It's based on this gift of grace. It's based on this saving privilege of spiritual perception. Beloved, that you and I become partakers of this same beatitude.

Notice the verse again, one more time, verse 23. Jesus said, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see." Not, blessed are your eyes, but the eyes, the eyes. And so, he generalizes this beatitude. He universalizes it. He extends it out to all those who possess the same eyes. In other words, the eyes of these disciples, the spiritual perception that they possessed. They're the prototype. Which means if we also possess spiritual perception, our eyes fall under the same blessedness of the same beatitude.

Paul himself, he saw himself and his fellow Apostles, his fellow ministers, those whom, those, they are those whom God used to make that connection. He said, 1 Corinthians 2:12, "We impart the things freely given to us by God." He said, they are in words. Verse 13, they are in words, what we impart, the free, the things freely given to us by God are in words and they are words not taught by human wisdom. They are in words taught by the Spirit, interpreting or connecting, or joining together, welding together spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

So, we do, too, beloved. We take divine words taught by the Holy Spirit, written down in holy scripture, and we take those

words and join them to those who are spiritual. That's what we do every single Sunday. That's what we do many times during the week with Bible studies. That's what we do in morning meetings, afternoon meetings, women's Bible studies, that's going on here all the time. We're connecting spiritual truth from God's word to spiritual people, living people. Those who've been regenerated and been born again by the Holy Spirit. Those with eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts to embrace and understand, we're joining those things together. They are life giving.

And then we go out into the highways and the byways, and we start proclaiming that word, speaking that same word out, and you know what happens? Those whom God has chosen; their ears perk up. They start to listen. They come near, and they say, you know what? I've never heard that before, but something about that is true. Rings true to me. Tell me more. You start unpacking the gospel to them, and you know what happens to all those whom God has chosen? They believe.

It doesn't matter who the vessel is that brings it. If it's truth, it will connect to those whom God has chosen. If it's gospel. That's what we do, too. We join spiritual truth,

spiritual words to those whom the Spirits' regenerated. Those who have new eyes to see, new ears to hear, new hearts to understand and believe and obey the gospel.

So, Christian, so, believer, repent, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you are seeing." Because not everyone can see what you see. Only those to whom spiritual sight has been given. The gift of salvation is by the sovereign choice of Christ, by the predestinating purpose of God's election, Ephesians 1:4, "who chose us in him before the foundation of the world." It's been planned for a long time.

So, Jesus rejoices in the eyewitnesses. The believers who physically, accompanied him in his ministry, rejoiced in his ministry, the test, whose testimony of him became the foundation of the faith, the very writing of scripture. He rejoices in all those who've been saved through that testimony, as well. That is us.

Third point, Jesus rejoices here in the providence of God, namely, number three, the surpassing privilege of historical perspective. The surpassing privilege of historical perspective.

Take a look at verse 24. It's just incredible here. Jesus said, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see," why is that, "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."

Jesus wants these disciples, and by extension all of his disciples, which means all of us, as well. He wants us to understand the surpassing greatness of their spiritual privilege. For each of us, occupying our own particular place on God's timeline of redemption and revelation, we partake of a vast, rich heritage of spiritual truth.

And, by the way, this tacitly affirms, teaches the progressive nature of divine special revelation. In other words, that's just a fancy way of saying that what was revealed to the ancients, though true and accurate, it was over time brightened, sharpened, and clarified in subsequent generations by subsequent revelation. So, the culminating point of all divine revelation is in who? I'm leading you to the answer, right? Christ. Hebrews 1:1 to 4, "God spoke long ago, many times, many ways, to the

fathers and the prophets, in these last days he has spoken to us," through whom, "his Son."

God's special revelation goes way back, way, way back. For example, Abraham and Job saw the truth of God's salvation from a distance. To Abraham God revealed Genesis 12:3, "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." And somehow Job knew, Job 19:25, "I know that my Redeemer lives and at, at the last he will stand upon the earth." Wow! True truth! But we have to admit it's from a shadowy distance. He didn't know clarity about that redeemer. Who it was who would stand on the earth. It's a bit murky at that time.

You get to Moses, though, we start to sharpen the focus. He saw the truth of God's salvation with a bit more clarity, especially in the light of the perfect law of God. The Torah revealed to him. In Deuteronomy 18:15, he said, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from among your brothers," that is he's gonna be Jewish, "It is to him you shall listen."

And so, we know, the Messiah is the quintessential prophet of God. Moses said he's gonna raise up a prophet like me from among you. By the time we get to David, even clearer. God promised David, 2 Samuel 7, the Davidic Covenant. He promised his physical offspring would reign on his family throne, but not reign temporarily as a physical king who would die. He'd reign as a king forever, an eternal king.

So not only does the Messiah occupy a royal office as David's son, in David's royal line, but because he will reign forever, he must be an eternal person. This is the only one who fits the description of God's king, in 2 Samuel 7, "the only begotten son of God." So, the Messiah is the anointed king whom God has chosen. He's a divine person.

Further, David prophesied, Psalm 110:1 and 2, "The LORD", that's the word, Yahweh, the divine name. Yahweh says to my lord. It's a title of sovereignty, Adonai. Yahweh says to my Adonai, wait a minute! David's on the throne of Israel. Who's he talking about? It was Jesus' question, too. "Yahweh says to my Adonai, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your

footstool. The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies," Psalm 110.

David goes further in Psalm 110 verse four, revealing the eternal priesthood of the Messiah, "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.'" The writer to the Hebrews unpacks that beautifully. So, Moses said, the Messiah is God's final prophet. David said the Messiah is God's eternal king. Which means final king. He's also his eternal priest. Which means final priest. We recognize those as the three offices of Christ, right: prophet, priest, and king.

Going back, you remember what Job revealed. Ancient times revealed something about redemption. We get to Isaiah, it's the high-water mark of revelation about the atoning work of the Messiah in the Old Testament. Isaiah 53:3 to 5, "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was

crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, with his wounds we are healed.”

Amazing thing. It's brought full clarity to us. What the Old Testament saints would have assumed is that that suffering servant and that royal servant are two separate people. They're not. They're brought together on one person, Christ. It's what they didn't know.

Jeremiah and Ezekiel added their witness; Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel 36. They talked about the nature of the New Covenant. Secure redemption. Everlasting forgiveness. Which so changed the nature of the redeemed person that they would, by divine regeneration, they would receive a new heart, a new spirit, and, get this, the Holy Spirit of God would live in them, in order, that they would walk in perpetual obedience to God's law.

We could add Daniel's prophecy of bodily resurrection. We could add Micah's prophecy of the Messiah's birthplace. We could add Joel's prophecy of, coming, the coming Holy Spirit. We could add many other Old Testament voices, but all those Old Testament

witnesses, none of them had the kind of clarity that Jesus' disciples had.

The things they saw fulfilled, heard explained, personally experienced, none of them even knew what we know today. So, when Jesus says, "Many prophets and kings desired to see what you see," he's giving us there, prophets and kings. He's giving us two categories of high and holy privilege. Prophets represent sacred privilege. Kings represent secular privilege. So, all the privileges of sacred and secular men.

The riches of divine revelation. The treasures of earthly kingdoms. Whatever Jesus' disciples see, hear, understand exceeds all of it. Notice these are spiritually minded prophets and kings that he's talking about here. They're not false prophets and wicked kings, but spiritually minded. How do we know that?

Because Jesus tells us that these particular prophets and kings desired to see what you see. Desired to hear what you hear. It's the verb *thelo*, expressing a wish, what one wants,

the desire of the heart. Jesus said something similar on a different, different occasion, one that Matthew records.

Very similar, the word that he used there is even stronger. Matthew 13:17: "For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see and to hear what you hear." That is a different verb. It's not *thelo*, to want, wish, desire. This is the verb *epithumeo*. It's translated in a positive sense in that text as, longing, earnestly desire. In a negative sense, it talks about the power of sinful desire or lust.

So, prophets, kings, they earnestly longed, desired, wanted so badly to see and to hear the things that the disciples saw. It's not the same contrast as verse 21, "What's been hidden from the wise and understanding revealed to little children." These are good and godly men. Spiritually minded prophets and kings with all their privilege. So, for prophets, they had the, the, special privilege of special revelation, authoritative instruction and teaching, divine wisdom coming through them to people, and then them teaching it. For the kings, David, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, Josiah, good and godly

kings. They had the privilege of ruling in power, wealth, and wisdom. They had the law of God at their fingertips and the best teachers in Israel to inform their, their instruction and their laws and their rules and their ordinances in the land.

But none of their privileges, at their time, in their place, none of them gained for them what they truly longed for. God withheld it from them, and he gave it instead to fishermen, tax collectors. As the writer to the Hebrews tells us, Hebrews 11:13, "All those prophets and kings they died in faith, not having received the things promised but having seen them and greeted them from afar." Why?

Because the end of Hebrews 11, God intended, verses 39 to 40, "All of these, though commended through their faith, they did not receive what was promised since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us," believers, "they should not be made perfect." *Teleioó*, fulfilled. Their work, their faith should not be perfected, completed.

It's amazing! God has bound us, all believers, Old Testament believers, New Testament believers, you could say

millennial believers, you could say eternal state believers, he's bound us all together in the wise outworking of his providence. Fulfilling his plan of redemption. Giving to some one thing and to others another thing, and then making them mutually appreciative of one another, equally desirous of the things we didn't experience, and we get to ask them about what they experience and they can ask us, one day.

1 Peter 1:10 to 11, "Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully," diligently, they were "inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories."

Again, it's that bringing together of the king and the suffering. The glory and the suffering. The cross and the crown. How did it come together? How do we understand this? You and I know. These are things verse 12, "even the holy angels longed to look into but are not able."

I like what Philip Ryken wrote. He said, "With a holy jealousy, these mighty kings and faithful prophets longed to know the Christ as the disciples knew him. What a blessing it was for them to see the ancient promises fulfilled in the birth, life, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. What a blessing and what a joy, indeed!"

So, Jesus wraps up this entire section with quite the benediction, doesn't he? Only Jesus knows how to close a service well. Another beatitude for his privileged disciples. And get this, all this blessing spilling over from the mission of the seventy-two, let's not forget that. Their obedience and the outworking of evangelism, to take their place in the Lord's work, in the Lord's field, in the salvation harvest.

And folks, if we'll do the same, we're gonna experience the same joy, the same sense of privilege, excitement, in fact, we're going to come to see how great, how far surpassing is our privilege, than so many prophets and kings. Beloved, we are upon, we, we are those whom the scripture speaks of, upon whom the ends of the ages has come, and so much has been written down for our instruction, as Paul says, "upon whom the ends of the

ages has come. To the prophets of old it was revealed that they were serving not themselves, but you in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven."

They know that now, with all certainty. This salvation, Hebrews 2:3 to 4, "Was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts by the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will." As J. C. Ryle says, I love this, "The humblest Christian believer understands things which David and Isaiah could never explain." Isn't that amazing! Read David. Read the Psalms. Read Isaiah. We're in Isaiah right now in our daily Bible reading, as we're doing that together, as a church, it's such a joy. Profound insight that Isaiah the prophet and David the king had.

One more word from Ryken, "Ancient kings would have laid down their crowns, old-time prophets would have left behind their ministries to know Jesus the way we know him in the Gospel, as our Savior from sin and our God forever. No one is

more greatly blessed than we are, and therefore no one should live with greater joy.”

That is a good word to end on, is it not? Beloved, never be ashamed of your privilege. There's a lot of talk these days about, privilege, and everybody needs to be ashamed of their privilege. Not so with us. We have a privilege by a sovereign, holy God, and he's given it to us. He's given many privileges. He's the dispenser of privileges.

We've been given a privilege, and this comes from our father. So you go out, get to work proclaiming this glorious gospel, so that we can see others be partakers of the same privilege, and all the while rejoicing in your special spiritual privilege by the grace of God. Let's pray.

Our Father, we are so overwhelmed with the chorus of voices from history, kings, prophets, not insignificant people like we are, but kings and prophets, holy angels longing to look into salvation truths. We are overwhelmed at your amazing grace. We thank you that we belong to you because of Christ, his choice, his election. We thank you that we are partakers of your

predestinating grace. We thank you that we sit before you in holy awe and wonder, that you would choose us.

We pray, Father, that you would help us to live holy lives. That we'd be faithful witnesses of this truth. That we would be loving, worshipping witnesses to your glorious gospel. That we would live in accordance with your wisdom, and proclaim the wisdom of your righteousness. We love you and thank you in Christ's name, amen.