

Seventy Disciples Return With Joy

Andrew Murray once said, "Pride, or the loss of humility, is the root of every sin and evil." He was correct. Satan's sin of pride brought rebellion against God (Ezek. 28:16-17) and eventually sin entered the creation (Genesis 3:1-21; Romans 5:12, 18-19). It is amazing what sins are motivated by pride. Pride is a destructive evil that we usually do not see within ourselves. We are blind to it. Proverbs 11:2 says that, "When pride comes, then comes dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom." The first part of the proverb reminds us that dishonor will eventually come upon the proud. We usually think that dishonor occurs when we cannot hide. But the truth is, God is actively opposed to the proud and works against them to bring dishonor upon them. James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5 reminds us of this truth when they say, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." God makes the humble more gracious but not the proud. It is God who lifts us up and brings us down (Psalm 76:5-7). We will discover in this study that Jesus humbled these men by revealing that God the Father determines our spiritual knowledge and experiences. God the Father hides and reveals truth, even to Christians.

OUR SIGNIFICANCE. Our study is in Luke 10:17-24 and it is about some proud men who were not aware that they were proud. This is a tragic condition when any man or woman is not aware they are very proud because God will be opposed to them and their sin will become obvious. In our last study, we discovered that Jesus had sent out seventy disciples to preach that the kingdom of God was nearer. Those who heard the message should have responded in repentance and sought the Lord Jesus. Repentance requires humility and the lack of response is rooted in pride.

In our study we will discover that their ministry was successful and the men were excited. But they were not aware that their pride was on display. Jesus Christ saw it and politely rebuked them. Jesus was not tactful; instead He sought to be truthful. Listen to the excitement of these men.

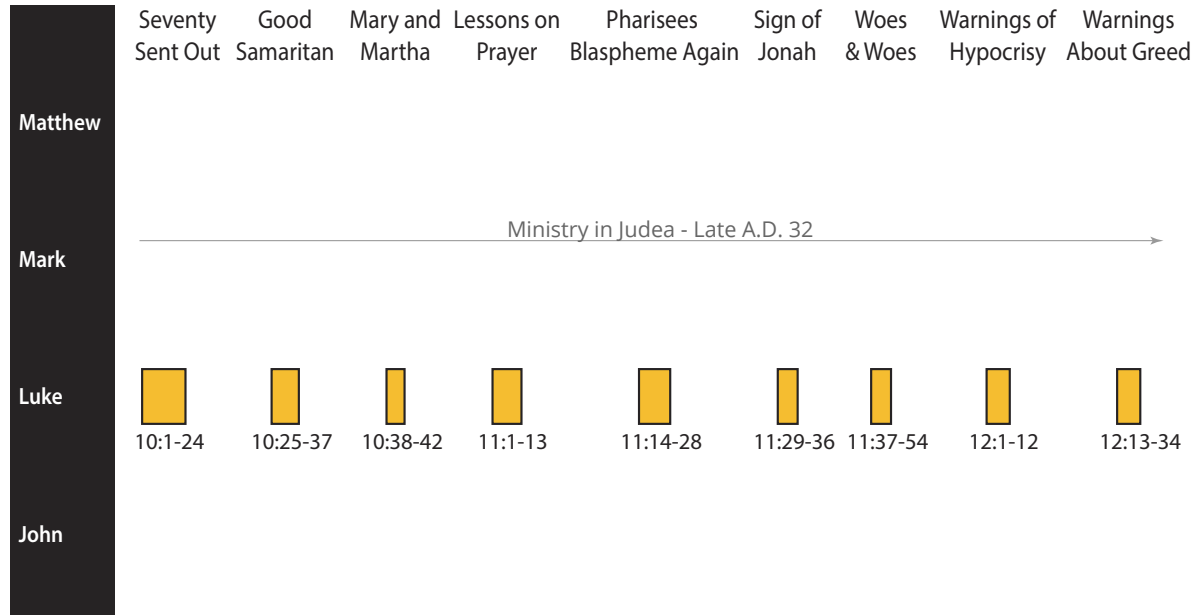
The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." Luke 10:17 (NASB)

This verse is both encouraging and discouraging. It is encouraging because the disciples realized that the power to cast out demons came from Christ when they used Christ's name. One can imagine the thrill of their experience. They did what Jesus told them to do and, wow, they cast out demons! I think most of us would have been excited too! Yet the verse is discouraging because the verse reveals that the seventy disciples were excited that *they* were able to cast out demons. They must have felt incredible at first, but then a subtle feeling must have slowly emerged as they realized that God had used them, resulting in a sense that there was something special about themselves. They were like us. We look



Life and Heart of Jesus

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for significance in life. We want to know that God is using us and I suspect that the same thing was true of them. A subtle feeling that says, "Hey, look we are special!" But they did not realize how insignificant they were. We do not realize how insignificant we are and we do not understand how little we know.

WRONG VIEW OF SUCCESS. The Bible does not state they were excited that thousands of people responded to their message about Christ or that people were rescued from demon oppression. It says they were excited about their power over the demons. They were excited about "their own personal involvement in the success of the ministry." It does not appear that they were excited that others benefitted. We know that in most churches success is determined by how many people come to church. In Matthew 7:13-14 Jesus tells us that few people will make it into heaven. If numbers is the measure of success, then God is and will be an ultimate failure. The number of Christians in the early churches were small since the churches that Paul founded usually met in homes (Acts 8:3; Romans 16:3-5, 23; 1 Corinthians 16:19;

Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2). The only one mega-church that is recorded in the book of Acts was in Jerusalem (Acts 2:41-46). It is sad that almost everyone measures success by numbers. The disciples of John the Baptist did also. On two previous occasions John's disciples were upset that more people were going to Jesus than to John (John 3:26). This reveals that men and women normally measure success by the "how manys". But this time the disciples were not thrilled with numbers but with the fact that they were able to cast out demons. If we are honest, success is usually measured by how many are following the pastor or the ministry leader. Success is measured by how many think we are great or how much money the ministry is receiving. In our sin nature we want to know that others agree with and approve of us. We are great! We seek a sense of self-worth or value. When this happens, something is missing!

The disciple's root problem starts to be revealed by Jesus in the next verse. They are proud men! They did not know they were infected with pride. Unlike most diseases which cannot be seen by others, pride is a hidden infection that is

not easily detected by the one who is infected but it is visible to others. As a result, it alienates others and God. Bridget of Sweden said,

Pride alienates man from heaven; humility leads to heaven.¹

There are many men and women in ministry who are more thrilled with what they think they have accomplished in the ministry rather than in worshipping the One who accomplished what they experienced. When Jesus saw their pride, He said this,

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

WATCHING SATAN FALL. Jesus' statement that He saw Satan fall, has had many interpretations. Some teach that Jesus was using symbolic language and His comment refers to the overthrow of idolatry throughout the whole world.² But nothing that Jesus said suggests that He is using figurative language, unless one does not believe in Satan and, therefore, assumes He was being figurative. Such a view rejects the clear teaching of the Bible that Satan is a living being and does exist.

A second view is that Jesus was referring to Isaiah 14:12-14 where the prophet Isaiah wrote that Satan was thrown out of heaven and sent to the earth. Also, in Ezekiel 28:12-16 we are told that Satan was actually cast down to the earth. These passage reveals that Satan was an angel, a cherub, and was thrown out of heaven.³

A third view says that Jesus is referring to a future event that is described in Revelation 12:7-10. In this passage we are told that Satan will go to heaven and attempt to defeat God at some time in the future. But he will be defeated and cast out of heaven and down to the earth.⁴

A fourth view is that this refers to Jesus' resurrection and

ascension.⁵ Others believe Jesus was referring to His future victory over Satan on the cross.⁶ Still others say Jesus means that Satan was "snuffed out by the powerful works of his followers!"⁷

All of these views are rejected, except the second view. The second view is the correct view since Isaiah 14:12 says that Satan had fallen from heaven and had been cut down to earth. The tense of the Hebrew verbs that are translated as "fallen" and "cut down" are both perfects. That is, the actions are completed. That is, Satan had fallen and was no longer in heaven. In Ezekiel 28:16 we are told that Satan was cast from the mountain of God. The actual Hebrew says that Satan was "defiled" or "fatally wounded." The verb is an imperfect. It refers to a past ongoing event that is also described in Revelation 12:4. In that passage we are told that one-third of the angels in heaven joined Satan and all of them were thrown down to the earth. This may suggest that a battle occurred in heaven similar to the future event that is described in Revelation 12:7-9 which will occur near the end of the tribulation period. A number of Bibles have translated the Hebrew as Satan being banished or cast from heaven.

It is important to note that when Jesus said He was watching Satan fall He used the imperfect tense of the root Greek verb *theoreo* that is translated as *watch*. The imperfect tense normally refers to continuous action in the past. That is, Jesus was actively watching Satan fall in the past. Jesus adds that Satan dropped like lightning. When He said *fall*, Jesus used a aorist participle of the root word *pipto*. The aorist refers to completed action at some point in the past. Therefore, it appears that Jesus spoke about Satan's fall that is recorded in Isaiah and Ezekiel. It is also possible that Jesus was implying that Satan was still falling in the sense that he was continuing to be defeated and would ultimately be cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:1-3). That would help explain Isaiah 14:15, where we are told that Satan will be thrust down to Sheol.

Thus, Jesus told the disciples He was watching when Satan

1. Mark Water. The Encyclopedia of Christian Quotations. Baker Books. 1984. p. 825.

2. F. Godet. The Gospel of Luke. Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1887. p. 298.

3. Walter L Liefeld. Luke. The Expositor's Bible Commentary. Regency Reference Library. 1984. p. 939.

4. Ibid.

5. Joel B Green. The Gospel of Luke. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Eerdmans Publishing. 1997, 419.

6. Ephrem the Syrian. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron. Arthur A Just. Ancient Christian Commentary. InetVarsity Press. 2003. p. 175.

7. R. Kent Hughes. Luke. Crossway Books. 1998. p. 377.

fell in the past. It must have been a spectacular event that He saw - the anointed cherub that covered God and one-third of the angels in heaven being thrown out of heaven. Therefore, when Jesus told the disciples that He watched that event, He communicated that He had an experience that was greater than their experiences. Yes, they cast out demons but that was nothing compared to Jesus watching Satan being cast out of heaven. He was involved in Satan's fall.

REJOICE FOR THE RIGHT REASON. What a masterful response by Christ. The disciples were excited that they had cast out demons, but that was nothing compared to what Jesus had experienced. Then Jesus reminds them that He gave them authority over the demons. They had been given authority over every kind of demon or evil spirit. Nothing in the demonic realm would be able to trouble them.

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. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven." Luke 10:19-20 (NASB)

When Jesus said they had power over serpents and scorpions, He referred to different types of demons. This becomes obvious when He says "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the *spirits* are subject to you . . ." That is, do not rejoice that you have victory over *spirits* which are evil spirits, evil angels or demons.

Why did Jesus rebuke the disciples? The disciples were rejoicing that they had the power to cast out demons. Jesus knew they had a sense of empowerment. Oh, they knew that the power did not come from within them. We can be sure that they knew the demons were subject to them in His name. But, deep within they felt that they were something special. Maybe they thought, "Look at us!" They were arrogant and felt that *they* had made the ministry a "success." They had a sense of being special. They were God's men!

NAMES ARE RECORDED IN HEAVEN. Then at the right moment Jesus said, "Rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven!" Jesus' comment reveals what scripture has already recorded. That is, the names of the followers of God, or the

saints, are recorded in heaven. The Psalmist wrote these words,

You have taken account of my wanderings;
Put my tears in your bottle.
Are they not in your book?
Psalm 56:8 (NASB)

God is keeping a record of everything we do and every emotion we experience. In Psalm 139 we are told that God is keeping a record of our days.

Your eyes have seen my unformed substance;
And in Your book were all written
The days that were ordained for me,
When as yet there was not one of them.
Psalm 139:16 (NASB)

In Matthew 12:36 Jesus reveals that there is a divine record of every person's words,

I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. Matthew 12:36 (NASB)

Revelation 20:12-13 tells us that some day the deeds of every non-Christian will be evaluated.

And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Revelation 20:12-13 (ESV)

In summary, God is keeping a record of everything that occurs in our life: our tears, words and sins. We are also told that those who are going to heaven have had their names written in the Book of Life since the beginning of time. The

existence of a Book of Life occurs throughout the scriptures. It appears first in Exodus 32:32-33 and then again in Psalm 69:28. In the New Testament appears in Philippians 4:3.

Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. Philippians 4:3 (NASB)

It appears five times in the book of Revelation. In Revelation 13:8 we are told that the Book of Life was written before everything was created.

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. Revelation 13:8 (NASB)

In Revelation 20:15 and 21:27 we are told that if someone's name is not in the book, they will go to the Lake of Fire for eternal punishment.

When Jesus told His disciples that their names were recorded in the Book of Life, that must have been a great encouragement to the men. Jesus' statement also revealed that the greatest blessing in our life is not our ministry for Christ or our personal "successes." The greatest blessing is that Christians are going to heaven because we cannot make that happen. Therefore, the next time you want to share some blessing in your life that you have received from God, do not forget to remember first that your name is recorded in the Book of Life. Then tell others that God worked the ministry through you. They should thank Him and not you.

At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit . . ." Luke 10:21 (NASB)

REJOICED IN THE SPIRIT. Then Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit. What an amazing statement for us. This simple statement hints at some truths about the man Jesus Christ. We will not discuss them in depth here but only mention briefly a few of them.

First, Jesus' statement reveals that He lived life on planet earth as a human being in total dependence upon the Holy Spirit. That was and is God's plan for every Christian as revealed in Ephesians 5:17-18 and Galatians 5:16-23. Ephesians 5:17-18 reveals it is God's will that every Christian be filled with the Holy Spirit.

So many Christians want to know God's will for their lives. Well, here it is! God's will for your life is that you would be filled with the Holy Spirit. That is, He wants the Holy Spirit to be in control of every Christian's life. Ephesians 5:17-18 refers to a momentary filling of the Holy Spirit. Then in Galatians 5:16-23 we are told that if we seek to be filled each and every moment, that is constantly filled, we will not be constantly sinning. Galatians 5:16 calls the moment-by-moment filling of the Holy Spirit "walking in the Spirit". Then in verses 17-21 we are told that we will not be constantly sinning and verses 22-23 tell us how the Holy Spirit will change us. That is, He will begin to produce "love, joy, peace, patience, etc.

Here in Luke 10:21 we discover that Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit. Other passages in the New Testament reveal that Jesus was filled all the time by the Holy Spirit from His birth, during His ministry, at His death and His resurrection. (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:35; 3:22; 4:1, 14, 18; 10:21; Acts 1:2; 2:22; 10:38; Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 3:18). Jesus, the man, was constantly filled with the Holy Spirit. That is how every Christian should also live their life. That is how every Christian can achieve victory over sin and see the fruit of the Spirit blossom in their lives.

The second important truth of that simple statement is that Jesus did live His life as a man. When He came to earth, He came to live life as you and I would, but yet, He was sinless. His divine glory was hidden. John 17:5 states that He had glory, the Shekhinah glory, before He was born on our planet. Philippians 2:7 reveals that it was hidden while walked among us, except for a brief moment on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8). He limited the use of His divine knowledge (Matthew 24:36; Luke 2:52, 40) and power (Luke 5:17). In brief, He limited Himself so that He could experience what it was like to live like us. Hebrews 5:8 says that He even learned what it was like to obey. Because

He chose to live like us, He prayed as we do to the Father (Matthew 26:36; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:18-19; 22:32; John 17:1). He could have communicated His requests to the Father by His thoughts, but then He would not have lived His life like us. Therefore, He prayed audibly or with His thoughts as we do (Ecclesiastes 5:2). Jesus lived His life, like us, totally dependent upon the Holy Spirit. Here we are told that He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit. That is, the Holy Spirit gave Him great joy. Wow! What an experience that must have been. We should note that joy is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

... 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." Luke 10:21 (NASB)

HIDDEN FROM THE INTELLIGENT. One wonders how the disciples reacted to Jesus' statement that God the Father had "hidden these things" from the wise and intelligent. Note that Jesus' statement proves that wisdom and intelligence are not identical. One can be a graduate of an elite university but be very foolish. How sad it is today that so many think that their great intelligence will help them discern the mysteries of God. Some do not seem to understand that they cannot know if there is an invisible world since an invisible cannot be seen or detected. Human eyes cannot see into an invisible world. How foolish it is to think that they can know and see the invisible. When Jesus said that He saw Satan fall from heaven, He saw that in the invisible world. Intelligence cannot help you see that. But wisdom understands that it cannot be known. Wisdom helps one discern the existence of an invisible world. In Romans 1:20-22 we are reminded that God is invisible and the human eye cannot see Him. Some claim that a Soviet cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin, had orbited the earth in a capsule and declared that He did not see God.⁸ If the event is true, he did not make a wise comment. He missed the grandeur of the universe and the unexplainable in the universe. Unfortunately, many pseudo-scientists manipulate facts to support their anti-God

viewpoint. They cannot prove God does not exist. In order to do that, they would have to search the entire visible and invisible universe to discover if in fact He does exist. Romans 1:20-22 describes their condition.

For His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, a being understood through what He has made. As a result, people are without excuse. For though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became nonsense, and their senseless minds were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools . . . Romans 1:20-22 (NASB)

The truth is that there are many intelligent people who are very foolish. One of the well-known atheists of our times, Richard Dawkins, when asked if he believed that there was a God who created humans, said God did not exist and it did not happen. Then he was asked how did humans come into existence? He said that aliens from another planet put us on planet earth. His comment revealed that he was open to the concept of aliens placing humans on earth as long as the alien was not God.⁹ Intelligence does not guarantee wisdom, nor does it insulate one against bias. It is very common for the elite of society to reveal their low view of Christians and God. But the elite of society are foolish. God has told us that those who reject the concept of God are fools.

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." Psalm 14:1 (NASB)

In Luke 10:21, when Jesus said, "You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants," He was not saying that God hides spiritual truth from the intelligent and wise. There are many very brilliant men and women who believe in God. Some of them are Noble prize winners and scientists at prestigious universities and research laboratories. Some are famous literary authors and inventors such as Francis Collins, Johannes Kepler, Galileo, Lise Meitner, Sir Francis Bacon and Mike Hulme.¹⁰

9. Ben Stein. Expelled (DVD). Statements are made at the end of the DVD.

10. archives.relevantmagazine.com/comment/405285

8. https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Yuri_Gagarin

It is important to note that when Jesus said "infants," the Greek word that He used was *neipos*. The word refers to children whose age is about 3 or 4 years. Jesus did not expect the disciples or us to understand that He was saying such young children could understand the complexity of His teaching about the demonic world. He was not referring to actual children but to Christians. In Matthew 18:1-4 Jesus used children as a symbol of those who humbly believe in God. That is exactly what Jesus did on this occasion. He was comparing the spiritually dead to those who are spiritually alive.

It is also true that the proud will reject any concept of God. In both cases, God will not reveal Himself to them, unless it is part of His plan. Our invisible God is in the business of revealing Himself to those who humbly and seriously seek Him. Why would He reveal Himself to God rejecting men and women or to Christians who are not really committed to Him? So, God the Father hides Himself and other spiritual truths from those who are not interested in discovering God and knowing Him.

CANNOT KNOW GOD BY SELF-EFFORT. In the next verse, Luke 10:22, Jesus continues talking about the "infants" and says that God the Father reveals Himself to them. So, verse 21 says that the Father reveals Himself to "infants" and verse 22 says that these "infants" are allowed to discover Jesus. That is, the "infants" are Christians. This is identical to Jesus' teaching in John 6:65, 45 and 37. These "infants" were in God the Father's plan to become Christians from before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:3-4).

In verse 22, Jesus reveals that He has been given all power and, consequently, no one can know Himself or the Father without Jesus' help.

All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and 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. Luke 10:22 (NASB)

Jesus' comment is incredibly important. He reveals that God the Father and God the Son know each other. He also reveals that we cannot know Jesus Christ, unless He wants us to know Him. The word "choose" comes from the Greek

word *boulomai*. The word means "to will, to want, to wish". That is, God the Father cannot be seen, cannot be known unless Jesus Christ wishes or wants us to know Him. That is, Jesus Christ is the One who gives us permission to know God the Father.

In these two verses Jesus reveals two truths. First, God the Father selectively reveals Himself and, second, hides spiritual truths. Now you might think that He reveals everything to Christians, but that is not true. In John 14:21, Jesus says that He will disclose Himself only to those who keep His commands and love Him. That includes Christians! He hides truth even to disobedient Christians. Now you might not approve. You might wish that God would just reveal Himself to you because you want to know more about Him. But stop and think for a moment. Why would anyone openly share personal information just because someone wants them to? I disclose myself to those who love me and demonstrate that they love me. I do not disclose myself to just anyone. God does the same thing. He discloses Himself to family members, that is, Christians. How can one recognize a Christian? The answer is that a Christian loves God and consequently, obeys Him.

Turning to the disciples, He said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see, 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." Luke 10:23-24 (NASB)

BLESSED ARE YOUR EYES. Jesus had been speaking publicly and those who were nearby had heard His comments. We are told He turned to the disciples and spoke privately. Jesus did not want whoever was nearby to hear Him. He tells them that they were blessed that they had seen the things that they seen. The Greek word that is translated as "see" is *blepo*. Since the tense of the word is a present participle, this reveals that Jesus was referring to those things that they had been seeing during His ministry and probably their most recent experience of casting out demons. I suspect that many Christians would like to see a demon expelled, have watched Jesus' miracle healings and heard His incredible teaching.

The disciples were truly blessed because they were the first ones to experience these events. Jesus explains that the reason they were blessed was because prophets and kings had wanted to experience what they were experiencing. Prophets and kings had been moved by the Holy Spirit to write scripture (2 Peter 1:20-21) and in the process they had gained insight into the future about Jesus Christ. Yet, according to 1 Peter 1:10-12, they wanted to know more; but they were told they could not. Notice the message of the following three verses,

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. 1 Peter 1:10-12 (NASB)

Kings and prophets were told that they could not understand more since the things that they wrote were for us and not them. Who were those kings and prophets? King David wrote about the sufferings of Christ in Psalm 16:8-11; 110:1; 132:11, for example. These verses are quoted in Acts 2:25-28, 30 and 34-35 in reference to Christ's death and resurrection. There are numerous other passages (Psalm 22:16, 18; 41:9).

The prophets spoke of the coming suffering of Christ in many passages (Isaiah 50:6; 53:1-12; Zechariah 12:10; 13:7).

CONCLUSION. They were blessed because they were able to see the prophecies fulfilled with their eyes. Note that Jesus started with a rebuke and ends with encouragement. The disciples were thinking about what they were able to do and Jesus ends with what God had done for them! This is a great lesson for us. We should always thank God for the positive events as well as the negative events in our service to Christ, unless the negatives are the result of our personal sins. We are to give thanks in all things (1 Thessalonians 5:16, 18; James 1:2-4).

Paul and James remind us that it is God who accomplishes all good things,

I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. 1 Corinthians 3:6-9 (NASB)

Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. James 1:16-17 (NASB)