

**The 72 evangelists have returned from their mission; it has been a success, and Jesus is pleased. Filled with joy, God the Son rejoices in the will of His Father and lifts up an expression of thanksgiving and praise. In these four verses, Jesus plums the depths of theological thought, from the Trinity, to the sovereign will of God and the doctrine of election. I ask that you listen to this sermon carefully, there may be doctrines that are explained in a way you've never heard before; please, be patient and listen prayerfully. Let us pray now for grace and understanding.**

**Luke 10:21-24—** *In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>22</sup> 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." <sup>23</sup> Then turning to the disciples he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! <sup>24</sup> 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."*

Looking back on my life, I see the hand of God bringing elders into my life and investing their lives in mine. One of these elders exposed me to the theology of the Reformation and the teaching of well-trained Bible scholars. He took me to the last Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology to be held in Pittsburgh. During this two-day series of seminars, I was exposed to the deep doctrines of grace taught by gifted and faithful teachers of the Word of God, such as, James Boice, R. C. Sproul and John Gerstner, the man who was the theological mentor to Sproul. Their teaching was delivered with power and winsomeness. And with clarity and skill, doctrines were presented that were hard to grasp, especially the absolute sovereignty of God and the doctrine of election. But the Spirit of God was at work in my heart and I saw that the exposition of these gracious men was plainly derived from the Scripture. I had to acknowledge this fact, even if I did not fully understand, or like it. My theological curiosity was piqued, and I began to study the Bible in earnest, taking hard, but sincere questions to pastors and the Scriptures. The result was a richer understanding of God's Word, a greater appreciation of Reformed Theology, and those men who faithfully preach and teach it. Many Christians shy away from deep theological study and discussion because such may lead to division. Yet, The Apostle Paul tells the young pastor, Timothy: **1 Timothy 4:16—*Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both***

***yourself and your hearers.*** The manner in which we live is directly related to the doctrines we understand and believe. So, let us do the hard work of unpacking the deep truths Jesus gives us in these four verses.

### **THE TRINITY**

This passage may correctly be identified as a trinitarian passage. Verse 21 has in it, all three persons of the Trinity: ***In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, . . .***

Jesus had commissioned 72 other messengers, besides the twelve; they have returned after sharing the message peace, that the kingdom of God was near. These disciples come back reporting great success and Jesus rejoices in the Holy Spirit. This is significant and indicates that the God-Man, Jesus, accomplished His mission by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the History of Israel, those called to serve in the offices of prophet, priest, and king were anointed by the Holy Spirit, equipping them for service to which the Lord called them. Two of these offices, the priest and king, had outward ceremonial washings, anointings, that reflected the inner anointing of the Spirit. Jesus serves in all three offices; He was anointed at His baptism. In order to identify the Christ, John the Baptist was to look for a dove that would descend upon the one who is the Christ of God. This image depicted the Holy Spirit who filled the Lord Jesus without measure. At His baptism, God the Father, spoke. **Matthew 3:16-17—*As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. <sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”*** By the Spirit of God, Jesus had intimate fellowship with His Father.

**Theologians distinguish between the Ontological Trinity and the Economic Trinity.**

**Ontological Trinity—Ontology is the study of “being.”** The true God exists; He is. “I am that I am!” He tells Moses. God is one divine being, as expressed by the Shema, “Hear O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is One.” (Deut. 6:4). The One True God is revealed in three persons, The Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is not a contradiction to say God is one Divine Being, revealed in three Divine Persons, each sharing those attributes that make God, God. The Westminster Shorter Catechism gives a good definition: **Question 4—*What is God?* Answer—*God is a Spirit,***

*infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.* Three incommunicable attributes, Infinite, eternal, unchangeable are noted along with the rest that are communicable to people.

**The One God expresses the principle of the One and the Many**, especially in the creation of man. **Genesis 1:26-27**—*Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*<sup>27</sup> *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

**Let that last statement sink in!** God created man in his own image. How? He created them, male and female. Marriage is the most profound expression of the Trinity, where two unique individuals come together and in sexual union, they become one, body and soul. The attacks on marriage and gender in this day is an attack on the very nature of God.

**The Economic Trinity—Here, we study the division of labor**, or the work of creation and redemption by each of the divine persons. The Father is viewed as the source of Creation, also, planning a great salvation, through the person and work of the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit, who applies the work of the Father and the Son to the souls of believers.

**Colossians 1:15-20—(speaking of Jesus):** *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.*<sup>16</sup> *For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.*<sup>17</sup> *And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.* For some cults, Jesus, as first born is seen as proof of His being a created being, but it is not. Rather, as God the Son, He is heir to all things. ***How can Jesus be the image (icon) of the invisible God, in whom the fullness of God dwells, if He is not divine?*** **Note:** If Jesus is a created being, then verse 16 is a false statement, because all things were not created by Him, if He, too is a created being.

**He made all things and He is the Redeemer:**<sup>18</sup> *And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.*<sup>19</sup> *For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,*<sup>20</sup> *and*

*through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

**So with this in mind, we see Jesus expressing the Joy of the Lord. God the Son, Jesus, is moved to joy by the God the Holy Spirit; and The Son raises praise to God the Father.**

**Mutually Exclusive Knowledge of Each Other.** <sup>22</sup> *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.”* Here we see the truth about the knowledge we have of the Father and the Son as being qualitatively different than ours. ***No human being can or will know the Son like the Father does, and no one can or will know the Father like the Son. Jesus is the essential Son of God and He reserves the right to reveal the Father to those He chooses. If we have faith in Christ and possess salvation, we have a true knowledge of the Father and Son and are adopted children of God.***

**This passage reveals the truths of the Trinity; reflect on this. We also find Jesus expressing truth about the about. . .**

#### **THE WILL OF GOD AND ELECTION**

***“I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.***

Jesus mentions some hard things about the will of God, concealing truths from some and revealing it to others. ***Theologians distinguish between the secretive, or decretive (decrees) will of God and his revealed will.***

This distinction was seen by Moses, who declared that many who left Egypt continued in rebellion because God had not given them, “. . . a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.” (Deut. 29:4). **Deuteronomy 29:29**—“*The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

There are things we wish to know about for which we may never get answers. In the midst of trial or pain we cry out, “Why?” But many of those questions will go unanswered; they are the secret things that belong to God. But there are things revealed about His will are for us and are children. In our passage this morning, Jesus expresses joy and reveals some things in God’s will that many don’t like

He has hidden, “these things,” that is, the truths of the Good News that the 72 have proclaimed. Jesus praises God for keeping these hidden, or concealing them *“from the wise and understanding.”* That is, from those who believe themselves to have the true knowledge of God and salvation but have rejected the Christ of God. Hear this, God is active in concealing the Gospel from these people. Instead, He is revealing the Gospel to others, who have received His messengers like

In His commentary on these verses, Dr. R.C. Sproul gives his testimony of coming to grips with these deep doctrines. In seminary, I took a course in the theology of Jonathan Edwards. That was my first mistake. I took it under the tutelage of the United States’ leading authority on Jonathan Edwards (John Gerstner). That was my second mistake. My third mistake was to write a little note that I put on my desk that said: ***“You are responsible to believe, to teach, and to preach what the Bible says is the Word of God. What the Bible says is true, not what you want it to say.”*** You combine those three mistakes, and it was three strikes and I was out. By the time Edwards was through with me, he took Paul’s epistles, and particularly Romans, and particularly Romans 9, and thoroughly convinced me of election and predestination. “OK,” I said, “that’s what the Bible teaches. I have to accept it, but I don’t have to like it.”

Sproul, R.C.. Luke: An Expository Commentary (p. 302). Reformation Trust Publishing. Kindle Edition.

**Romans 9:6-21**—*But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,<sup>7</sup> and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”<sup>8</sup> This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.<sup>9</sup> For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.”<sup>10</sup> And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac,<sup>11</sup> though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—<sup>12</sup> she was told, “The older will serve the younger.”<sup>13</sup> As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”<sup>14</sup> What shall we say then? Is*

there injustice on God's part? By no means! <sup>15</sup> For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." <sup>16</sup> **So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.** <sup>17</sup> For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." <sup>18</sup> So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. <sup>19</sup> You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" <sup>20</sup> But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" <sup>21</sup> Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

**R. C Sproul**—Some say that God is a gentleman. He will not impose His will on people. He'll offer Himself to anybody who wants Him, but unless they come on their own free will, He will leave them to their own devices, because God can't violate the free will of the sinner. The problem with this view is that it leads to the conclusion that no one will be saved, because if God leaves everybody in the state that they are without intruding Himself into their sinful nature, they have no hope of salvation. Remember, we are by nature children of the darkness, dead in our sin and trespasses, and Jesus told Nicodemus plainly that unless God the Holy Spirit regenerates us, we will not and we cannot come to Christ (John 3:5–8; Eph. 2:1–3). In ourselves, we cannot, because we will not, come to Christ, and we're not able to do what we don't want to do. That's what free will means. Sproul, R.C.. Luke: An Expository Commentary (p. 303). Reformation Trust Publishing. Kindle Edition.

**Philippians 2:12-13**—Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

**Ephesians 1:11-14**—In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, <sup>12</sup> so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup> In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.