

Luke: 10:21–28

From Catena Aurea:

10:21–22

21. In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

22. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

THEOPHYLACT. As a loving father rejoices to see his sons do right, so Christ also rejoices that His Apostles were made worthy of such good things. Hence it follows, In that hour, &c.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. He saw in truth that through the operation of the Holy Spirit, which He gave to the holy Apostles, the acquisition of many would be made, (or that many would be brought to the faith.) He is said therefore to have rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, that is, in the results which came forth through the Holy Spirit. For as one who loved mankind He considered the conversion of sinners to be a subject for rejoicing, for which He gives thanks. As it follows, I give thanks unto thee, O Father.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. Now here, say they whose hearts are perverted, the Son gives thanks to the Father as being inferior. But what should prevent the Son of the same substance with the Father from praising His own Father, who saves the world by Him? But if you think that because of His giving thanks He shews Himself to be inferior, observe, that He calls Him His Father, and the Lord of heaven and earth.

TITUS BOSTRENSIS. (non occ.) For all other things have been produced by Christ from nothing, but He alone was incomprehensibly begotten of His Father; Who therefore of the Only-begotten alone, as a true Son, is by nature the Father. Hence He alone says to His Father, I give thanks to thee, O Father, Lord, &c. that is, I glorify thee. Marvel not that the Son glorifies the Father. For the whole substance of the Only-begotten is the glory of the Father. For both those things which were created, and the Angels, are the glory of the Creator. But since these are placed too low in respect of His dignity, the Son alone, since He is perfect God like His Father, perfectly glorifies His Father.

ATHANASIUS. (con. Greg. Sabell. 3. con. gentes 6.) We know also that the Saviour often speaks as man. For His divine nature has human nature joined to it, yet you would not, because of His clothing Himself with a body, be ignorant that He was God. But what do they answer to this, who wish to make out a substance of evil, but form to themselves another God, other than the true Father of Christ? And they say that he is unbegotten, the creator of evil and prince of iniquity, as well as the maker of the world's fabric. (Gen. 1:1.) Now our Lord, affirming the word of Moses, says, I give thanks unto thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth.

EPIPHANIUS. (adv. Hær. 42.) But a Gospel composed by Marcion has, "I give thanks to Thee, O Lord," being silent as to the words of heaven and earth, and the word Father, lest it should be supposed that He calls the Father the Creator of the heaven and the earth.

AMBROSE. Lastly, he unveils the heavenly mystery by which it pleased God to reveal His grace, rather to the little ones than the wise of the world. Hence it follows, That thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent.

THEOPHYLACT. The distinction may be, that it is said, the wise, meaning, the Pharisees and Scribes who interpret the law, and the prudent, meaning those who were taught by the Scribes, for the wise man is he who teaches, but the prudent man he who is taught; but the Lord calls His disciples babes, whom He chose not from the teachers of the law, but out of the multitude, and by calling, fishermen; babes, that is, as devoid of malice.

AMBROSE. Or by a babe we should here understand one who knew nothing of exalting himself, and of boasting in proud words of the excellence of his wisdom, as the Pharisees often do.

THEOPHYLACT. The mysteries then were hid from those who think themselves wise, and are not; for if they had been, these would have been revealed to them.

ORIGEN. For a feeling of deficiency is the preparation for coming perfection. For whoever by the presence of the apparent good perceives not that he is destitute of the true good, is deprived of the true good.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. 38. in Matt.) Now He does not rejoice and give thanks because the mysteries of God were hid from the Scribes and Pharisees, (for this were not a subject of rejoicing, but of lament,) but for this cause gives He thanks, that what the wise knew not, babes knew. But moreover He gives thanks to the Father, together with whom He Himself does this, to shew the great love wherewith He loves us. He

explains in the next place, that the cause of this thing was first His own will and the Father's, who of His own will did this. As it follows, Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. 38. in Matt.) But after He had said, I thank thee that thou hast revealed them to babes, lest you should suppose that Christ was destitute of the power to do this, He adds, All things are delivered to me of my Father.

ATHANASIUS. (Tract. in Matt. 11:22.) The followers of Arius, not rightly understanding this, rave against our Lord, saying, If all things were given to him, that is, the dominion of the creatures, there was a time when He had them not, and so was not of the substance of the Father. For if He had been, there would be no need for Him to receive. But hereby is their madness the rather detected. For if before He had received them, the creature was independent of the Word, how will that verse stand, In him all things consist? (Col. 4:17.) But if as soon as the creatures were made, they were all given to Him, where was the need to give, for by him were all things made? (John 13.) The dominion of the creation is not then, as they think, here meant, but the words signify the dispensation made in the flesh. For after that man sinned, all things were confounded; the Word then was made flesh, that He might restore all things. All things therefore were given Him, not because He was wanting in power, but that as Saviour He should repair all things; that as by the Word all things at the beginning were brought into being, so when the Word was made flesh, He should restore all things in Himself.

AMBROSE. Or, when you read all things, you acknowledge the Almighty, not the Son lower than the Father; when you read delivered, you confess the Son, to whom by the nature of one substance all things rightly belong, not conferred as a gift by grace.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. Now having said that all things were given Him by His Father, He rises to His own glory and excellence, shewing that in nothing He is surpassed by His Father. Hence He adds, And no one knoweth who the Son is but the Father, &c. For the mind of the creatures is not able to comprehend the manner of the Divine substance, which passes all understanding, and His glory transcends our highest contemplations. By Itself only is known what the Divine nature is. Therefore the Father, by that which He is, knoweth the Son; the Son, by that which He is, knoweth the Father, no difference intervening as regards the Divine nature. And in another place. For that God is, we believe, but what He is by nature, is incomprehensible. But if the Son was created, how could He alone know the Father, or how could He be known only by the Father. For to know the Divine nature is impossible to any creature, but to know each created thing what it is, does not surpass every understanding, though it is far beyond our senses.

ATHANASIUS. (Orat. 1. cont. Arian.) But though our Lord says this, it is plain that the Arians object to Him, saying, that the Father is not seen by the Son. But their folly is manifest, as if the Word did not know Himself which reveals to all men the knowledge of the Father and Himself; for it follows, And to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

TITUS BOSTRENSIS. Now a revelation is the communication of knowledge in proportion to each man's nature and capacity; and when indeed the nature is congenial, there is knowledge without teaching; but here the instruction is by revelation.

ORIGEN. (non occ.) He wishes to reveal as the Word, not without the exercise of reason; and as Justice, who knoweth rightly both the times for revealing, and the measures of revelation; but He reveals by removing the opposing veil from the heart, (2 Cor. 3:15) and the darkness which He has made His secret place. (Ps. 18:11.) But since upon this men who are of another opinion think to build up their impious doctrine, that in truth the Father of Jesus was sent down to the ancient saints, we must tell them that the words, To whomsoever the Son will reveal him, not only refer to the future time, after our Saviour uttered this, but also to the past time. But if they will not take this word reveal for what is past, they must be told, that it is not the same thing to know and to believe. To one is given by the Spirit the word of knowledge; to another faith by the same Spirit. (1 Cor. 12:8, 9.) There were then those who believed, but did not know.

AMBROSE. But that you may know that as the Son revealed the Father to whom He will, the Father also reveals the Son to whom He will, hear our Lord's words, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

10:23–24

23. And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:

24. For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. He turns to them indeed, since He rejected the Jews, who were deaf, with their understandings blinded, and not wishing to see, and gives Himself wholly to those who love Him; and He

pronounces those eyes blessed which see the things no others had seen before. We must however know this, that seeing does not signify the action of the eyes, but the pleasure which the mind receives from benefits conferred. For instance, if any one should say, He hath seen good times, that is, he has rejoiced in good times, according to the Psalm, Thou shall see the good of Jerusalem. (Ps. 128:5.) For many Jews have seen Christ performing divine works, that is to say, with their bodily sight, yet all were not fitted to receive the blessing, for they believed not; but these saw not His glory with their mental sight. Blessed then are our eyes, since we see by faith the Word who is made man for us, shedding upon us the glory of His Godhead, that He may make us like unto Him by sanctification and righteousness.

THEOPHYLACT. Now He blesses them, and all truly who look with faith, because the ancient prophets and kings desired to see and hear God in the flesh, as it follows; For I say unto you, that many prophets and kings have desired, &c. (Matt. 13:17.)

CHRYSOSTOM. (in Joan. Hom. 8.) Now from this saying many imagine that the prophets were without the knowledge of Christ. But if they desired to see what the Apostles saw, they knew that He would come to men, and dispense those things which He did. For no one desires what he has no conception of; they therefore knew the Son of God. Hence He does not merely say, They desired to see me, but those things which ye see, nor to hear me, but those things which ye hear. For they saw Him, but not yet Incarnate, nor thus conversing with men, nor speaking with such authority to them.

ORIGEN. (in Cant. 1:2.) But why does he say that many prophets desired, and not all? Because it is said of Abraham, That he saw the day of Christ and was glad, (John 8:56.) which sight not many, but few attained to; but there were other prophets and just men not so great as to reach to Abraham's vision, and the experience of the Apostles, who, He says, saw not, but desired to see.

10:25–28

25. And, behold, a certain Lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26. He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27. And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. For there were in fact certain men who then went about the whole country of the Jews bringing charges against Christ, and saying that He spoke of the commands of Moses as useless, and Himself introduced certain strange doctrines. A lawyer then, wishing to entrap Christ into saying something against Moses, comes and tempts Him, calling Him Master, though not bearing to be His disciple. And because our Lord was wont to speak to those who came to Him concerning eternal life, the lawyer adopts this kind of language. And since he tempted Him subtly, he receives no other answer than the command given by Moses; for it follows, He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

AMBROSE. For he was one of those who think themselves skilled in the law, and who keep the letter of the law, while they know nothing of its spirit. From a part of the law itself our Lord proves them to be ignorant of the law, shewing that at the very first the law preached the Father and the Son, and announced the sacraments of the Lord's Incarnation; for it follows, And he answering said, Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.

BASIL. (in Ps. 44.) By saying, with all thy mind, he does not admit of any division of love to other things, for whatever love you cast on lower things necessarily takes away from the whole. For as a vessel full of liquid, whatever flows therefrom must so much diminish its fulness; so also the soul, whatever love it has wasted upon things unlawful, has so much lessened its love to God.

GREGORY OF NYSSA. (de Hom. Opif. c. 8.) the soul is divided into three faculties; one merely of growth and vegetation, such as is found in plants; another which relates to the senses, which is preserved in the nature of irrational animals; but the perfect faculty of the soul is that of reason, which is seen in human nature. By saying then the heart, He signified the bodily substance, that is, the vegetative; by the soul the middle, or the sensitive; but by saying the mind, the higher nature, that is, the intellectual or reflective faculty.

THEOPHYLACT. We must hereby understand that it becomes us to submit every power of the soul to the divine love, and that resolutely, not slackly. Hence it is added, And with all thy strength.

MAXIMUS. To this end then the law commanded a threefold love to God, that it might pluck us away from the threefold fashion of the world, as touching possessions, glory, and pleasure, wherein also Christ was tempted.

BASIL. (Reg. fus. ad int. 2.) But if any one ask how the love of God is to be obtained, we are sure that the love of God cannot be taught. For neither did we learn to rejoice in the presence of light, or to embrace life, or to love our parents and children; much less were we taught the love of God, but a certain seminal principle was implanted in us, which has within itself the cause, that man clings to God; which principle the teaching of the divine commands is wont to cultivate diligently, to foster watchfully, and to carry on to the perfection of divine grace. For naturally we love good; we love also what is our own, and akin to us; we likewise of our own accord pour forth all our affections on our benefactors. If then God is good, but all things desire that good, which is wrought voluntarily, He is by nature inherent in us, and although from His goodness we are far from knowing Him, yet from the very fact that we proceeded forth from Him, we are bound to love Him with exceeding love, as in truth akin to us; He is likewise also a greater benefactor than all whom by nature we love here. (ad int 3.). And again. The love of God then is the first and chief command, but the second, as filling up the first and filled up by it, bids us to love our neighbour. Hence it follows, And thy neighbour as thyself. But we have an instinct given us by God to perform this command, as who does not know that man is a kind and social animal? For nothing belongs so much to our nature as to communicate with one another, and mutually to need and love our relations. Of those things then of which in the first place He gave us the seed, He afterwards requires the fruits.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. 32. in 1 Cor.) Yet observe how, almost to the same extent of obedience he requires the performance of each command, For of God he says, with all thy heart. Of our neighbour, as thyself. Which if it were diligently kept, there would be neither slave nor free man, neither conqueror nor conquered, (or rather, neither prince nor subject,) rich nor poor, nor would the devil be even known, for the chaff would rather stand the touch of fire than the devil the fervour of love; so surpassing all things is the constancy of love.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. When the lawyer had answered the things contained in the law, Christ, to whom all things were known, cuts to pieces his crafty nets. For it follows, And he said to him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

ORIGEN. From these words it is undoubtingly gathered, that the life which is preached according to God the Creator of the world, and the Scriptures given by Him, is life everlasting. For the Lord Himself bears testimony to the passage from Deuteronomy, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God; (Deut. 6:5.) and from Leviticus, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (Lev. 19:18.) But these things were spoken against the followers of Valentinus, Basil, and Marcion. For what else did he wish us to do in seeking eternal life, but what is contained in the Law and the Prophets?

From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:

10:21–22 Jesus' Praise to the Father

Jesus Rejoices in the Holy Spirit.

Cyril of Alexandria: He sent them, decorated with apostolic dignity and distinguished by the work of the grace of the Holy Spirit. He gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out. Having performed many miracles, they returned, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us in your name." As I have already said, he was full of joy, or rather of exultation because he knew that those he sent had benefited many, and they, above all others, had learned his glory by experience. Being good and loving to humanity and wishing that all should be saved, he found his reason for rejoicing in the conversion of those who were in error, the enlightenment of those in darkness, and the acknowledgment of his glory by those who were without knowledge and instruction. Commentary on Luke, Homily 65.

Children Ready for Salvation More Than Worldly Wise.

Clement of Alexandria: After we have repented of our sins, renounced our wickedness, and have been purified by baptism, we turn back to the eternal light, as children to their Father. "Rejoicing in the spirit, Jesus said, 'I praise you, Father, God of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to little ones.'" The Educator and Teacher is naming us "little ones," meaning that we are more ready for salvation than the worldly wise who, believing themselves wise, have blinded their own eyes. He cries out in joy and in great delight, as if attuning himself to the spirit of the little ones, "Yes, Father, for such was your good pleasure." That is why he has revealed to little ones what has been hid from the wise and prudent of this world. Christ the Educator 1.6.

The Son Knows the Father Perfectly.

Chrysostom: The proof that the Son knows the Father perfectly rests on the fact that he is "the one who is from God." The Son has clear knowledge of the Father, because he is from God. The fact that he is from God is a sign and indication that he knows him clearly. An inferior essence would not be able to have clear knowledge of a superior essence, even if the difference between them were slight. On the Incomprehensible Nature of God 5.25.

10:23–24 Jesus' Beatitude on the Disciples

The Power of the Kingdom of God.

Cyril of Alexandria: He also gave the holy apostles power and might even to raise the dead, cleanse lepers, heal the sick, and by the laying on of hands to call down from heaven the Holy Spirit on anyone they wanted. He gave them power to bind and to loose people's sins. His words are "I say to you, whatever you will bind on earth, will be bound in heaven. Whatever you will loose on earth, will be loosed in heaven." These are the things we see ourselves possessing. Blessed are our eyes and the eyes of those of all who love him. We have heard his wonderful teaching. He has given us the knowledge of God the Father, and he has shown him to us in his own nature. The things that were by Moses were only types and symbols. Christ has revealed the truth to us. He has taught us that not by blood and smoke, but rather by spiritual sacrifices, we must honor him who is spiritual, immaterial and above all understanding. Commentary on Luke, Homily 67.

10:25 Inheriting Eternal Life

The Mystery of the Incarnation.

Cyril of Alexandria: Anyone who thoroughly understands the mystery of the incarnation may say to the lawyer, "If you were skillful in the law and in the meaning of its hidden teaching, you would not forget who he is you try to tempt. You thought that he was a mere man, only man, and not God who appeared in human likeness, knows what is secret, and can look into the hearts of those who approach him. In many ways Emmanuel is depicted to you by the shadowing of Moses. You saw him there sacrificed as a lamb, yet conquering the destroyer and abolishing death by his blood. You saw him in the arrangement of the ark, in which the divine law was deposited. In his holy flesh he was as in an ark, being the Word of the Father, the Son that was begotten of him by nature. You saw him as the mercy seat in the holy tabernacle, around which stood the seraphim." He is our mercy seat for pardon of our sins. Yes, and even as man he is glorified by the seraphim, who are the intelligent and holy powers above. They stand around his divine and exalted throne. Commentary on Luke, Homily 68.

10:26–28 Love God and One’s Neighbor

Two Wings Hold Teaching Aloft.

Ephrem the Syrian: What is the greatest and first commandment of the law? He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God, and your neighbor as yourself.” ... All this teaching is held high through the two commandments, as though by means of two wings, that is, through the love of God and of humanity. Commentary on Tatian’s Diatessaron 16.23.

To Know the Law is to Know the Incarnation.

Ambrose: With these verses belongs the text that exposes those who seem to themselves to be experts on the law, who keep the letter of the law but disregard its spirit. He teaches that they are ignorant of the law from its very first chapter. He proves this immediately at the beginning of the law. Both the Father and the Son proclaimed and announced the sacrament of the divine incarnation, saying, “You shall love the Lord your God” and “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The Lord said to the lawyer, “Do this, and you shall live.” He who did not know his neighbor, because he did not believe in Christ, answered, “Who is my neighbor?” Whoever does not know Christ does not know the law either. How can he know the law when he is ignorant of the Truth, since the law proclaims the Truth? Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 7.69–70.

The Lawyer Misses His Prey.

Cyril of Alexandria: He says, “What is written in the law? How do you read?” The lawyer repeated what is in the law. As if to punish his wickedness and reprove his malicious purpose, Christ, knowing all things, says, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.” The lawyer missed his prey. He shot off the mark. His wickedness is unsuccessful. The sting of envy ceased. The net of deceit is torn. His sowing bears no fruit, and his toil gains no profit. As some ship overwhelmed by misfortune, he has suffered a bitter shipwreck. Commentary on Luke, Homily 69.