

St. Michael and All Angels – Epistle

“Enlisted Angels”

Luke 10:17-20

St. Michael and All Angels
Analysis by Michael Hoy

17The seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!” 18He said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. 19See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. 20Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

DIAGNOSIS: Behind Enemy Lines

Step One: Initial Diagnosis – *The Joy In Demons Submitting to Us*
Before you think about trudging off to war, as all of us must do each day, think again—for what you are up against are not simple obstacles such as terrorism or cancer or nation-states, but much greater things: principalities and powers, snakes and scorpions, demons, the Enemy. And though successful conquests may come, as they do for the seventy who return, the more fatal blow is misplacing the credit: “Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!” To be sure, the disciples are joyous; but it’s all in the accent of their expression of joy. They misplace that to whom the demons submit—to “us ,” rather than to “you.”

Step Two: Advanced Diagnosis – *Failing in Pride*

The subtler malady is the pride that overtakes the disciples. Having failed to give credit where credit is due, Jesus reminds them that the real power was always elsewhere. “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning.” This all preceded the conquest, without any merit on the part of the disciples. But that has been overlooked. Instead, with the emphasis on “US,” the danger is that we really do not have a clue as to what we are dealing with, or what we are talking about in all our zeal and joy. As the expression goes, pride comes before the fall. But not only Satan falls—we all can fall in our misplaced boasting and pride.

Step Three: Final Diagnosis – *Losing the War*

Is it possible that in winning the battle, the disciples can lose the war? In our misplaced joy and pride, we can end up standing behind enemy lines. When the emphasis is on “us” and not on God and God’s kingdom, when the war is over, we may find ourselves standing on the wrong side of the tracks—still behind enemy lines. Indeed, when we misplace the joy, the Evil One can find reason to be pleased about our staying behind his lines, his ranks; and then, when the odds are more overwhelming, never letting us think that we will ever succeed again—at anything. Finally, when the war is over, we find that we have not submitted to God and God’s plan. And God will exercise the right judgment upon such evil.

PROGNOSIS: Victory over the Enemy

Step Four: Initial Prognosis – *Christ, Our Hero*

But that—that judgment—is precisely where Christ steps into the breach. Evil is overthrown, and also the Final Accusation is conquered through our Hero, Jesus the Christ. He rescues us from the clutches of the Evil One by claiming us in his authority, and he places himself in the line of the fire of accusation.

Through his valiant work, Our Hero, Jesus, gets us beyond enemy lines, on to the side of victory and promise under the kingdom of God.

Step Five: Advanced Prognosis – *Listed “in-Christ”*

That is where we are “listed” when the final count is taken. We are not MIA, or worse, left for dead, but our names are “written in heaven.” As those for whom our Hero gave his life so that we might live, we are never more under the clutches of evil or abandoned to the judgment of final accusation. We are alive as he is alive and risen from the dead. “Nothing will hurt you,” Jesus says to us. In his name and by his authority, we are listed as his own.

Step Six: Final Prognosis – *With (Greater) Joy!*

His rescue mission is the cause for the greater joy. What we must battle is great, indeed. But under the sign of his cross, we look to the day of final victory. Furthermore, we are already enlisted as his angels, his messengers, to spread the joy that victory over evil and death is for all nations, for all peoples.