Jesus’ Eschatological Vision of the Fall of Satan: Luke 10,18 Reconsidered1

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For Professor J.D.G. Dunn on his Retirement

Introduction2

Armand Puig Tàrrech describes Luke 10,18 as “a verse as attractive as it is enigmatic”.3 As a result, the verse has usually been regarded as an authentic saying of the historical Jesus,4 but, along with the pericope as a whole

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3 Tärrech, Visió (see n. 1), 243.

4 Spitta, Satan (see n. 1), 160; Vollenweider, Ich sah (see n. 1), 190; Müller, Vision (see n. 1), 419; Merklein, Jesu Botschaft (see n. 1), 60; M. Hengel, The Charismatic Leader and his
(10,17–20), has been found notoriously difficult to interpret. A number of different proposals have been offered. In the patristic era, it was common to see in the verse reference to the eye-witness testimony of the pre-existent Son of God to the pre-historic fall of Satan, on which more below. Since this time, various other suggestions have been made of different occasions for “falls” of Satan from heaven, as well as different occasions for the vision revealed to Jesus. The three principal interpretative options can be categorised as follows: that which refers to a vision of Jesus of a primeval past event; that which refers to a vision of Jesus of an event in the recent past, prior to (or even simultaneous with) the vision; and finally, that which refers to a vision of a future event.

A number of scholars have attempted to distinguish between the original sense of the saying in isolation, and the meaning of the statement in its present Lukan context. Because of the considerable speculation involved in this process, the exclusive focus here will be the meaning of the saying in the context of Luke’s Gospel. The argument pursued here will be that the Lukan Jesus refers to a vision of the eschatological fall of Satan in the last days. This fall of Satan is

Followers, Edinburgh 1996, 65. See Fitzmyer, Luke (see n. 1), 165, for a more comprehensive discussion of secondary literature on the historicity of the saying. One tendency to be avoided is that of A.R.C. Leaney, A Commentary on the Gospel according to St Luke, London 1966, 179, who introduces a lamentable antithesis between Lk 10,18 either being inspired by Isaiah 14 or going back to Jesus.

It is not the case, as is commonly suspected, that the pre-existent reading held sway until the modern period: Calvin, for example, thought that the vision was a prophetic vision during Jesus’ earthly ministry. (J. Calvin, Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke, Edinburgh 1845–46, 2:33.)

There is the grammatical question of whether εκ του ουρανου qualifies the ‘lightning’, or Satan’s fall. Müller, Vision (see n. 1), 418 n. 8, is right to point out here that the question is fairly inconsequential: ‘Auch wenn εκ του ουρανου Teil des Vergleichs mit einem Blitz wäre, so würde doch dieser Vergleich nur dann sinnvoll sein, wenn auch vom Satan selbst der Fall vom Himmel gemeint ist.’ It is unclear why Fitzmyer associates the grammatical connection of “from heaven” to the lightning with Satan’s deposition from the heavenly court (Fitzmyer, Luke (see n. 1), 165–166).

Although Hills, Luke 10,18 (see n. 1), argues intriguingly that the vision is not Jesus’ at all, but rather belongs to the demons as the grammatical subject of ηειροψν. We will see the key problem with this reading below.

R. Bultmann (History of the Synoptic Tradition, Oxford 1968, 161), in examination of the saying in isolation, says that ‘Almost nothing can be said about the originality of this saying, since its meaning is almost lost to us.’ Vollenweider is only slightly more optimistic, but still speculates rather implausibly about how the saying might have a different meaning in isolation from its sense in its present pericope (Ich sah (see n. 1), 189–190). See also Hultgård, Chute (see n. 1), 71. Hultgård argues that the sense of the saying in isolation is eschatological, while in the Lukan context it refers to an event which has already taken place: ‘le logion se réfère alors à un événement qui vient d’avoir lieu, événement qui permet à Jésus et à ses disciples d’accomplir, dans le présent, des exorcismes et qui atteste ainsi la venue du règne de Dieu.’ Cf. also Miyoshi, Anfang (see n. 1), 100–101.
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not only a positive message; Satan falling from heaven implies that he will, temporarily at least, wreak havoc on the earth before his final destruction. Prompted by the disciples’ triumphalism, Jesus reports this to them in order to warn them not to focus on their abilities as exorcists, but rather to rejoice that they are chosen by God. In addition to discussing this line of interpretation, we will examine some of the problems with other approaches to the exegesis of this passage.

I. A Vision of a Primeval Past Event by Jesus?

First, the pre-temporal and primeval views. These interpretations (which in some forms entail the pre-existence of Jesus) have more to be said for them than is usually granted.9 The argument of Zahn, for example, that the pre-existent reading would be impossible because Jesus nowhere else claims to witness historical events prior to his lifetime is misguided;10 Lk 10,18 is after all, unique in form, being the only reference to a vision of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels.11 The two options here consist first of the patristic view of the pre-historic fall of Lucifer, and secondly of the primeval descent of the Nephilim to earth in Gen 6,4, which received so much subsequent elaboration in later Jewish interpretation.

1.1 The Primeval Fall of Satan

The first reference to this interpretation of Lk 10,18 comes in Tertullian in the context of his discussion with those Platonists who deny the validity of the senses. Tertullian brings in the example of Christ himself:

We may not, I say, we may not call into question the truth of the senses, lest we should even in Christ himself bring doubt upon the truth of their sensation; lest it should somehow be said that he did not really “behold Satan as lightning fall from heaven”; that he did not really hear the Father’s voice testifying of himself; or that he was deceived in touching Peter’s wife’s mother; or that the fragrance of the ointment which he afterwards smelled was different from that which he accepted for his burial; and that the taste of the wine was different from that which he consecrated in memory of his blood. (Tertullian, de Anima 17).12

10 T. Zahn, Das Evangelium des Lucas, Leipzig 1913, 420, argues that Jesus experiences all evil spirits submitting and bowing to him. He argues against the “old interpretation” (mentioning Origen, Princ. 1.5.5 in connection with Isaiah 14; De Orat. 26.5; c.Cels. IV,92) on the grounds that elsewhere Jesus never spoke of pre-historical events as of his own experiences. He also made the point that the idea of a sinful fall of Satan is not really spoken of as a plunge from heaven elsewhere in the NT.
11 Thus Bultmann, followed by Müller, Vision (see n. 1), 417; Vollenweider, Ich sah (see n. 1), 191; C.F. Evans, Saint Luke, London 1990, 454.
If this passage does not at first sight seem necessarily to reflect Jesus’ pre-existence in its mention of Lk 10,18, it should be observed that the events attributed to Christ in this passage seem to follow, as it were, a biographical order. First, in his pre-temporal existence, he sees the fall of Satan; the Father’s testimony comes at the baptism (Mk 1,11), the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law is at the beginning of the ministry (Mk 1,30–31), then the anointing of perfume (Mk 14,3), and finally the last supper (Mk 14,12–25).

One passage to which the pre-existent interpretation of Lk 10,18 is often misattributed comes in Origen’s De Principiis. The passage does clearly describe the event of a primeval fall of Satan. First, Origen investigates the oracle against Tyre in Ezek 28,11–19, arguing that since the prophet describes the prince of Tyre in such exalted terms, the prince cannot possibly be a human figure; the reference must be to a heavenly being who fell from grace. ‘Seeing, then, that such are the words of the prophet, who is there that on hearing, “You were a seal of a similitude, and a crown of beauty among the delights of paradise,” or that “From the day when you were created with the cherubim, I placed you on the holy mount of God,” can so enfeeble the meaning as to suppose that this language is used of some man or saint, not to say the prince of Tyre?’ Immediately after, Origen turns his attention to the very similar Isaiah 14. Quoting 14,12–22, he adds:

Most evidently by these words is he who formerly was Lucifer, who used to arise in the morning, shown to have fallen from heaven. For if, as some think, he was a being of darkness, how is Lucifer said to have existed before? Or how could he arise in the morning, if he had in himself nothing of the light? No, as the Saviour Himself teaches us, speaking of the devil, “Behold, I see Satan fallen from heaven like lightning.” For at one time he was light.

Origen uses this passage to demonstrate that Lucifer really had been holy once, when he dwelt in the heavens. Hence the property of holiness here, as in us, is only an accidental, rather than an essential property. However, there is no clear reference to pre-existence here, since according to Origen, Jesus sees in the present (video) that Satan has fallen (cecidisse).

It is Jerome who really emphasises the dimension of pre-existence, however, in his commentary on Isaiah. On Isa 14,12, he writes,

On this the saviour said to his disciples, ‘I saw Satan like lightning, falling from heaven’: not only I see, but I saw formerly, when he fell.

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14 Origen, Princ. I, 5, 5.
15 My translation. For text, see Jerome, Commentarium in Esaiam (CChr.SL 73), Turnhout 1960, 240: ‘Unde et salvator ad discipulos loquitur: Videbam Satanam quasi fulgur de caelo cadentem. Non modo video, sed prius videbam quando corruit.’
Here Jerome takes issue with the line of interpretation taken by Origen.\textsuperscript{16} More recently, however, this view has been challenged on a number of fronts, and currently finds very little support indeed among scholars. One of the few scholars in the twentieth century to follow the pre-existent reading was Kittel, who sees Jesus as claiming ‘pre-existence by open reference or by hint’ in his ministry,\textsuperscript{17} and notes the rise of an alternative interpretation of Lk 10,18, by then almost universally held, which he insisted required reexamination.\textsuperscript{18} One of the key reasons for questioning the patristic understanding has of course been the lack of a pre-existence Christology found by scholars in Luke. Another ground for scepticism about reference to the primeval fall of Satan has been the absence of early Jewish parallels to such a fall. A.R.C. Leaney, for example, talks of the common-place of the final defeat of Satan in early Judaism, ‘but the actual idea of Satan’s falling from heaven occurs much later in Jewish literature, for example in the Palestinian Targum… and in the \textit{Sayings} (\textit{Pirqē}) of Rabbi Eliezer’.\textsuperscript{19} This objection, at least, can be seen to be thoroughly unjustified.

In the Life of Adam and Eve, the primeval fall of Satan is probably envisaged as having taken place on the sixth day of creation. Some time later, after the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden, Eve asks the devil why he has been persecuting them both (11,1–3). The devil replies that he does so because Adam is the source of all his (the devil’s) misfortunes (13,1–2). When Adam was created, Michael required all the angels to worship Adam as God’s image (14,1–2). The devil refused on the grounds that he would not worship a younger being, and the other angels followed the devil in this (14,3–15,2). There then followed threats from Michael:

> And Michael said, ‘Worship the image of God; and if you will not worship him, you will make the Lord God very angry’. And I said, ‘If he is angry with me, I will set my seat above the stars of heaven and I will be like the most high’. And the Lord God was angry with me and banished me and my angels from our glory; and on your account were we driven from our dwelling places into this world and thrown out onto the earth. At this we were overcome with grief, since we had been deprived of so great glory (Life of Adam and Eve 15,2–16,2).

In 2 Enoch, on the other hand, the fall of Satan takes place on the \textit{second} day of creation. This was the day of the creation of the heavenly powers, and Satanail’s fall seems to have taken place almost immediately after his creation, when he decided to exalt himself above God:

\textsuperscript{16} This is not to say that it is Origen personally against whom Jerome is reacting.

\textsuperscript{17} R. Kittel, \textit{λέγω κτλ}, in \textit{TDNT IV}, 130.

\textsuperscript{18} Kittel (\textit{TDNT IV}, 130, n. 220) argues against Zahn, \textit{Evangelium des Lucas} (see n. 9), 420. He also makes reference to his Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn und unser Herr, Berlin 1937, 19 (\textit{non vidi}). F.C. Conybeare also seems to follow the pre-existent interpretation of the saying in his \textit{The Demonology of the New Testament}, \textit{JQR} 8 (1895–96), 578.

(And God said,) ‘And from the rock I cut off a great fire, and from the fire I created the ranks of the bodiless armies, ten myriad angels, and their weapons are fiery and their clothes are burning flames. And I gave orders that each should stand in his own rank. [Here Satanaiel was hurled from the height, together with his angels.] But one from the order of the archangels deviated, together with the division that was under his authority. He thought up the impossible idea that he might place his throne higher than the clouds which are above the earth, and that he might become equal to my power. And I hurled him out from the height, together with his angels. And he was flying around in the air, ceaselessly, above the Bottomless. And thus I created the entire heavens. And the third day came.’ (2En J 29.3–6).

So in both cases, Satan is depicted in terms that evoke the morning star in Isaiah 14, as he plots to ‘set his seat above the stars of heaven’ (Life of Adam and Eve), or to ‘place his throne higher than the clouds’ (2 Enoch). Again, in both cases, Satan receives his due punishment of being cast out from heaven. Whatever reasons there may be for rejecting reference to a primeval fall in Lk 10,18, the religious-historical evidence clearly does not show that such a fall is unlikely in principle.

1.2 A Primeval Fall of the Watchers

The second primeval option envisages a fall not simultaneous with the events of Gen 1–2, but with the events of Gen 6. This latter view is taken by Miyoshi, at least for the logion as an isolated saying. He takes the position that if Lk 10,18 is treated on its own, it is impossible to use one particular passage as background to it: it must be examined in relation the whole nexus of related ideas, and it seems that Miyoshi understands Jesus here to be talking about a vision of the descent of the Nephilim.

1.3 Critique

However, despite some plausibility in the above interpretations, there are problems with attributing to Jesus a role as spectator in such a primeval cosmic drama, whether it be a fall of Satan or of the nephilim.

First, Miyoshi’s reading which sees the watchers in the background probably falls down on the grounds that ‘Satan falling’ would be a strange way to describe the descent of the nephilim. Although there may well have been numerous different versions of the story, in the Book of Watchers, the head of the angelic chiefs is Shemihazah (1En 6.3; cf 4Q201), and it seems to be Asael on...
whom the punishment is focused (1En 10.4–8; 13.1–2), presumably because he
taught men about weapons, leading to war, and taught women about orna-
ments and make-up, which led to fornication (1En 8.1). This should not be
pressed too far, however, since it cannot be ruled out that early Christians were
aware of a leading role for Satan in the fall of the Nephilim.

The bigger problem here with both the primeval views is that while
Lk 10,18 could in isolation refer to a primeval fall, it would in this case make
very little sense in the context of Lk 10,17–20. (As noted in the introduction
above, we are concerned with the saying’s meaning in Luke’s Gospel.) It is very
difficult to see how a vision of the fall of Satan in the terms in which it is de-
scribed in Life of Adam and Eve and 2 Enoch above would fit in that wider
context. Why respond to the success of the disciples with reference to the pri-
meval fall of Satan? The only reason could be that Jesus was simply claiming
that he had seen something more impressive than that which they had wit-
nessed, but which was otherwise largely unrelated. To reply simply by oneup-
manship would seem to be a strange response on Jesus’ part. Just as difficult
is the question of why Jesus would follow a reference to such a fall with the
reassurance of future immunity from evil powers in Luke 10,19. These prob-
lms imply that the reference to a primeval fall of Satan of this kind is unlikely.
While one could interpret Jesus’ statement as trumping the disciples’ claim
to have seen people freed from demon possession by his own claim to a far
more spectacular sight, it is very difficult to see how this would tie in with
Lk 10,19, and with Jesus’ grant to the disciples of authority over the powers of
evil.23

2. A Fall of Satan Prior to the Vision

In view of the fact that both of the primeval interpretations of Satan’s fall
are unlikely, it seems more promising to look, for the content of the vision, to
an event either in Jesus’ ministry or in the eschatological future. It is the
former which has attracted most scholarly support, envisaging that the Jewish
expectation of the fall of Satan has already taken place: ‘Die endzeitliche
Vernichtung des Teufels gehört zum Hoffnungsgut des Judentums. In der Vision
Jesu handelt es sich gewiß auch um ein eschatologisches, aber nun bereits
geschehenes Ereignis.’24 Evans also advocates a dimension of realised eschatol-
ogy here.25 The occasion for a fall of Satan has been located at various points

23 Of course the possibility remains that in its original setting the reference was to a pri-
meval fall of Satan, and that the saying has now been imported into a different context.
But this is extremely difficult to prove, and a number of scholars now see a good deal of
coherence to Lk 10,17–20.

24 Vollenweider, Ich sah (see n. 1), 196. Emphasis his.

25 Evans, Luke (see n. 10), 455, seeing a contrast with the expectation of 1Enoch 16; 54,4–5;
90,21ff; TLevi 18,12; TJud. 25,3; Revelation 12.
in Jesus’ ministry. Interpretation of the event typically takes three forms, depending on whether the focus is on the action of God, of the disciples, or of Jesus himself.

2.1 An Act of God

Ulrich Müller draws a strong distinction between the defeat of Satan in, and his expulsion from heaven, while seeing on the other hand his activity on earth as continuing, in particular through the work of demons. The occasion of Satan’s defeat in heaven, however, is uncertain: certainly it has nothing to do with Jesus or the disciples. God has simply demonstrated his greater power by acting in heaven so as to bring about this fall of Satan which is the pre-condition for the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. And as demons are cast out on earth, the reality in heaven becomes visible and the earthly situation is coming into line with that of heaven. Manson argues that because this saying attributes the downfall of Satan directly to God, rather than involving the agency of Jesus, it probably goes back to the earliest stratum of tradition. The problem with this view, however, is that the destruction of evil and the ministry of Jesus pass somewhat like ships in the night. Jesus’ work becomes confined simply to the announcement of Satan’s defeat, without any sense that he is himself bringing it about. Luke, however, seems to identify Jesus with the “strong man” who binds Satan (Lk 11.14–23). That pericope involves a context of dispute over Jesus’ identity, and would point to a key role of Christ in the defeat of Satan in the ministry. Attributing the fall of Satan to a contextless act of God, without parallel in the Gospels, seems a counsel of despair, and very difficult to demonstrate.

The other most important example in this category is Joel Marcus’ interpretation, which argues that Jesus witnesses the fall of Satan at his baptism: ‘he quickly inferred from seeing Satan deposed from his position of authority in heaven that the time of salvation had arrived’. However, Marcus’ reasons for transposing the vision to the baptism are far from convincing. Marcus is right that ‘a baptismal vision of Satan’s fall would also help account for the central theme of Jesus’ preaching, which began not long after the baptism, namely the Kingdom of God’. Similarly, he argues that the baptism is an appropriate time for a vision of Satan’s downfall. Even if this is the case, how-

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26 Müller, Vision (see n. 1), 419, 421.
27 Müller, Vision (see n. 1), 418. It is purely theo-logical, rather than Christological (419).
28 Müller, Vision (see n. 1), 422.
30 Marcus, Jesus’ Baptismal Vision (see n. 1), 515.
31 Marcus, Jesus’ Baptismal Vision (see n. 1), 517.
32 Marcus, Jesus’ Baptismal Vision (see n. 1), 516.
ever, these arguments could also work for other settings as well, such as the wilderness temptation account. Further, it seems implausible that the idea of Jesus’ vision of the descent of the Spirit like a dove should have developed in the tradition from the vision of Satan’s fall. Marcus asks: ‘why not link the vision that lacks a setting (Luke 10.18) with the visionary setting that lacks a plausible vision?’ This seems, however, rather on the speculative side.

2.2 The Disciples’ Exorcisms as the Fall of Satan

A view which has attracted more support understands Jesus’ vision to be of an event which takes place during the mission of the seventy-two, immediately prior to his report of his vision in Lk 10,18. For example, W. Manson sees the event as ‘a vision which he had contemporary with the disciples mission’. Danker and Bock go further in equating the fall of Satan with the mission. As Bock, for example, puts it, ‘The disciples’ ministry spells defeat for Satan’. These positions, however, are very unsatisfactory. Significant as the disciples’ exorcistic activity is, it is very difficult to see how it could be invested with such powerful cosmic significance that it could be described as tantamount to the fall of Satan himself. Similarly, in the past some scholars saw support for a fall contemporaneous with the disciple’s mission on the basis of the imperfect tense of ἰησοῦς, although this is now seen to be extremely problematic.

2.3 An Event Early in Jesus’ Ministry

Because of this problem, many more scholars are inclined to attribute to Jesus a much more significant role in the downfall. Plummer notes that some older scholars made the incarnation the key event. Some posit a fall of Satan as a result of Jesus’ victory in the temptation narrative. Crump argues that Lk 10,18 is to be connected closely with Jesus’ activity in prayer (for example, for Simon Peter in Lk 22,31): ‘the implication is that this heavenly overthrow has been accomplished through the prayers of the scribal-intercessor, Jesus’.

33 Marcus, Jesus’ Baptismal Vision (see n. 1), 518–519.
34 Marcus, Jesus’ Baptismal Vision (see n. 1), 516.
37 The principal reason for this is that, as Fitzmyer (Luke [see n. 1], 166–67) notes, the present and the imperfect were the only tenses of ἰησοῦς in common use.
39 N. Geldenhuys, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, London 1961, 302; Page, Powers (see n. 1), 111, though in the end all Page can say is that this interpretation is “possible”.
40 Crump, Jesus (see n. 1), 51.
But this ‘implication’ seems very distant from Lk 10,18: there is a serious lack of evidence for this argument. One thing that is clear is scholars’ lack of success in being able to identify the moment of the fall of Satan. One is tempted to agree with Loisy in his conclusion that if Jesus had intended to say that he had overcome Satan through a specific event in his ministry, he would have said so.41 Certainly, Jesus triumphing over temptation and Satan leaving Jesus after the failed attempts to lead him into sin (Lk 4,1–13) could hardly be described as Satan “falling from heaven”; in fact, Luke’s account suggests a very different picture: ‘When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time’ (Lk 4,13).

Because of the difficulty in identifying the fall of Satan with a specific event in Jesus’ ministry, a number of scholars equate the fall more generally with Jesus’ description of his own “binding the strong man”. With Jesus having bound the strong man (i.e. Satan), he and his disciples are then free to plunder Satan’s house, i.e. to set to work destroying the demonic realm in general. For many scholars, then, the event of the fall witnessed by Jesus is what makes possible the disciples’ exorcisms. Certainly, this view is preferable to that whereby the activity of the disciples casting out demons is regarded as tantamount to the fall of Satan.42 Furthermore, a fall of Satan which is the necessary precondition for casting out demons would be strengthened by the parallel in TLevi 18,12 where the priestly Messiah will bind Belial, and thereafter be able to give his children power to trample over evil spirits.43 Hence Wiefel sees the exorcisms as ‘Folgen’ and ‘Signale’ of Satan’s fall, which is really the decisive triumph.44 As Vollenweider puts it: ‘Jesus spricht dann von einem bereits Ereignis gewordenen Sturz Satans und leitet hieraus die Möglichkeit seiner eigenen Exorzismen wie derjenigen seiner Jünger her’.45

Vollenweider’s important article proposes the view that the fall of Satan is included in the arrival of the Kingdom of God, which in turn is linked very closely to Jesus’ binding of the strong man.46 He insists that the inbreaking of the Kingdom by definition means the end of the reign of Satan (not vice versa, as in Müller’s reading). The Kingdom of God is not defined by its opposition to the reign of Satan, but the vision is of the fact that ‘die bedrohliche Herr-

41 A. Loisy, L’Évangile selon Luc, Frankfurt 1971, 299.
42 J. Ernst, Das Evangelium nach Lukas, Regensburg 1977, 337, thinks it refers to the present disempowerment of Satan. Further, ‘Die Dämonenaustreibungen der Missionare müssen als Demonstration dieser von Jesus selbst vorgenommenen Entmächtigung verstanden werden.’
43 Noted by Vollenweider, Ich sah (see n. 1), 196.
44 W. Wiefel, Das Evangelium nach Lukas (ThHK 3), Berlin 1988, 200; cf. also Evans, Luke (see n. 10), London 1990, 455, as well as Hultgård, Chute (see n. 1), 71.
45 Vollenweider, Ich sah (see n. 1), 190, also 197, 200. H. Schürmann (Das Lukasevangelium, Freiburg 1994, 2:89) makes the same point.
46 See esp. Vollenweider, Ich sah (see n. 1), 201.
schaft des Teufels an ihr Ende gekommen ist.\textsuperscript{47} However, this reading is susceptible to a general problem which besets all the interpretations which see Satan’s power as destroyed in the early stages of Jesus’ ministry.

2.4 Critique

The problem with all these views is that, as we noted in connection with the temptation theory, Satan later reappears, still with some considerable force. His ongoing activity in his instrumental role in the betrayal and death of Jesus (Lk 22,3) would imply that his defeat has not yet been accomplished.\textsuperscript{48} Furthermore, Lk 22,31 is particularly instructive. The fall of Satan, as we have said, is a fall from heaven, a final expulsion of Satan by God. If this is envisaged as already having taken place prior to the vision, then how can it be that Satan is later petitioning God that he might “sift” Peter? Later still, Peter asks in Acts, Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit? Scholars such as Limbeck and Merklein note that Satan’s fall is his disempowering, such that he can no longer function as the adversary in the divine council such as he did in Job 1–2; yet in Lk 22,31, Satan is portrayed in exactly that role.\textsuperscript{49}

In the light of the fact that Satan is still active in Luke 22, then, it makes better sense to see the fall of Satan as, from the point of view of Luke 10, an event which has not yet taken place.\textsuperscript{50} In support of this, it is important to note that ἐθέωρον very commonly refers to sight of events to come.\textsuperscript{51} Although the introduction “I saw” in the OT does not always indicate a vision of the future,\textsuperscript{52} the place where the introductory ἐθέωρον occurs most frequently is in the book of Daniel, where the dreams and visions talked about point to future events. This is true of Nebuchadnezzar’s visions (LXX Dan 4,13)\textsuperscript{53} and those of Daniel in chapter 7 (ἐθέωρον in verses 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 21; cf. 8,15). 1En 1,2 offers another example where the verb (as present participle, ἔθεωρον) comes in an explicitly futuristic context: ‘not for the present generation, but for one that is far off’. Evans states that the verb had ‘in Greek literature

\textsuperscript{47} Vollenweider, Ich sah (see n. 1), 200.
\textsuperscript{48} This is also a problem for the suggestion of J.V. Hills that it is in fact the demons of 10,17 who saw (ἔθεωρον) the fall of Satan. See Hills, Luke 10,18 (see n. 1), 25–40.
\textsuperscript{49} See Limbeck, Satan (see n. 1), 286–87; Merklein, Jesu Botschaft (see n. 1), 60–61. For other references, see Miyoshi, Anfang (see n. 1), 99 n. 29. I am to some extent in agreement with Spitta here (Spitta, Satan als Blitz (see n. 1), 161).
\textsuperscript{50} Contra Müller, for example, who operates on the premise that the vision must relate to a prior act of God: he states at the beginning of his article that Jesus’ Visionsbericht is one which ‘den bereits erfolgten Sturz des Satans ansagt’. See Müller, Vision (see n. 1), 417.
\textsuperscript{51} Garrett, Demise (see n. 1), 49.
\textsuperscript{52} Cf. Isa 6,1; Ezek 1,27–28; 1Kings 22,17–19//2Chron 18,16–18.
\textsuperscript{53} See also in the Theodotion version, Dan 4,13; cf. 2,31; 2,34.
and in the LXX the particularly religious sense of visionary sight, and the imperfect tense was customary in introducing visions (cf. Dan 4,10; 7,2ff)). But while the meaning of ἰδοὺ ὁ θεός (and ἴδος in general) cannot be overloaded with prophetic significance in and of itself, in the context of a visionary experience of the forces of evil, the Danielic background makes good sense.

3. A Prophetic Vision of the Eschatological Future

Jesus’ vision, then, can plausibly be said to be a vision which he had, during his ministry, of a future event. Furthermore, there is certainly no reason to deny that the report in Lk 10,18 is claiming to be a report of a vision. There are no grounds for understanding Jesus to be speaking symbolically, still less to attribute the saying to Jesus’ ‘poetic imagination’. Fitzmyer, for example, dismisses too easily the possibility of a claim to a real vision, tying it too closely to Merklein’s view where Lk 4,1–13 is the context for the vision.

Although the eschatological interpretation has been a minority position, it has found some adherents. Green describes an important aspect of this reading: ‘Luke portrays Jesus as having a prophetic vision, then, whose content was the future (and ultimate) downfall of Satan’. But the principal point which has not been appreciated by scholars thus far is the fact that the final ‘fall of Satan’ is something of a mixed blessing, at least in the short term. It will be argued here that the substance of this vision is the final descent of Satan to earth when he unleashes his wrath prior to his final destruction. It is true that the departure from heaven is not Satan’s own initiative: the background of Isa 14,12 confirms this. In the following discussion we will both bring for-
ward evidence for the “end-times” interpretation advocated here, and show how the interpretation advocated differs from a similar reading offered by Garrett. This will be shown by examining (1) the tradition-historical background to Lk 10,18, and (2) the fall of Satan in the narrative world of Luke-Acts. We shall then see the sense which this interpretation makes of (3) Lk 10,17–20 as a whole, and finally (4) the connection between 10,17–20 and 10,21–24.

3.1 Tradition-Historical Background

In the literature on Lk 10,18, the issues of tradition history are extremely prominent, and we only have space here to focus on a few key aspects.63 The aim here will be to underscore the coherence which our passage gains when read against the background both of early Jewish expectation of the defeat of Satan and of the final time of tribulation through which the elect will be preserved. This tradition-historical evidence becomes important, then, for the analysis of Lk 10,17–20, in particular for the relation between 10,18 and 10,19–20:

18 He said to them, ‘I saw Satan falling like lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I have given you authority to trample upon serpents and scorpions, over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will be able to harm you. 20 Only, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

As is widely recognized, the OT and early Jewish traditions concerning the fall of Satan are particularly relevant here.64 However, equally significant

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63 For a recent summary of the Jewish material which scholars have adduced as evidence, see Marx, Chute (see n. 1), 172–175. Despite Hultgård, Chute, it is questionable how much light the Iranian background really sheds on Lk 10,18 in its historical and literary context. Similarly, Marx’s elaboration of the Sumerian background is only distantly related. While the account of the destruction of Ebih by Innana may have some connection with Isaiah 14, it is, as Marx implies, several stages removed from Lk 10,18. (Marx, Chute (see n. 1), 184).

64 Despite reluctance on the part of some, perhaps in view of its association with the patristic interpretation, it needs to be acknowledged that Isa 14,12 does play an important part. See especially Tärrech, Vissió (see n. 1), 231–236 and Miyoshi, Anfang (see n. 1), 100–101; contra Spitta, Satan als Blitz (see n. 1), 161; Nolland, Luke (see n. 17), 2:563. In addition to 2En 29,4–5 and Life of Adam and Eve 14–16 (discussed above), Tärrech also notes that Bereshit Rabba 5,5 discusses the fall of Satan in connection with Isa 14,12 (Tärrech, Vissió (see n. 1), 229–230). Miyoshi and others are right to point out that the reference in the previous pericope to the fall of Capernaum in terms which recall the same passage reinforces the likelihood to allusion to the same passage in our verse. (Isa 14,12 is also applied to a city, the city of Memphis, in Sib. Or. 5,72.) Similarly, Spitta’s view that there is no dimension of judgment on evil but simply an act of aggression on Satan’s part...
for our purposes are the places which point to an expectation of a final time of trial. It is this second category of passages which has not been harnessed in the task of interpreting Lk 10,17–20. Of the Jewish and early Christian discussions of the preservation of the elect through the eschatological woes preceding the end, Dan 12,1 (to take just one example) is particularly important, especially as it is taken up in the eschatological traditions of the Gospels:

And at that time shall Michael arise, the great prince who stands for the children of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since they became a nation until that same time: and at that time your people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

Here, there is some ambiguity in the nature of the ‘escape’ of the people of God: ‘This may mean they “escape” from the annihilation referred to in 11:44, avoiding death, unlike the martyrs of 11:33–35, or it may mean that they “escape” from the realm of death by breaking out from it, as v 2 will elaborate.’ Nevertheless, the point is clear that despite the intensity of the trial, the people of God will not finally succumb to it. Mk 13,19–22 has a similar, perhaps even more pessimistic, account:

19 For those days shall be a time of trial such as there has not been since the beginning of the creation, when God created, until now, and never shall be again. 20 And unless the Lord had shortened the days, no-one would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect whom he has chosen, he has shortened the days. 21 And then if any man says to you, ‘Here is the Christ’, or, ‘There he is’, do not believe it: 22for there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and they shall show signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

Here, Mark envisages a hypothetical period at the end that would have been so destructive that all would have perished: just as in Dan 12,1, we see the reference to the time of trial of unequalled intensity. However, for the sake of those whose names are written in the book of life, God has shortened that eschatological time of trial. Similarly, the plausibility of the deceptions circulating in these end times will be so potent that the impossible possibility of the deception of the elect is raised. Seeing the final time of tribulation in the context of election makes sense of Jesus’ statement in Lk 10,20, where he emphasizes the importance to the disciples of the fact that their names are written in heaven as the key ground of assurance for their perseverance in the face of the powers of evil.

Against this background, we can see that Lk 10,17–20 combines, perhaps even for the first time, the traditions about the eschatological fall of Satan with those of the final outbreak of his persecution of the elect. In early Jewish literature, Satan’s fall tends to be associated with his judgment; or if his malignant activity on earth is envisaged, this is a consequence of his primeval de-

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(and thus no reference at all to Isa 14,12) does not seem to do justice to the imagery of falling here. Nolland, Luke (see n. 17), 2:563.

65 J. Goldingay, Daniel (WBC 30), Dallas 1989, 306.
scent to earth (as in Life of Adam and Eve above), or of his periodic journeys to earth (Job 1–2). In Jewish texts, when Satan’s fall is described at the end of the age, it is simply his final destruction which is envisaged. The possible exception to this is TSol 20,16–17, where in the demon Ornias’s interview with Solomon, he reports that the demons “fall down like leaves from the trees”; as they are “dropped like flashes of lightning to the earth”, they appear like “stars falling from heaven”. When they fall, Ornias says, “we burn cities down and set fields on fire”. However, with the Testament of Solomon having undergone heavy Christian redaction, it is quite feasible that this is dependent on Lk 10,18 and/or Revelation 12.

On the other hand, it is possible, as some scholars argue, that Rev 12,7–9 and 12,12 derive from a Jewish source into which the author of Revelation has inserted material about the atoning work of Christ and the witnesses’ testimony to the Gospel in 12.10–11:

7 And there was a battle in heaven, with Michael and his angels fighting against the serpent. And the serpent fought, with his angels, 8 but he was not strong enough, nor was any place found for them in heaven any longer. 9 And the great serpent was cast down, the snake of old, the one called ‘the devil’ and ‘Satan’, the one who deceives the whole world. He has been cast down to the earth, and his angels have been cast down with him. 10 And I heard a great voice in heaven saying, “Now the salvation, power and Kingdom of our God have come, and the authority of his Christ, because the accuser of our brothers has been cast down, the one who day and night accuses them before our God. 11 And they have conquered him through the blood of the lamb and through the word of their testimony. They did not love their lives even at the point of death. 12 Therefore rejoice, you heavens, and you who dwell in them. But woe to you, earth and sea, because the devil has descended to you in great fury, since he knows his time is short.” (Rev 12,7–12)

Whether or not the Revelation passage is dependent on a Jewish literary source, scholars have rightly recognized the same constellation of ideas both here and in Lk 10,17–20: the fall of Satan, his final time of havoc, his eschatological defeat, and the final victory of the elect.66 Ellis rightly raises the question here of whether the visions of Jesus and John were very similar in content.67 As Bovon puts it: ‘Gleichwohl ist für Lukas wie für den Seher Johannes [Offb 12,7–18] der aus dem Himmel ausgestoßene Satan noch nicht endgültig überwunden’.68 Whichever came first, it needs to be recognized that both passages are reliant on two Jewish and early Christian eschatological topoi: first, that of the final fall of Satan to earth, and secondly, the final time of trial, which the elect will survive, preceding Satan’s destruction. Against this background, then, the motifs of Lk 10,17–20 are not merely disparate elements;

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66 I understand this to refer to an eschatological event accompanying the second coming of Christ in Revelation, and not his first coming, contra Page, Powers of Evil (see n. 1), 110.
rather, they have a coherence which is shared in the combination of the same motifs in Revelation 12.

3.2 The Fall of Satan in the Narrative World of Luke-Acts

Another scholar who comes close to the position argued for here is Garrett, in her book *The Demise of the Devil*. She argues that the final casting of Satan out of heaven, on the one hand, has to be held together with the final attack of Satan on the world below. However, there are problems with the precise way in which this attack is understood in Garrett’s account.

Garrett’s proposal has the merit of paying attention to literary question of the relation of Lk 10,17–20 to 10,21–24, an issue ignored by most scholars. She argues that (a) there is a close connection between 10,17–20 and 10,21–24 (because of the common theme of revelation, and their connection by the linking phrase ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ἁγιᾷ Δαυίδ; (b) the focus in 10,21–24 is on revelation, especially the revelation of the sonship of Jesus; (c) the resurrection of Jesus is the revelation of his sonship; (d) therefore the resurrection is the occasion of the fall of Satan. Garrett’s resolution of the issue here is very problematic, since it relies on a series of leaps in order to get to the conclusion (d). Garrett is probably correct that there is some connection between 10,17–20 and 10,21–24, especially in view of the chronological marker which links them. However, in order to tie the two pericopes together, Garrett has to import the idea of the resurrection, which seems far removed from either 10,17–20 or 10,21–24.

In order to ‘identify more precisely the occasion of the devil’s fall in the narrative world of Luke-Acts’,69 then, Garrett locates that event at the point of the resurrection. As a result, she understands the final havoc wrought by Satan to be primarily in evidence in the book of Acts. She sees an onslaught of “the Enemy” in the activities of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5,1–2), of Simon Magus (Acts 8,9–25), of Bar Jesus in Acts 13,6–12, and in the viper’s attack on Paul (28,3–6).70 The problem here comes in the fact that in the Danielic and early Christian traditions about the eschatological woes at the end, they are much more wide-ranging in their scope. As we saw above, they seem to refer to events on a global scale, which affect both unbelievers and believers. These isolated incidents in the book of Acts, then, are probably not the best events to equate with Satan’s outburst.

More promising, however, is the eschatological discourse in Luke 21, where Luke describes Jesus forecasting God’s preservation of his people both in the (relatively) near future, and in the more distant future immediately prior

69 Garrett, Demise (see n. 1), 51.
70 Garrett, Demise (see n. 1), 50.
to the coming of the Son of Man. The twin themes of tribulation and preservation are both strikingly present in Lk 21,12–19:71

12 Before all these things, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors on account of my name. 13 This will result in your being witnesses to them. 14 Make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. 15 For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to oppose or contradict. 16 You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. 17 Everyone will hate you because of my name. 18 But not a hair of your head will perish. 19 By standing firm you will gain life.

Clearly then, in the period before “nation will rise against nation” (21,12a), before the events immediately preceding the end, Luke still envisages considerable persecution, and yet God’s people will not be prevented from “gaining life” (verse 19).

Secondly, we can also see associations with the fall of Satan in the more distant future immediately prior to the coming of the Son of Man:

25 And there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth the nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. 26 Men will faint from fear in their expectation of the events to come in the world, for the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 27 And then they will see the Son of Man… (Lk 21,25–27)

A number of features immediately strike the reader. Initially, the general theme is similar to that in Mark: there are “signs” in the sun, moon and stars. (We can see further parallels with Revelation 12, especially verse 4.) However, Luke also includes non-Markan material about (a) the panic among the nations, which is explained in two ways: first, (b) their confusion at the shaking of the seas, and second, (c) as fear at what is to come because of the activity of the stars. In Luke, an important parallel is drawn between the signs in the heavens (ἐν ἁλῶι καὶ σελήνῃ καὶ ὀστροῖ) and the panic on earth (ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς), which emphasises the fact that the eschatological upheaval im-

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71 It is quite likely here that the variation between the Markan and Lukan eschatological discourses is the result of oral transmission, rather than literary redaction. But it might be noted that the tribulation is stronger in Luke than Mark: cf. “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death” (Mark 13,12) with “You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death” (Lk 21,16). The potential traitors are not only brothers, parents and children, but also relatives in general as well as friends. Further, Luke casts the treachery not in third person terms (“brother will betray brother”) but in the second person (“you will be betrayed”). And the killing is more direct in Luke (“they will put some of you to death”). Again, the preservation is correspondingly more emphatic. While Mark has “be on your guard” (Mark 13,9), Luke emphasises “make up your mind not to worry beforehand” (Lk 21,14). Most strikingly, in Lk 21,18, immediately after the threat of death, Luke includes “but not a hair on your head will perish”.
mediately prior to the coming of the Son of Man will involve the whole of creation in its interconnectedness. The intertwining of the confusion of world and people is explained in two ways. First, the upheaval in the tides leads to ἀπερίωσις. Secondly, the shaking of the “powers of heaven” leads to terrified expectation as to what is to happen on earth. This is not to be understood simply as meteorological upset, because in both cases there is a strong association with the forces of evil. As is well-known, the sea has a strong symbolic connection to demonic forces in opposition to God: commenting on Rev 21,1, Aune notes, 'The motif of the disappearance of the sea reflects the ancient Israelite tradition of the opposition of Yahweh and the sea. The antipathy between Yahweh and the sea is expressed in a variety of ways in the OT and early Judaism.' This is equally strong in the case of the “powers of heaven”, in which the phrase δύναμις τῶν οὐρανῶν itself captures the ambiguity of reference both to stars and to the angelic forces, which cannot in any case be easily distinguished. The activities of the sea and the stars in 21,25–26 provide a clue that the eschatological trial is not merely the result of hostile human activity, but rather includes the agency of demonic forces, which connects Luke’s eschatological discourse with the fall of Satan.

Even in the places where there is no explicit verbal reference to demonic activity, it is unlikely that Luke and his audience would have separated the tribulation from the activity of Satan. Furthermore, there are other early Christian parallels which see elements of Luke’s portrayal as a function of demonic activity. First, in Rev 12,4, the falling of the stars (cf. Lk 21,25) appears in the context of the fall of Satan. Second, in 2Thess 2,8–10 there is an outbreak of evil κατατάλειψις τοῦ σατανᾶ (2,9). Like the action in Lk 21,25–26, this immediately precedes the return of Christ. 2Thess 2,1–10 has a similar two-stage eschatology: there is a period during which “the mystery of lawlessness is already at work” (2 Thess 2,7) and then a final outbreak of havoc when the restrainer is removed (2,8).

Hence, there is very strong evidence that the eschatological discourse in Luke 21 envisages a time characterised by Satanic trial both in the (relatively) near future, as well as at the end immediately preceding the return of Christ. The events following the fall of Satan in Jewish and early Christian tradition affect all humanity, not merely the church as in Garrett’s examples from Acts.

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72 D. Aune, Revelation (WBC 52), Nashville 1998, 3:119. On this, Aune’s summary is useful: (1) Yahweh establishes a border or sets a guard on the sea (Jer 5:22; Job 7:12). (2) Yahweh rebukes or is angry with the waters (Isa 1:2; Nah 1:4; Hab 3:8; Pss 18:6; 29:3; 1 Enoch 101:7). (3) Yahweh dries up the waters (Isa 1:2; 19:5; Jer 1:38; 51:46; Ezek 30:12; Nah 1:4; Ps 18:16; Job 12:15; Sib. Or. 5.447; 1 Enoch 101:7). See further C. Kloos, Yhwh’s Combat with the Sea: A Canaanite Tradition in the Religion of Ancient Israel, Leiden 1986.

73 See e.g. 1Enoch 78, where the sun and moon are named; in 80,6, the chiefs of the stars go astray, and harden themselves against the sinners (80,7).
In fact, in view of the preservation motif, those outside of the Christian com-
munity are affected considerably more than the elect who are preserved. The
underlying problem with Garrett’s interpretation here is that she equates the
narrative world of Luke-Acts too closely with the actual narrative of Luke-
Acts, and as a result she only looks to events narrated within the two-volume
work for her evidence. In fact, Luke 21 also envisages considerable turmoil
taking place after the events recorded in the narrative of Luke-Acts, and these
eschatological woes constitute a better context for the turmoil subsequent to
the fall of Satan from heaven. Most scholars, in connection with Luke 10,18,
point to the way in which Jewish eschatological expectation about the fall of
Satan is fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus. However, we can see that the cosmic
events such as the falling of the angelic stars (as in 1En 90.23–24) are still en-
visioned by Luke as future, to accompany the final return of the Son of Man.74

3.3 Literary Coherence of Lk 10,17–20

When Lk 10,17–20 is read against this background, we can see the sense
of Jesus’ instruction to the disciples not to rejoice in their success in casting
out demons. It is not this exorcistic power which would ultimately preserve
them: that preservation is only guaranteed by the inscription of their names in
the heavenly book of life.75

On this interpretation of Lk 10,18, the pericope as a whole can be para-
phrased as follows. The seventy(-two) return from their mission in high spirits,
rejoicing to Jesus that the demons submit to them in his name (10,17). Jesus’
statements in verses 18–20, however, attempt to rein in their triumphalism
by his announcement that the power of Satan will yet be unleashed again. On
the other hand, however, the disciples – and in the Lukan context, Christians
in the future, by extension76 – will be preserved through this final period of
Satan’s fury. Hence, Jesus’ promise in 10,19 is closely related to 10,18. How-
ever, the focus is not on the fact that the authority given to the disciples has
been made possible by the fall of Satan; rather, the future fall of Satan to earth
will mean that the disciples will need the supernatural power promised by
Jesus. After telling the disciples, then, of his vision of Satan’s fall from heaven

74 It is, however, possible that Luke envisages the death (and resurrection) of Jesus as the oc-
casion of Satan’s defeat, and that his attacks continue throughout the ensuing period
until the return of the Son of Man.
75 The attempt of Miyoshi and others to explain that the names of the seventy are ‘slotted
into’ heaven now that Satan has been expelled from there is too schematic and makes no
real theological sense: “durch Unterwerfung der Dämonen im Namen des Herrn ist der
Satan vom Himmel gestürzt; an seiner Stelle im Himmel sind jetzt die Namen der Jünger
eingeschrieben” (Miyoshi, Anfang (see n. 1), 118).
76 Garrett, The Demise of the Devil (see n. 1), 49: ‘Inasmuch as the seventy(-two) are credited
with knowledge that Luke elsewhere reserves for post-resurrection followers, one can again
conclude that these missionaries prefigure Jesus’ followers in the days after Pentecost.’
in 10,18, he tells them that nothing will harm them: it would have been odd for Jesus to respond to their triumphalism with simple scare tactics. However, he does not want their minds to focus on their abilities derived from the authority over evil powers which they have been granted. Their confidence during the final tribulation should rest in the fact that they belong to God’s elect, that their names are written in the heavenly book of life.

3.4 The Connection between Lk 10,17–20 and 10,21–24

If Garrett’s suggestion, noted above, of the resurrection of Jesus as the link between 10,17–20 and 10,21–24 is wrong, can a better proposal be offered? A few scholars do attempt to show the connection between the two sections. Bovon, for example, sees the fall of Satan (equivalent to the exorcisms mentioned in 10,17) as explained on the basis of it being the will of the Father. Similarly, Green understands Luke in 10,21–24 to be explaining the mission of the disciples and their victorious activity. But there does not seem to be any reference at all, however small, to victory over Satan in 10,21–24. Evans leaves the connection rather vague, focusing on the common element of joy.

The instinct of these scholars that the connection between the two sections is not merely arbitrary is correct. In addition to the common theme of rejoicing (verses 17, 20, and 21), Luke connects them with the temporal marker ἐν συντη̣ρ τῇ δόξῃ. A more substantive theological connection between the two sections, however, seems to me to lie in the idea of the disciples’ election. This seems to furnish a direct link between 10,20 and 10,21:

20Only, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven. 21At that hour, he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said: ‘I praise you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have concealed these things from the wise and clever, but revealed them to babes. Yes Father, because such is your good pleasure.’

Here, the theme of the disciples’ names being inscribed in the heavenly book of life (10,20) connects with God’s revelation to them through his son. 10,21 is not merely concerned with revelation, however: it connects this revelation with God’s purpose. The language of God’s εὐδοκία evokes the sense of God’s electing will, his predetermining purpose, as it does elsewhere in the NT (Eph 1,5; 1,9; Phil 2,13; 2Thess 1,11). The uses of the verb εὐδοκέω also have a

77 Although it is quite possible that Luke’s understanding of election is not unchristological, Crump goes too far in saying that Jesus is depicted as the heavenly scribe in Luke (Crump, Jesus (see n. 1), 60, 63).
78 Bovon, Lukas (see n. 65), 2:66.
79 Green, Luke (see n. 8), 420.
80 C.A. Evans, Luke (New Interpreters), Peabody 1990, 171: ‘Luke obviously intends this paragraph as Jesus’ response to the joy of the disciples who have returned. It may be inferred from the general tenor of vv. 17–24 that the disciples’ experience was a positive one, one that has enabled them to grasp the truth of Jesus and the Kingdom more clearly.’
very similar sense: in Luke, both in the baptismal *bat qol* (Lk 3,23), and in Jesus’ promise to the disciples that God has elected to give them the kingdom (Lk 12,32). Jesus’ rejoicing in God’s election of the disciples in 10,21 seems, then, to have a very strong connection to the inscription of their names in the heavenly book of life in 10,20. Lk 10,21–24 serves, then, to reinforce the importance of the disciples’ election, rather than the authority over demons, as the basis of their confidence.

**Conclusion**

We saw first, then, the problems with the primeval interpretation of the fall of Satan, principally that in the Lukan context (which has been our focus here) it cannot make sense as a response of the Lukan Jesus to the rejoicing of the disciples. On the other hand, understanding the content of the vision as the disempowering of Satan during Jesus’s ministry is also problematic, particularly when one considers the continuing activity of Satan both in the passion narrative and even in the book of Acts. It is in fact more satisfactory to see Jesus’s vision as of the eschatological fall of Satan to wreak havoc on the earth prior to his final destruction. (It must be remembered that the fall of Satan is positive *in the long term.*) According to this interpretation, Lk 10,18 coheres perfectly with verses 17 and 19–20.\(^81\) That Jesus is correcting his disciples’ triumphalism is not, of course, a new interpretation of the passage. However, this reading is set on a much surer footing when seen in the light of the various aspects of the passage which have not received sufficient attention from scholars. It is for this reason that we have examined two neglected contextual factors in particular: first, the combination of the “fall of Satan” motif with that of the preservation of the elect during the final woes, and secondly, the hints given in Luke 21 of a context for the outbreak of these woes in the time before the coming of the Son of Man. This means that Jesus’ exhortation to the disciples is focused on their perseverance during these woes, a perseverance which is dependent not primarily upon their authority over the evil spirits, but on God’s election. It is this final point which is further reinforced by Jesus in Lk 10,21–24.

\(^{81}\) Against Vollenweider, who claims that while the verse could only refer to the end of Satan’s dominion if viewed in isolation (Ich sah (see n. 1), 189–190). Also, Hills in his argument that the vision belongs to the demons, protests that “Jesus’ speech is almost impenetrable if it speaks instead of his own vision” (Hills, Who Saw (see n. 1), 39).
What does Luke 10:18 mean? The devil was cast out of heaven, Satan and his angels fell from heaven. And he also foresaw how Satan hereafter, in a more conspicuous manner, would fall before the preaching of his Gospel by his apostles, not only in Judea, but especially among the Gentiles, where he, the prince of this world, would be cast down from his throne, and out of his kingdom; so that what they related, as it was what he knew before, it was but little in comparison of what he himself had seen long ago, and of what he foresaw would be; and even he would give them power to do other miraculous works besides these. Luke 10:17. Luke 10:19. Read Luke 10:18.