

# LUKE

## Chapter 9

*Jesus Sends Out the Twelve*

**And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, 2 and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. 3 And he said to them, “Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. 4 And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. 5 And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them.” 6 And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.**

**9:1–6** A new phase of Jesus’ ministry began when he sent out the apostles to do the type of preaching, teaching and healing that they had observed him doing (Mt 9:35). This was the third tour of Galilee by Jesus and his disciples (see note on 8:1). On the first tour Jesus traveled with the four fishermen; on the second all 12 were with him; on the third Jesus traveled alone after sending out the Twelve two by two. (CSB)

Luke 9 is a watershed chapter. With 9:1–50, the hearer is on the brink of Jesus’ turning point, 9:51, which is pivotal for Luke’s gospel. Luke creates great anticipation concerning the identity of Jesus as the Messiah, culminating in Peter’s confession that Jesus is “the Christ of God” (9:20). As in all the synoptic gospels, the feeding of the five thousand precedes this confession, and Jesus’ first prediction of his passion and resurrection follow it. Luke’s form heightens the messianic secret and changes it into a messianic passion secret. The secret is not just that Jesus is the Messiah; part of the secret is that the Messiah must suffer and die, and this necessity will not be understood or publicly proclaimed until after Easter. (See further the comments at 5:12–16; 8:56; 9:21–22, 36.) The disciples must wait until after Jesus’ passion to reveal the full glory of their Lord (9:36), because Jesus must first complete his mission before entering into his glory. The transfiguration emphasizes the suffering before the glory. Lk 9:1–50 is the end of Jesus’ Galilean ministry; in 9:51 he will begin his journey to Jerusalem, where the passion will be accomplished. (CC p. 376)

In the commissioning of the Twelve, Jesus gives the disciples the privilege of participating in his prophetic pattern of preaching and miracles of healing. However, neither the Twelve nor the seventy(-two) (10:1–12) are sent to “teach” (διδάσκω) yet. Luke in his gospel carefully records that only Jesus *teaches*. The disciples will teach only after Pentecost. Jesus promises that after the coming of the Spirit, the Spirit will “teach” the disciples what to say (12:12), and that is the only verse in the gospel where anyone other than Jesus is the subject of διδάσκω, “teach.” This promise is fulfilled in Acts, and after the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost, Luke frequently describes the disciples as teaching. (CC pp. 376-377)

While Jesus alone “teaches” (διδάσκω) in the gospel, he sends the Twelve to “preach” (κηρύσσω [9:2]; cf. 8:39) and “to evangelize/proclaim the Good News” (εὐαγγελίζω [9:6]), and Jesus himself also frequently preaches and evangelizes. While none of these three verbs is found in the commission of the seventy(-two) in 10:1–12, Jesus’ description of their mission appears to suggest that they too would have engaged in preaching and evangelizing, but not teaching. (CC p. 377)

In biblical usage, the distinction between these verbs would seem to be that preaching and evangelizing/proclaiming the Good News involve stating the simple fact that the kingdom of God has arrived in Jesus, who releases creation from its bondage to sin and its consequences in fulfillment of OT prophecy (4:18–19). Teaching involves more detailed and lengthy exposition, explanation, and interpretation of Christology and the kingdom of God brought by Jesus. The disciples are not equipped to do this until after the outpouring of the Spirit, who enlightens them about the meaning of Jesus’ death and resurrection. In addition, Jesus himself commanded his disciples to wait until after his resurrection before proclaiming him publicly as the Christ (9:21–22, 36). Their silence until then constitutes the messianic passion secret—the secret that the Messiah/Christ must suffer and die at the hands of sinners (9:21–22). Only after the resurrection will they understand the necessity of Jesus’ suffering before he enters his glory, and only then will they be able to teach and preach that Jesus, the Messiah, has completely fulfilled his mission. That probably is an additional reason why the disciples are not told to “teach” until after Pentecost. (CC p. 377)

During Jesus’ earthly ministry the two testaments overlapped, in a sense. John the Baptist carried out the last prophetic role of the OT. Jesus himself followed and fulfilled the OT Law and often commanded others to do the same (e.g., 5:14; 17:14). However, Jesus also began to lay aside the OT Law after completing it (e.g., 6:1–11; 13:10–17; 14:1–6). This was an intermediate period, between the time the OT Law was in full force and the post-resurrection age when Christ himself would free his apostles and the church from the OT regulations (e.g., Acts 10 and 15). Jesus’ disciples would not be able to teach the fulfillment and abrogation of the OT Law until after Jesus’ death and resurrection, and that may be yet another reason why they do not “teach” in Luke’s gospel but do so frequently in Acts. (CC p. 377)

**9:1** *the Twelve* – “The Twelve” (τοὺς δώδεκα) as a technical term was first used when they were called by Jesus (6:13). The Twelve are also included in Jesus’ preaching the Good News at 8:1. The disciples are called “the Twelve” at the feeding of the five thousand (9:17). Luke also notes that “the Twelve” are recipients of the third passion prediction (18:31) and will be judging the twelve tribes of Israel (22:30). This commissioning signals an important event in the preparation of the Twelve. (CC p. 377)

*power and authority.* Special power to heal (see 5:17; 8:46) and authority in teaching and control over evil spirits. (CSB)

Jesus empowers His apostles to perform the same wonders as He has done. The Twelve performed similar miracles after the resurrection (cf Ac 2:43; 3:6; 5:12–16; 9:32–42). (TLSB)

ὕναμιν καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ δαιμόνια—“Power and authority” is followed by two diverse constructions, a prepositional phrase (ἐπὶ ...) and an infinitive (θεραπεύειν). (CC p. 375)

He gave them power and right, or authority, unlimited authority, as His representatives. Although the message which Jesus brought was not new, the form and clearness in which He brought it was. The apostles therefore, going out in His name, must be clothed with unusual power. (Kretzmann)

*demons.* The demons were made subject to them, and the power to heal diseases was transmitted to them. Note that these two are mentioned separately, and that their treatment was not the same: The demons were to be cast out, the diseases were to be healed.

**9:2 sent** – ἀπέστειλεν—The Twelve are “sent,” as Jesus was sent by the Father in the Spirit (4:18). The Twelve were first called “apostles,” meaning “sent ones,” in 6:13, and they will be so designated again when they return (9:10) and often in the future. (CC p. 375)

*proclaim and heal* – κηρύσσειν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἰᾶσθαι [τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς]—The Twelve preach the same message as Jesus (cf. 4:18). Healing is part of the message. (CC p. 375)

They are summoned by Jesus and given “power and authority over all the demons and to cure diseases,” and he sends them out “to preach the kingdom of God and to heal” (9:1–2). And that is exactly what they do, “proclaiming the Good News and healing everywhere” (9:6). This prophetic activity of preaching and miracles proclaims that the kingdom of God is present. When the Twelve return to report everything they had done, Luke calls them “apostles” (9:10). For the first time, the twelve disciples have engaged in apostolic ministry. In the post-Pentecost church, Jesus’ pattern of preaching confirmed with miracles will be repeated in the apostolic ministry of Word and Sacrament, preaching accompanied by Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. In the Divine Service, this corresponds to the Service of the Word followed by the Service of the Sacrament. (CC p. 378)

Jesus’ own ministry was one of healing and revealing. Note that healings revealed the hidden power of the Gospel with irrefutable evidence. (TLSB)

**9:3 Take nothing.** No excess baggage that would encumber travel, not even the usual provisions. They were to be entirely dependent on the people with whom they were staying. (CSB)

Jesus sends them into a ministry that will leave them completely dependent on the Lord of the harvest. They are sent without provisions. Staff, bag, bread, money (9:3; cf. 10:3)—these are the usual necessities of travel. The Twelve need not take them now during Jesus’ earthly ministry. However, when Jesus prepares the disciples for his imminent “exodus” (9:31), he will commission them again, alluding back to 9:3 but reversing the instructions, since in the future Jesus will expect his disciples to plan ahead and make full use of whatever resources they have available (22:35–38). (CC p. 378)

Some of the detailed instructions follow. The apostles were to take nothing for their journey; they were not to prepare themselves, and, above all, they were not to be burdened on the way. They were to show no characteristics of the itinerant begging preachers and prophets, having neither a staff nor a beggar’s collecting bag, neither bread nor silver money, nor even a change of tunics with them. They were to be dependent altogether upon the people whom they served for their sustenance. (Kretzmann)

These instructions required the apostles to trust God. Their daily needs were to be met by those that received their ministry and provided hospitality (food and lodging). (TLSB)

**9:4 stay there.** They were not to move from house to house, seeking better lodging, but use only one home as headquarters while preaching in a community. (CSB)

Prohibits the Twelve from constantly moving about so as to secure better accommodations. The goodwill of those who received the Gospel and extended hospitality to Christ’s ambassadors was more important than the apostles’ comfort. (TLSB)

μένετε—The presence of the Twelve brings the presence of the Lord (10:16). Cf. comments on 2:43; 19:5; 24:29. (CC p. 375)

They should lose no time in selecting a place to stay, in hunting choice quarters. The house into which they should enter first and whose inmates would receive them, that should be their abode until they had finished their work in that city. (Kretzmann)

**9:5** *wherever* – ὅσοι ... τῆς πόλεως ἐκείνης—The referent for “as many as” is not to persons but to the later expression “that city.” In this scenario an entire city rejects the Twelve. (CC p. 375)

*they do not receive you* – μὴ δέχωνται—The same language used for the world’s rejection of Jesus is used for rejection of the Twelve and their ministry of teaching and healing. (CC p. 375)

*shake the dust off your feet.* A sign of repudiation for their rejection of God’s message and a gesture showing separation from everything associated with the place (see 10:11; see also notes on Mt 10:14; Ac 13:51). (CSB)

τὸν κονιορτὸν ἀπὸ τῶν ποδῶν ὑμῶν ἀποτινάσσετε εἰς μαρτύριον ἐπ’ αὐτούς—The imperative “shake off the dust from your feet” supports the strong command to depart and remove all traces of that city from the Twelve. Apostles will actually shake off the dust from a town in Acts 13:51. In accord with the office of the keys—the keys of the kingdom given to the apostles—when they dissociate themselves from a town, God himself will not acknowledge that town as his own. (CC p. 375)

But if some people would reject them and their message, they should express the judgment of Christ upon the people of such a city by an appropriate gesture, by shaking off the very dust from their feet, signifying that they would have nothing to do with such opposition to the Word and work of Christ, but hereby bore witness before God against them. (Kretzmann)

This was ritual act symbolizing God’s judgment against those who reject the Gospel, as if to indicate that the Twelve should not even associate with these unbelievers’ dust. Jesus commands the Seventy-two do the same when He sends them out (10:10-11), and Paul also does this during his mission journeys (Acts 13:51; 18:6)

**9:6** *preaching the gospel and healing* – εὐαγγελιζόμενοι καὶ θεραπεύοντες πανταχοῦ—This expression parallels Lk 9:2 and shows that “preaching the kingdom of God” and “proclaiming the Good News” are synonymous. Healing (physical and spiritual healing combined) is part of the ministry of the kingdom, but later in the NT, teaching and preaching take precedence over healing, even as it did in Jesus’ ministry. Physical healing will resume and be complete in the resurrection. (CC pp. 375-376)

When in their journeys they encounter resistance and rejection, they are to leave that city and “shake off the dust from your feet as a witness against them” (9:5; cf. 10:11). A similar action appears in the Talmud (*Berakot*, IX, 54a, Mishnah): “A man should not enter the temple mount with his staff or with his shoes or with his wallet or with his feet dust-stained.” The temple is not a place for lodging or business. And dust from mixed or Gentile cities must not be brought into its hallowed precincts. It is a place where “the covenant is ratified and made, through sacrifice, priesthood, and altar.” (CC pp. 378-379)

As the Twelve now go into the world healing diseases and proclaiming that the kingdom of God is near, they do so as members of the household of faith. Wherever they preach the Gospel and it is received, *there* is the οἶκος, the household of God. Their ministry, as it were, creates the new temple of God (cf. Jn 4:20–24). The dust from any place that does not receive their preaching is

profane, to be shaken off, lest it stain God's people and be brought into God's house as they enter the presence of the "new temple." As the new temple of God, Jesus is at one and the same time the sacrifice, the priest, and the altar. In the Twelve's proclamation of the kingdom that comes in Jesus and in the miracles that testify to the kingdom's presence, the kingdom is "among you" (17:21; ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστίν). Proclamation of the kingdom and healing in Jesus' name have replaced the temple. The new place of redemption is the cross and wherever the cross is proclaimed. Thus, the Twelve must conform their outward behavior to demonstrate that this is true. (CC p. 379)

Literally means "evangelizing." This proclamation naturally included both Law (threats of judgment on sin and unbelief) and Gospel (promises of blessing and eternal life to those who believe. (TLSB)

**9:1–6** Jesus sends out the 12 apostles to preach the Gospel, heal diseases, and cast out evil spirits. When modern-day Christians hear of such wondrous power and consider how few miracles they have experienced, they easily begin to feel inadequate for the service to which God calls them. However, we possess the same hope and eternal life through Christ crucified. We know that wherever that Gospel is delivered and received, the greatest healing follows. • "May God bestow on us His grace, With blessings rich provide us; And may the brightness of His face To life eternal guide us, That we His saving health may know, His gracious will and pleasure, And also to the nations show Christ's riches without measure And unto God convert them." Amen. (LSB 823:1) (TLSB)

#### *Herod Is Perplexed by Jesus*

**7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, 8 by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen. 9 Herod said, "John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he sought to see him.**

**9:7–9** Herod is reintroduced (cf 3:1); he tells that he put John the Baptist to death. This passage also raises the question of Jesus' identity—a major theme in the discourse of this chapter (vv 18–22)—as well as sets the stage for Herod's interview of Jesus on Good Friday, just before His death (23:8–9). (TLSB)

Both Matthew and Mark connect Herod's questions about the identity of Jesus with the report of John's death (Mt 14:1–2; Mk 6:14–16). Luke's location of this report here suggests a theological purpose. (Luke reports John's arrest at 3:19–20, but only here does he refer to John's death.) Jesus' ministry is being extended by the mission of the Twelve into the villages. The identity of Jesus now comes forward as the central theme. (CC p. 380)

Luke's placement of this pericope here alerts the hearer to the imminent confession of Peter and the transition from the first phase of Luke's Christology to the second phase. Herod appears twice later in Luke. In 13:31–33 Herod reportedly seeks to kill Jesus, and Jesus stands trial before Herod in 23:6–12. Here, however, Herod does not yet desire Jesus' death. The question about Jesus' identity has reached feverish proportions as Herod ponders whether Jesus is John the Baptist raised from the dead or Elijah or one of the ancient prophets. All three designations indicate a prophet of some sort. These designations place Jesus in select company and show that the title "prophet" is a positive one. (CC pp. 380–381)

**9:7 Herod the tetrarch.** Herod was at this time probably living at Tiberias, a city which he had practically rebuilt to fit in with his great plans. Rumors of the activity of a certain rabbi in Galilee may have reached the tetrarch of this province before, but he was too busy with his profligate life to pay much attention to them. (Kretzmann)

*was said by some – ὑπό τινῶν*—This phrase, repeated in 9:8 (along with the synonym ἄλλων), refers to the rumors circulating among the people. Jesus' teaching and miracles elicited various opinions from different groups within Israel. (CC p. 380)

But here, in the very region in which many of the greatest miracles of Jesus were performed, the courtiers of Herod supplied him with information concerning the movement among the people, probably not without a hint as to its possible dangerousness, for the Herodian party was strong. (Kretzmann)

*John had been raised from the dead.* Luke does not give details about John's death (see Mt 14:1–12; Mk 6:17–29), which occurred about this time, but simply notes that it had taken place (v. 9). (CSB)

The news of the great Prophet bothered Herod, it embarrassed him, it placed him in a quandary; he did not know what to make of it. (Kretzmann)

**9:8 Elijah had appeared.** Various reports came to his ears, some saying that John had risen from the dead; others, that Elijah had been revealed, for their understanding of Mal. 4, 5 was of the real Elijah; still others, that one of the old prophets had risen again. (Kretzmann)

**9:9 who is this** – “Who is this concerning whom I hear such things?” (9:9) is being asked not only by Herod, but by everyone. Soon Jesus will question the disciples about his identity and evoke the confession of Peter that he is the Messiah. One must remember that four hundred years had transpired since the last previous prophetic activity at the close of the OT period. As the Jewish rabbis said, the Holy Spirit (responsible for inspired prophecy) had departed from Israel at that time. After centuries of divine silence, suddenly John the Baptist burst onto the scene, speaking of the Spirit's return through the Coming One who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. Then Jesus shows himself to be the greatest of all the prophets, mighty in word and deed (24:19). (CC p. 381)

Herod and the people naturally conclude that Jesus stands in continuity with the OT prophetic tradition and the ministry of John the Baptist. But at this point in the narrative, no one understands that the greatest teacher and miracle worker of all must suffer and die for the sins of the people. Only after the resurrection will human eyes be opened to the messianic passion secret. (CC p. 381)

But Luke does not want the hearers of his gospel to be perplexed. To impart clarity on this vital question of Jesus' identity and role, Peter's confession and Jesus' first passion prediction will follow shortly (9:18–22). (CC p. 381)

*sought to see him – ἐζήτει ἰδεῖν αὐτόν*—The imperfect ἐζήτει is durative: Herod began and for some time continued to try to see Jesus. The language here is similar to that of 23:8, where Jesus appears before Herod in Jerusalem: “And Herod, seeing Jesus, was exceedingly glad, for he was wishing for a long time to see him” (θέλων ἰδεῖν αὐτόν). (CC p. 380)

Herod's conscience was pricking him, for he had been guilty of murder, a fact which is here merely referred to briefly. Herod knew that he had beheaded John in the prison, for the sake of his stepdaughter Salome, and now that this Prophet had arisen, with a message so much like that of the Baptist, he brooded on the matter and was anxious to see Jesus, in order that he might be satisfied as to His identity. Herod's position and manner of acting is that of a great many people that do not wish to break entirely with the Church. They may, under circumstances, hear a sermon and even form a liking for some preacher. But when they are placed before the choice: Christ or the world, they choose the latter. But their conscience will give them no rest; in the midst of all apparent happiness their defection gives them no peace. God is not mocked. (Kretzmann)

**9:7–9** After the Twelve are sent out to preach and heal, there is such an outburst of prophetic activity that even Herod takes notice. Unfortunately, many people today have the same kind of puzzled but faithless reaction when the Gospel reaches their ears. By God's Spirit and grace, our hearing of the Gospel will bear different fruit, that is, faithful commitment and the eager expectation of Jesus' life-giving blessings. • Lord, open my heart to the blessings of Your Gospel. Grant me Your Spirit, that I never fail to appreciate the privilege of knowing You rightly and of being Your child and heir. Amen. (TLSB)

#### *Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand*

**10** On their return the apostles told him all that they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida. **11** When the crowds learned it, they followed him, and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing. **12** Now the day began to wear away, and the twelve came and said to him, "Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate place." **13** But he said to them, "**You give them something to eat.**" They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people." **14** For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, "**Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.**" **15** And they did so, and had them all sit down. **16** And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. **17** And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

**9:10–17** The feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle besides Jesus' resurrection that is reported in all four Gospels (see notes on Mk 6:30–44; Jn 6:1–14). (CSB)

The feeding of the five thousand is the climax of Jesus' Galilean ministry, just as the Last Supper is the climax of Jesus' Jerusalem ministry and the meal at Emmaus is the climax of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances in Luke. (CC p. 385)

Luke alone stresses the teachings about the kingdom of God in the introduction to this miracle. The simple frame first has the disciples narrating to Jesus the things they did when he sent them out (namely, "to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick" [9:2]) and then concludes with the notice that Jesus spoke about the kingdom and healed the sick (9:11). The use of λαλέω, "speak," with the indirect object "concerning the kingdom of God" indicates that Jesus is speaking prophetically. Luke emphasizes how the teaching and the miracles of Jesus complement each other. While Matthew (14:14) mentions healing and Mark (6:34) refers to Jesus' teaching immediately preceding the feeding miracle, only Luke (9:11) has both healing and teaching, with the teaching of the kingdom of God taking precedence. The kingdom of God comes as the Messiah teaches, heals, and feeds his people, as was promised by the prophets of old. In the post-

Pentecost life of the church, God's kingdom will continue to come through teaching based on the Word, through Baptism, and through God's feeding of his people in the Lord's Supper. (CC p. 386)

Lk 9:10–17 must be considered within the context of 9:1–50, the climax of Jesus' Galilean ministry. Within that context it serves as the great act of Jesus that elicits Peter's confession and Jesus' first prediction of his passion. As such, it brings the table fellowship motif into one of Luke's most critical sections and shows that table fellowship is an essential part of Lukan Christology. (CC p. 386)

Lk 9:10–17 has an OT precedent. For Luke more than the other synoptics, 2 Ki 4:1–7, 38–41, and especially 42–44, are a significant part of the OT background along with Exodus 16 and Numbers 11. Jesus is the prophet like Moses, who feeds the people *in the wilderness* (Lk 9:12). He also continues the prophetic line as Elisha followed Elijah. This is consistent with Luke's Christology, for only Luke's gospel reports that in Jesus' Nazareth sermon, Jesus compares himself to Elisha, who, with Elijah, serves as an example of a prophet rejected by Israel but received by Gentile pagans (4:25–27). If John the Baptist is the new Elijah (1:17; cf. 9:30; Mal 4:5–6), then Jesus would be the new Elisha, who was the successor of Elijah and who in many respects surpassed his predecessor. Elisha received a *double measure of the Spirit* who was upon Elijah (2 Ki 2:9–15). Similarly, the Spirit would be far more evident in Jesus' ministry than in the ministry of John, his predecessor (Lk 3:16, 22; 4:1, 18). Elijah and Elisha are the only ones in the OT to raise the dead, as Jesus does in the NT (cf. also Paul in Acts 20:7–12). (CC pp. 386–387)

These prophetic alignments are profound Christological statements, indicating that the OT promises that God would visit his people and feed them with the bread of life are coming true in Jesus Christ. The table fellowship between God and his people, foreshadowed in the ministries of the prophets Moses and Elisha, will reach its fulfillment in the ministry of Jesus, who feeds the multitudes in the wilderness with abundant bread and who will feed his church with his own body and blood. (CC p. 387)

The synoptic gospels do not record the reaction of the crowds found in Jn 6:14–15. Instead they include a different reaction: the Christological confession of Peter. Only in Luke does Peter's confession immediately follow the feeding of the five thousand. In response to the questions of Jesus as to his identity, *and to the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand*, Peter declares that Jesus is "the Christ of God" (9:20). Peter's reaction indicates that Luke considers this feeding to be a messianic miracle, a confirmation that Jesus is *the prophet* of Deut 18:15. He feeds his people with the eternal bread of life at his table fellowship of teaching and eating, the fulfillment of the prophetic pattern in the OT. This miracle and its theological significance build on the meals Jesus has eaten with Levi (Lk 5:27–39) and the Pharisee (7:36–50). (CC p. 388)

Luke also ties the passion of Jesus as the Christ to the table fellowship of Jesus. The one who comes to fulfill God's OT promises to feed his creation is the same one who suffers and dies and rises on the third day. This will become more explicit in Luke on the night in which Jesus was betrayed and on the first Easter morning. Thus the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand is part of the Lukan table fellowship theme that will find completion in Luke 22 and 24, and it also anticipates the two major elements of that fellowship: (1) Christological teaching by Jesus himself about the passion and resurrection of the Messiah and (2) eating with the Messiah, who is to be offered up for the life of the world. (CC p. 388)

The day begins with the news of the death of John the Baptist. It continues with the return of the disciples from a short-term missionary journey. Following the disciples are five thousand men



and their families. Jesus tried to get away from the crowd by crossing the sea, only to find the crowd waiting for him on the other side. He wanted to mourn in solitude, but instead he was surrounded by people. He wanted to spend time with just the disciples, but instead he got a crowd. He wanted time to think, but instead he and people to face. (A Gentle Thunder – Hearing God Through the Storm – Max Lucado p. 90)

**9:10** *on their return –When the apostles returned from their first missionary journey, they related to the Lord in detail what they had done and what success they had had. They had labored with all the enthusiasm of beginners; it had been a strenuous experience for them. And therefore Jesus took them along with Him, He withdrew with them alone into the neighborhood of the city Bethsaida Julias, on the northeast coast of the Sea of Galilee, not far from the river Jordan. Note: It is altogether well-pleasing to the Lord if one of His servants, after a period of strenuous activity in the interest of the kingdom of God, withdraws for a time and gains new physical strength for the new demands awaiting him. But the withdrawal of Jesus did not remain undiscovered. (Kretzmann)*

*apostles – οἱ ἀπόστολοι*—The Twelve of 9:1 are now referred to as “the apostles” after they were sent by Jesus (9:2; ἀπέστειλεν) to preach the kingdom and to heal. They were first called “apostles” in 6:13. (CC p. 382)

*told him – διηγήσαντο*—This is the verbal form of Luke’s noun for Gospel reports (1:1; διήγησις). In narrating what happened when they preached the kingdom and healed, the apostles begin the process of Gospel narration, telling the story of Jesus and the kingdom. This will become one of their premier tasks after Pentecost, eventually encompassing written accounts and the four gospels themselves. (CC p. 382)

*Bethsaida.* On the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee. (TLSB)

*βηθσαϊδά*—Only Luke names the city close to where the miraculous feeding took place, located north of the Sea of Galilee. The place is desolate (9:12), so εἰς must mean into the region belonging to the city. (CC p. 382)

**9:11** *the crowds* – The multitudes found out about it, and, some of them having noticed the direction in which He sailed, they followed afoot around the north end of the lake. So the recess of Jesus was of but short duration, since His kind heart would not turn from the people after their long journey to find Him. He willingly received the multitude, and He began speaking to them, and continued for the larger part of the day, on His favorite topic, the kingdom of God, what it means, and how they might enter into it. And all those that were in need of His healing hand He did not disappoint, but ministered unto them with all the compassion and power of His Savior’s heart. Note: Jesus always has time for us; our prayers are never unwelcome to Him; His ear is always inclined to those that put their trust in Him, whether it be in matters concerning this world or that to come. (Kretzmann)

*spoke to them – ἐλάλει*—In Luke 1–2, the verb is used frequently when speaking about the words of the Lord through angels or prophets. It is used of the teaching of Jesus in 5:4; 8:49; 9:11; 11:37; 22:47; 24:6, 32. Perhaps the imperfect carries the force of “continued this prophetic speaking.” (CC p. 382)

Jesus’ ministry was one of revealing and healing, teaching about the Kingdom and relieving human suffering. (TLSB)

*kingdom of God* – περί τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ—“Luke clearly wants to relate the coming miracle to Jesus’ kingdom-preaching” (J. Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 766). (CC p. 382)

*cured those who had need of healing* – ἐλάλει ... ἰάτο—Jesus instructed the Twelve to follow his careful pattern of preaching confirmed with miracles (see commentary on 9:2). Jesus himself now resumes that pattern in the introduction to the feeding miracle. The feast in the wilderness was preceded by Jesus’ normal ministerial practice, which foreshadowed the apostolic ministry of Word and Sacrament. (CC p. 383)

**9:12** *now the day began to wear away*. After the preaching and healing, the question was raised about food and lodging because they were in an isolated place. Jesus may have introduced the question (see Jn 6:5), but the Synoptics indicate that the disciples were also concerned. (CSB)

People had gone to great lengths to see Jesus. (TLSB)

ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤρξατο κλίνειν—Most main meals and most theologically significant Lukan meals take place as the day is declining. The Passover must take place in the evening, and Luke carefully reports in similar language that the Emmaus meal occurred when the day was drawing to a close (24:29; κέκλικεν ἤδη ἡ ἡμέρα). (CC p. 383)

Jesus had been busy preaching and healing without ceasing all day long. But now the day began to decline, to draw near its close, bringing an unwelcome interruption in the Lord’s beneficent labors. The apostles felt it their duty to interfere at this point. They urged Jesus to dismiss the people, to send them away. The place where they were was an uninhabited region; but there were towns, Bethsaida Julias itself and other small hamlets, within walking distance round about; there the people might go and find places to lodge and also provisions for themselves. The disciples were not yet filled with the love for others which recognizes no sacrifice and sternly represses all selfishness. Their words rather express a certain peevishness as though they had been bothered long enough by these unwelcome guests. (Kretzmann)

*the twelve* – οἱ δώδεκα—Luke returns to calling the disciples “the Twelve” as in 8:1; 9:1, after calling them “the apostles” in 9:10. (CC p. 383)

*desolate place* – ἐν ἐρήμῳ τόπῳ ἐσμέν—The wilderness locale recalls the miracles in the Sinai Desert of the feeding of the children of Israel with manna and quail (Exodus 16; Numbers 11). The dramatic scene is so reminiscent of the exodus deliverance that the faithful of Israel would conclude that Jesus is now performing a miracle that recapitulates and fulfills God’s miraculous feeding of his people through Moses. (CC p. 383)

**9:13** *You give them something to eat*. Jesus unexpectedly challenges the apostles. Where earlier, they had to depend on the hospitality of others for food, now, ironically, Jesus asks them to provide for those hearing the Gospel. (TLSB)

*five loaves and two fish* – ἄρτοι πέντε καὶ ἰχθύες δύο—In the OT, bread is not just the essential staple of physical sustenance. It is also a significant metaphor for spiritual sustenance provided by God (cf. Deut 8:3; Is 55:1–3; Prov 9:1–6). J. Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 767, notes that the synoptics all use ἰχθύς to refer to the fish (as compared to John’s ὀψάριον) and suggests that this may have led to the early Christian use of the letters from the Greek word for fish, ΙΧΘΥΣ (ICHTHYS), as part of their confession as to who Jesus is: Jesus (Ἰησοῦς) Christ (Χριστός) of God (Θεοῦ) Son (Υἱός) Savior (Σωτήρ), especially in connection with the Ethiopian eunuch’s confession in Acts 8:37. Perhaps when early Christians heard the account of how the five

thousand ate the fish, they thought of feasting on the flesh of Christ. L. H. Appleton and S. Bridges, *Symbolism in Liturgical Art*, comment on the early Christian symbol of the fish with the basket of bread: “A Eucharistic symbol used in the catacombs. Seemingly an allusion to the feeding of the multitude by Christ, its real significance was sacramental. In the most familiar example of this, a glass of red wine is included in the basket of bread. *The inclusion of the fish strengthens the meaning by implication that the food is Christ Himself*” (New York: Scribner, 1959, 38–39; emphasis added). (CC p. 383)

*all these people* – λαός—This word is sometimes a technical term for God’s faithful people (see comments at 1:10). (CC p. 383)

**9:14** *five thousand men* – ἄνδρες πεντακισχίλιοι—The fact that only the men are numbered indicates that the number of people who actually partook of this miraculous food was more than five thousand. Matthew clarifies this by stating “besides women and children” (Mt 14:21). In the exodus account too only the men are numbered; in Numbers 1–2, only men twenty or more years old are counted. (CC p. 383)

As in OT reports about the exodus (Ex 12:37), women and children are not included in the number. (TLSB)

*sit down in groups of about fifty.* Echoes OT descriptions about Israel’s flight from Egypt (Ex 18:21). The upcoming feeding miracle thus invites comparison with miracles God worked through Moses during the desert wanderings (cf Jn 6:22–59). (TLSB)

κατακλίνατε—The same word is used at the meal with the Pharisee (7:36–50), the banquet parable (14:8), and the Emmaus meal (24:30). To recline is a posture characteristic of festive banquets (cf. J. Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 688). (CC p. 383)

κλισίας ... πενήκοντα—These are groups of people eating together. That they are to be in groups of fifty each could reflect one of the levels of the administrative division of Israel (Ex 18:21, 25; cf. 1QS 2:21–22) or the approximate size of a house church—or both, or neither. (CC pp. 383–384)

One of them had even figured out that the amount of money on hand would not be sufficient to buy bread for all those present, since there were some five thousand men present, without the women and children. And all this fuss and excitement with Jesus standing before them, of whom they knew and had the evidence of their senses that He was able to help at all times, even when death had laid his cold hands on a person and driven away the living soul. The disciples certainly do not appear to good advantage in this story. Note: This same lack of faith is found all too often in the Christians of these latter days. Worry and care for the body is all too apt to take the place of firm, and undoubting trust in the providence and goodness of Christ and our heavenly Father. That is the great fault that we, also in our days, not only on account of food, but also in manifold troubles and temptations feel that we know well how to figure out what we need, and how these needs should be met and help given to us. But if it is not there quickly as we like it, then nothing remains of our figuring but discontent and sadness. And it would be far better if we would leave God to deal with the situation and would not think of what we need. (Kretzmann)

**9:16** The five-fold action is typical of the way in which all Jewish meals would begin. The first two actions are in participial form and are dependent on the three main verbs: taking and looking up, he blessed, broke, and gave. (CC p. 384)

*taking* – λαβών—This begins the three most significant Lukan meals: here, the Last Supper (22:19), and at Emmaus (24:30). (CC p. 384)

*looked up* – ἀναβλέψας—This action is unique to the feeding of the five thousand and suggests an OT precedent (Gen 15:5; Deut 4:19). (CC p. 384)

*gave a blessing* – εὐλόγησεν—Blessing the food was the opening prayer of the meal. This first main verb, an aorist, marks the meal's beginning. The blessing would recognize that the food is a gift from God and the result of God's blessing—his grace and favor. Ex 23:25 promises that if the Israelites serve Yahweh, "he will bless [their] bread," meaning that he will bless Israel with abundant bread, as also in Deut 28:5: "Blessed will be your basket and kneading trough [in which bread dough was kneaded]." Bread is associated with God's blessing also in Ps 132:15; Prov 22:9. The blessing of the food may have begun with a blessing of God himself, as in later Jewish prayers of this form: "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ... who gives bread ... who gives the fruit of the vine." (CC p. 384)

Such prayer invites comparison to other passages, e.g., the Last Supper (22:17–20) and the event in Emmaus (24:30). (TLSB)

*broke* – κατέκλασεν—This action by the one presiding lies behind the formula ἡ κλάσις τοῦ ἄρτου, "the breaking of the bread," a way to refer to the Emmaus meal (24:35) and to the Lord's Supper in the early church (Acts 2:42). The compound κατακλάω is used only here and in the parallel at Mk 6:41; κλάω is used with "bread" for special meals and for the Lord's Supper. (CC pp. 384-385)

*gave them to the disciples to set before the people* – ἐδίδου παραθεῖναι τῷ ὄχλῳ—The imperfect ἐδίδου suggests ongoing action. The miracle is that while Jesus starts with a small amount of food, he keeps giving more and more. He is the source. The Twelve are the ones who distribute the food. It is part of their apostolic ministry, alongside the preaching of the kingdom and healing. Cf. Acts 6. (CC p. 385)

The institution of the Lord's Supper is unique, with Jesus' statements "This is my body" and "This cup [is] the new covenant in my blood" (Lk 22:19–20). But much of the language of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand is also found in the institution narrative in 22:19 and the meal at Emmaus in 24:30. G. Wainwright has pointed out the common language between the feeding miracles in the gospels and the institution narratives. References to the Emmaus account have been added in brackets:

1. Jesus took (λαβών/ἔλαβεν): Matt. 14:19; 15:36; 26:26; Mark 6:41; 8:6; 14:22; Luke 9:16; 22:19; [24:30]; John 6:11; I Cor. 11:23.
2. Bread (τοὺς ἄρτους/ἄρτον): Matt. 14:19; 15:36; 26:26; Mark 6:41; 8:6; 14:22; Luke 9:16; 22:19; [24:30]; John 6:11; I Cor. 11:23.
3. He looked up to heaven (ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν): Matt. 14:19; Mark 6:41; Luke 9:16.
4. He blessed/gave thanks (εὐλόγησεν/εὐλογήσας/εὐχαριστήσας) Matt. 14:19; 15:36; 26:26; Mark 6:41; 8:6; 14:22; Luke 9:16; 22:19; [24:30]; John 6:11; I Cor. 11:24.
5. He broke (κλάσας/ἔκλασεν/κατέκλασεν): Matt. 14:19; 15:36; 26:26; Mark 6:41; 8:6; 14:22; Luke 9:16; 22:19; [24:30, 35]; John 6:11; I Cor. 11:24.
6. He gave (ἔδωκεν/ἐδίδου/δούζ/διέδωκεν): Matt. 14:19; 15:36; 26:26; Mark 6:41; 8:6; 14:23; Luke 9:16; 22:19; [24:30]; John 6:11.

7. The crowds/the disciples ate (ἔφαγον/φάγετε): Matt. 14:20; 15:37; 26:26; Mark 6:42; 8:8; Luke 9:17; cf. I Cor. 11:26.

This meal language links together the wilderness feeding, the Last Supper, and the meal at Emmaus, suggesting an interpretation of the feeding of the five thousand as an adumbration of the Last Supper, and the Last Supper as the precedent for the Lord's presiding at post-Easter meals, both the Emmaus meal and celebrations of the Lord's Supper in the church. (CC p. 388)

But Jesus now took the matter in hand. He had His disciples command the people to recline on the grass which grew at that place, in dining parties, or companies, of fifty each. He was preparing to spread a banquet before them. Then He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and, looking up to heaven, He spoke a blessing upon them, He blessed the food. Then He broke both bread and fishes into smaller pieces and gave these to His disciples, who acted as His waiters upon this momentous occasion. (Kretzmann)

**9:17** *were satisfied* – ἐχορτάσθησαν πάντες—When God fed the children of Israel with manna, they collected only enough for each day. Except for the day before the Sabbath, any leftovers would rot (Ex 16:4–36). When the Creator comes to his creation as a creature in Jesus, he feeds his people to full satisfaction, and there are leftovers (τὸ περισσεύσαν), twelve baskets full, one for each disciple. The feeding dramatizes Jesus' beatitude "Blessed [you] hungering now, for you will be satisfied" (6:21; χορτασθήσεσθε). The prodigal son "longed to be satisfied [χορτασθῆναι] out of the pods that the pigs ate" (15:16), but he would be satisfied when he feasts upon the fatted calf that the father prepares for his homecoming. (CC p. 385)

Everyone left this meal full. This was not always the case, for malnutrition was common in Jesus' day. (TLSB)

*picked up twelve baskets of broken pieces.* This act served as an example of avoiding wastefulness and as a demonstration that everyone had been adequately fed. (CSB)

This number evokes the exodus account by calling to mind the 12 tribes of Israel (Ex 24:4; Nu 1:44; Dt 1:23). (TLSB)

τὸ περισσεύσαν ... κλασμάτων—The broken pieces represent the abundance of the miracle and the evidence that the Messiah has come to feed his people with abundant food. Some OT miracles were similar but less spectacular. God promised that on every sixth day (Friday) a day's worth of manna would be left over so the people would not have to gather it on the Sabbath (Ex 16:4–5, 22–27). Elisha provided surplus food in 2 Ki 4:1–7, 42–44, but not in 2 Ki 4:38–41. Through Moses and Elijah God provided his people just with enough food for each day (Ex 16:4, 17–21; 1 Kings 17). Cf. the petition for "*daily bread*" in the Lord's Prayer (Lk 11:3). (CC p. 385)

In the feeding of the five thousand, the Creator gives substantial food to his creation through the Messiah *in abundance*. Everyone present at the meal was satisfied, and the over-abundance (τὸ περισσεύσαν) filled twelve baskets (9:17). The leftover bread is a sign that the abundance of the new era of salvation is present among the crowds in the person of Jesus. *When Jesus instructs his disciples to pray for bread in the Lord's Prayer (11:3), they know that he has provided and will continue to provide both earthly bread and the bread of the future age.* In the same way, when they pray "Thy kingdom come," they know that Jesus already brings God's kingdom. Table fellowship with Jesus is a foretaste of the future eschatological meal. "The meals of Jesus during His ministry were signs of the coming feast in the kingdom: they were a throwing forward into the present of the first part of the future feast."

**9:10–17** In a miracle reminiscent of the manna in the wilderness, Jesus feeds the multitude that have come out to the wilderness to hear Him. Like the confused apostles, we often face life's challenges armed only with our sin-starved wisdom and resources. Yet, Jesus stands ready to help. Just as He miraculously fed the 5,000, He is willing also and able to provide for us in time of need. • Lord, teach me to turn to You in every time of need, for I can do all things through You, as You strengthen me. Amen. (TLSB)

*Peter's Confession of Christ*

**18 Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" 19 And they answered, "John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen." 20 Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God."**

A certain mystery surrounds Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ. Why didn't someone make this confession sooner? Much has happened. Evidence is there. Yet no human being has made the bold declaration that Jesus is the Christ of God. Peter is the first disciple, in fact, he is the first human being in the gospel, to make this confession. (CC p. 391)

But all hearers of this gospel know, from others in the gospel, that Jesus is the Christ. The angels were the first to confess that he is the Christ (2:11). Then the demons acknowledge him (4:41; cf. 8:28). But none of the human participants in the gospel narrative acknowledge that he is the Christ until Peter's confession at the end of Jesus' Galilean ministry. (CC p. 391)

How can it be that angels and demons understand as a matter of course that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, whereas his disciples, his friends, his relatives, and the general populace struggle with his identity? Perhaps the answer to these puzzling questions may be found in the very character of Jesus and his mission: he brings the kingdom, but he is veiled in flesh, humility, and rejection. For humans, Jesus creates division, just as Simeon prophesied: "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign spoken against, and of you yourself, through your soul a sword will go" (2:34–35). Jesus was a controversial figure who created a mixed response in those he visited with his presence. His teaching and his miracles did not always elicit the confession that we might expect from people. His relatives and friends in his hometown of Nazareth tried to kill him by throwing him over a cliff (4:29). Then, after he raised the widow's son at Nain, the people thought he was a great prophet, a visitation from God (7:16). Yet John the Baptist and his disciples asked him, "Are you the Coming One or should we wait for another?" (7:19–20). Jesus answered by performing still more messianic miracles and by quoting Isaiah (7:21–22). (CC pp. 391-392)

Jesus himself taught about this mixed response in the parable of the sower (8:4–18). There and in the theme of opened and closed eyes (see comments on 2:30), the doctrine of election is part of the mystery. Some see and hear and believe, but many do not. (CC p. 392)

Most were amazed at his teaching and his miracles. They realized that they were in the presence of a great prophet like Elijah or another of the prophets of old. But up to this point in the gospel, only angels and demons have perceived the spiritual reality that was hidden from so many human eyes: Jesus is more than a prophet—he is the Son of God, the Christ. The angels announced his presence and declared that there was glory in highest heaven and peace on earth (2:10–14). The demons shuddered for they knew he was present to banish them and destroy their power (8:28, 31). Only the Christ could bring about this cataclysmic change. Only the Son of God could unite

heaven and earth in peace. Angels and demons knew that Jesus was present to release creation from its bondage, to free the world from Satan's grasp, to forgive sins and heal diseases. How will human beings be led to make that confession? (CC p. 392)

The identity of Jesus is the question during his ministry in Galilee. As the gospel progresses, the hearer is aware of a certain tension that builds because no one confesses Jesus as the Christ. Opinions abound; rumors circulate. Speculation is rampant. Even royal interest is aroused (9:7–9). (CC p. 392)

Finally, Jesus takes the initiative. He sets the stage and creates the occasion. *He asks*, “Who do the crowds say I am?” (9:18). The answer is the same as that known to Herod (9:7–9): John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the ancient prophets. “But you—who do you say I am?” Jesus asks (9:20). And the light finally dawns (cf. 1:78–79) on Peter: “The Christ of God.” (CC p. 392)

Why does this confession crystalize at this point in Jesus' Galilean ministry? The answer lies in what came just before this confession. *The great miracle of the feeding of the five thousand elicits Peter's confession that Jesus is “the Christ of God.”* When the people see this miracle they know that Jesus is the new Moses come to feed his people, and there is abundance. They had read the OT and they knew that a prophet like Moses but greater than Moses would come, for he would be the Messiah, the Christ. That is what Moses himself promised in Deut 18:15: “Yahweh your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren—him you shall heed.” *The feeding of the five thousand was the culminating miraculous sign that demonstrated Jesus' prophetic Messiahship.* (CC pp. 392-303)

Luke has connected the feeding of the five thousand, the confession of Peter, and the first passion prediction in one integrated narrative. The comparison between Lk 9:21 and Mk 8:30 is significant. In 9:21, Luke heightens the messianic secret, which is prominently developed in Mark, by adding “commanded” (παρήγγειλεν) to “rebuking” (ἐπιτιμήσας). (Mk 8:30 has simply “and he rebuked them.”) Furthermore, Luke begins 9:21 with “But he” (ὁ δέ). This ties 9:21–22 directly to 9:18–20 and emphasizes Jesus' commanding. “This” (τούτο) refers to the confession that Jesus is the Christ. This messianic secret is now tied inextricably to Christ's passion. After Peter's bold confession that Jesus is “the Christ of God,” Jesus charges and commands his disciples to tell no one. With his “But he ... saying” (ὁ δέ ... εἰπών), Luke connects Peter's confession to the first passion prediction of 9:22. The messianic secret is now Luke's passion secret. This is unique to Luke. In the other synoptic gospels, the disciples are commanded to keep secret that Jesus is the Messiah or Christ. But here in Luke and in the second and third predictions of the passion in Luke (9:45 and 18:34), Luke ties the messianic secret to the passion. The disciples are to keep secret the fact that the Messiah must suffer and die, then rise. Luke shows a gradual movement toward total misunderstanding and silence. By the end of the gospel, Luke has demonstrated that the disciples are completely confused concerning the purpose of Jesus' Messiahship and consider the prospect of an empty tomb and a risen Christ to be utter nonsense. It seems that right after the light dawned on Peter, the picture began to become clouded over again. (CC p. 393)

**9:18** *now it happened* – καὶ ἐγένετο—This is a classic example of where καὶ ἐγένετο introduces a major passage that shifts the narrative in a new direction. The passion of Jesus is now introduced explicitly, and the second phase of Luke's Christology will begin to take more definitive shape. (CC p. 390)

It was some time before Jesus was able to withdraw from the neighborhood of the Sea of Galilee and find time for rest and uninterrupted intercourse with His disciples. But when the occasion

offered, He gladly availed Himself of the opportunity, traveling up into the northern part of Gaulanitis. Here He had leisure for prayer. And here He could speak to His disciples alone, to the Twelve that were with Him. (Kretzmann)

*he was praying* – ἐν τῷ εἶναι αὐτὸν προσευχόμενον—Jesus is often found praying at significant moments: e.g., his baptism (3:21) and his transfiguration (9:28). (CC p. 390)

*disciples were with him* – This happened in private. Luke connects Jesus' question to His having just been in communion with the Father in prayer. He is the Christ of God, sent to do the will of God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

*Who do the crowds say I am?* The report brought by the disciples was the same as the one that reached Herod (see vv. 7–8). This event occurred to the north, outside Herod's territory, in the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi (see Mt 16:13). (CSB)

This identity question was highlighted in the episode involving Herod (vv 7–9). (TLSB)

οἱ ὄχλοι—The crowds represent an outer circle of those hearing and observing Jesus' ministry. The innermost circle is the Twelve; next are the seventy(-two), other disciples, and the faithful remnant of "the people" (ὁ λαός), then the crowds, and finally the religious establishment. (CC p. 390)

**9:19** *John the Baptist...Elijah...prophets* – Ἰωάννην τὸν βαπτιστὴν, ἄλλοι δὲ Ἡλίαν, ἄλλοι δὲ ὅτι προφήτης τις τῶν ἀρχαίων ἀνέστη—See 9:7; these categories are related to Luke's prophet Christology. Jesus is evaluated in terms of the prophets who came before him. His identity is the issue. His fame has been spreading, and people are speculating. Jesus himself now forces the disciples to sort out the alternatives. (CC p. 390)

The apostles' answers are reasonable. After all, John was the greatest prophet ever (see note, 7:28), and Elijah was expected to reappear at the dawn of the messianic age. (TLSB)

**9:20** *who do you say* – ὑμεῖς δὲ τίνα με λέγετε εἶναι ... —Note the emphatic ὑμεῖς δέ at the beginning of the sentence: "But you!" accenting the disciples' perspective. Note also εἶναι at the end, emphasizing Jesus' identity. Will the disciples identify Jesus as the others have? How do they hear his teachings? How do they read his signs? (CC p. 390)

Jesus puts His disciples on the spot. This induces Peter to make the first full-fledged confession of Jesus as Messiah. (TLSB)

*Peter answered.* He was the spokesman for the disciples. (CSB)

*The Christ of God.* This predicted Deliverer (the Messiah) had been awaited for centuries (see Jn 4:25). (CSB)

Peter's unequivocal identification of Jesus' messianic status is a monumental event in the Gospel. Henceforth, Jesus begins to speak openly about His death (v 22). (TLSB)

τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ—"The Messiah of God"; this is the first *proper* identification of Jesus by a human participant in the gospel. (CC p. 390)



**9:18–20** For the first time in the Gospel, Peter makes a clear confession of Jesus as the Messiah. All of our words and actions should similarly confess the One who is the only life and hope of the world, though we often fail in this regard. When we fail—indeed even when we deny our Lord—Jesus treats us just as He did Peter. He faithfully calls us to repent, and He forgives our weaknesses. • Lord Jesus, grant us grace to believe Your promise that if we confess You before men, You will confess us before the Father in heaven. Amen. (TLSB)

*Jesus Foretells His Death*

**21 And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, 22 saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”**

**9:21** *commanded them to tell this to no one.* The people had false notions about the Messiah and needed to be taught further before Jesus identified himself explicitly to the public. He had a crucial schedule to keep and could not be interrupted by premature reactions (see notes on Mt 8:4; 16:20; Mk 1:34). (CSB)

This is an aorist (participle) of concurrent action, referring not to an action which precedes, but to simultaneous action. The Christ of God is to be known and confessed according to His saving work – His suffering and rejection, His being killed and raised again to life. Accordingly, the so-called Messianic Secret is not an arcane knowledge which the inner circle of disciples must guard; Jesus will be rightly confessed only when all that must be done to Him, and all that He must do is brought to completion. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

Many Jews expected the Messiah to be a military conqueror like David, one who would forcibly expel the occupying Romans. This helps explain why Jesus often commanded silence about His messianic identity. He did not want mistaken understandings about His person and work to take root. (TLSB)

**9:22** *must suffer.* Jesus’ first explicit prediction of his death (for later references see v. 44; 12:50; 17:25; 18:31–33; cf. 24:7, 25–27). (CSB)

First of Jesus’ repeated predictions about His arrest, trial and conviction, crucifixion, and resurrection (cf 9:44; 13:31–33; 18:31–33). (TLSB)

In this first passion prediction (Lk 9:22) and the subsequent passion predictions (9:44; 18:31–33) and statements (13:33; 17:25; 24:7, 26, 44), δεῖ (“it is necessary”) introduces the divine necessity of suffering as the path to glory. The suffering of Christ (πολλὰ παθεῖν, “suffer many things” [9:22]) is part of the necessity. This terminology refers to the entire passion, from the night on which he was betrayed (including the Last Supper) until his resurrection on the third day. All the other verbs here (ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι [“be rejected”], ἀποκτανθῆναι [“be killed”], ἐγερθῆναι [“be raised”]) are in the passive and highlight Christ’s passive obedience. All the evangelists hint at the passion of Jesus before the first passion prediction, in his rejection (ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι) by his own people (λαός) and by the Jewish religious authorities. In this passion prediction, only the religious establishment is named. But all of Israel, including Jesus’ own disciples will abandon and deny him. Everyone rejects Jesus because of the scandal of his ministry, which is the theology of the cross: his poverty, humility, service, suffering, and shameful crucifixion. The list of the three groups here—elders, chief priests, and scribes—is the most complete list of those members of the Sanhedrin responsible for his death. The elders are laymen, the chief priests are Sadducees, and the scribes are leaders of the Pharisees. The ultimate rejection is death (ἀποκτανθῆναι), and Jesus’ death encapsulates all that God’s prophets endured. The OT prophets

not only taught and performed miracles, but many were rejected to the point of death (cf. 11:47–51; 13:31–35). But Jesus will be raised by the Father on the third day. This indicates the Father’s vindication after Jesus’ victory on the cross. (CC pp. 393-394)

With the passion prediction (9:22), the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah is expressed in terms of historical particularities: the religious establishment will reject him, causing his suffering and death, but on the third day he will be raised. And although his identity was important, equally important were his deeds. Jesus’ deeds were the real stumbling block for everyone until after the resurrection, for it was what he had to do—to suffer and die—for the world’s salvation that scandalized them: “But he, rebuking them, commanded them to speak this to no one, saying, ‘It is necessary that the Son of Man suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised’ ” (9:21–22). (CC p. 394)

Why the messianic passion secret? First, since Jesus had not yet completed these divine necessities, he could not yet be publicized as the one who had accomplished the Father’s plan. After the resurrection, Jesus’ task would be complete, and then the Good News was to be preached to all. A related consideration is that the full prophet Christology involved both the first phase of teaching and miracles and the second phase of suffering, rejection, and death (see the excursus “Luke’s Prophet Christology”). To proclaim Jesus as Messiah now during the first phase could give a truncated picture of the Messiah’s work and lead people to conclude that the role of the Messiah was only to carry out the first phase. Still another consideration is that if the full plan were made known now, many might try to dissuade Jesus from traveling to Jerusalem and the cross—as Peter attempts in Mt 16:22. The enthusiasm and worldly expectations of the crowds often were a hindrance to Jesus’ ministry (e.g., Mk 7:36–37; 9:25; Jn 6:15). So the divine plan was to wait until the appropriate time before revealing the full portrait of Jesus, the Messiah (cf. John 17). (CC p. 394)

**9:21–22** Now identified as the Christ, Jesus challenges His disciples’ understanding of that role by revealing His impending suffering and death. It is painful to admit that we need a Messiah who would suffer and die for us—to make up for our failures and rebellions. Thankfully, Jesus was willing to be born under the Law, to fulfill all righteousness, and then pay the full price of our redemption on Calvary’s cross. • “Come to Calv’ry’s holy mountain, Sinners, ruined by the fall; Here a pure and healing fountain Flows for you, for me, for all, In a full, perpetual tide, Opened when our Savior died.” Amen. (LSB 435:1) (TLSB)

#### *Take Up Your Cross and Follow Jesus*

**23 And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. 25 For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? 26 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. 27 But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.”**

**9:23-27** his section opens with a reference to the cross (9:23) and closes with a reference to the kingdom (9:27). The central statement is about the two alternatives: life according to the world or real life with God (9:25). Alongside these three sayings are two others (9:24, 26), which describe the eschatological consequences of following—or not following—Jesus. Thus Jesus speaks of both inaugurated eschatology (9:23, 25, 27) and the final consummation (9:24, 26). He

emphasizes the present consequences of the arrival of the kingdom of God in himself. (CC p. 396)

Jesus has just predicted his rejection, death, and resurrection. But in that first passion prediction there is no mention of Jesus' death on the cross. When he turns to address *all*, however, he mentions a cross. This is the first reference to a cross (σταυρόν) or crucifixion (σταυρώω) in Luke's gospel. The only references to the cross outside of the passion narrative itself pertain to the *disciples* and not to Jesus. (CC p. 396)

**9:23-24** Having revealed that His ministry will include rejection and death on the cross, Jesus explains that His disciples must be prepared to experience the same things. Though the cost of discipleship can be steep, wonderful promises also apply. Those who surrender their lives (lose their lives) to Jesus and His Gospel unfailingly receive salvation and eternity with God (save their lives). (TLSB)

**9:23** *all* – What follows is not only for the inner circle of the disciples, but for all believers. To desire to live one's life is to turn away from Him who is the Lord of life, who willingly gives up his life. To have Him is to have all that He accomplishes and does for sinners. To lose Him is to lose what He gives and the fruit of self-giving. To give up one's life for His sake is to cling to Him who willingly gives Himself up for us. Thus, the way the Lord follows becomes as a matter of course the way of the man or woman who follows Him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

πρὸς πάντας—This is addressed to the crowds, not just to the disciples, although disciples are the ones who experience the consequences of discipleship. (CC p. 395)

*take up his cross daily.* To follow Jesus requires self-denial, complete dedication and willing obedience. Luke emphasizes continued action, and “daily” is not mentioned explicitly in the parallel accounts (Mt 16:24–26; Mk 8:34). Disciples from Galilee knew what the cross meant, for hundreds of men had been executed by this means in their region. (CSB)

Thus the scandal of the cross is first mentioned in connection with disciples following Jesus. A disciple is called to take up his cross and follow Jesus *daily*. Only Luke has “daily” (καθ' ἡμέραν). To take up the cross daily is to submit oneself in humility to the kingdom that now comes in the preaching and the miracles of the new era of salvation. To follow Jesus means to open oneself to the contempt of the world. In the ancient world death by crucifixion was *mors turpissima* (“the utterly vile death”), the most shameful, humiliating, and repulsive fate imaginable. The early church is full of vivid examples of Christians who bore the world's contempt and hatred because of the scandal of the cross (see figure 6). Those who are bearing their cross to the place of death have already been sentenced and found guilty. Such is the condition of those who have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection (cf. Rom 6:1–4; Col 2:11–13). This cruciform life places one at odds with the world so that he must lose “the world” and his life in it so as to receive his place in the kingdom, which is *now/not yet*. But this will also allow the disciple to see the kingdom of God when it comes as Jesus takes up *his* cross. These hard words set in motion the theme of the disciples' misunderstanding about the nature of the kingdom into which they are now being called and drawn. As Jesus progresses toward Jerusalem, the incomprehension of the disciples about the kingdom will increase to the point of denial when the kingdom comes with Jesus' death. (CC pp. 396-397)

That is the Christian's cross, not a physical one like Christ's, but none the less real and burdensome. The Lord explains the necessity. He that wants to save His life, the life in this world

with its pleasures, he will lose the true life for all eternity; for the only real life is that in communion with Christ. But he that denies his old sinful self for the sake of Christ, crucifies his flesh with all lusts and desires, he will find and save his soul, he will possess it as an eternal gain, he will have eternal life as his reward of grace. (Kretzmann)

**9:24** *whoever loses his life for my sake.* A saying of Jesus found in all four Gospels and in two Gospels more than once (Mt 10:38–39; 16:24–25; Mk 8:34–35; Lk 14:26–27; 17:33; and, in slightly different form, Jn 12:25). No other saying of Jesus is given such emphasis. (CSB)

ψυχή—“Life” (instead of “soul”) suggests a more holistic meaning that combines both the physical and spiritual. Some translations render ψυχή as “himself,” which gives a similar understanding. (CC p. 395)

To save one’s life is to lose it, and to lose one’s life is to save it (9:24). This is the same principle of the Great Reversal that is characteristic of Jesus’ teaching (cf. first/last, last/first [13:30]; humbled/exalted, exalted/humbled [18:14]). The first use of σώζω, “save,” means physical preservation in this world and the second eternal, spiritual salvation. Conversely, the first use of ἀπόλλυμι, “perish,” means loss of life in eternity, and the second use refers to daily denial of oneself as regards the life of this world. One who attempts to save his life now will lose it eternally (9:24) because he will show that he is ashamed of the Son of Man (9:26); one who loses his life now will save it eternally (9:24) for the Son of Man will not be ashamed of him when he comes in glory at the second coming (9:26). When Jesus speaks of being ashamed of “my words,” he refers back to the first passion prediction in 9:22. This is part of Luke’s Word motif (see comments at 24:13–35). (CC p. 397)

**9:25** *loses or forfeits himself* – ζημιωθείς—The passive of ζημιόω, meaning “to suffer loss,” has the accusative of respect ψυχὴν (“to suffer loss with respect to one’s soul”) in Mt 16:26 and Mk 8:36. In Luke ζημιωθείς is parallel to ἀπολέσας, and ἑαυτὸν does double duty as both a direct object of ἀπολέσας (“losing/ruining himself”) and as an accusative of respect with ζημιωθείς (“suffering loss with respect to himself”). (CC p. 395)

All of this is condensed into a simple statement that stands in the center of this section: “For what is a man benefited having gained the whole world but having lost himself or having suffered loss?” (9:25). Again, the contrast between temporal gain and eternal loss expresses the irony of the Great Reversal. (CC pp. 397-398)

The “preacher of Jerusalem” surpassed all in wisdom, wealth, pleasure, and accomplishments but named it all vanity (Ecclesiastes 1–2, especially 2:9–11). There is a profound warning here to shun this world’s definition of success. In the context of the sending of the Twelve (9:1–6) and the seventy(-two) (10:1–20), “gaining the whole world” might also be seen to include a this-worldly (triumphalistic) view of “missionary success.” Jesus does warn the disciples about the temptations of worldly wealth by sending them off without provisions (9:3), but it is not for their attachment to material gain that Jesus chastises the seventy(-two) disciples when they return from their missionary journey. They return pumped up with pride over the success of their missionary endeavors, specifically that “even the demons subject themselves to us in your name” (10:17). Jesus tells them not to rejoice in their power over the enemies of God, but to rejoice that their names are written in the heavens (10:19–20). The ones whom Jesus sends into the harvest are tempted to pride over the manifest signs of their missionary success; they should focus, rather, on the eschaton and the joy of life eternal (cf. 1 Cor 3:13). Taking up the cross daily is an antidote against temptations to gain the whole world, for daily contrition, repentance, and confession has

as its consequence the Lord's acknowledgment when he comes in the Father's glory and the glory of the holy ones. (CC p. 398)

**9:26** *one is ashamed of me.* ἐπαισχυνθῆ... ἐπαισχυνθήσεται—There are eschatological consequences of confessing or not confessing Christ. Jesus will be ashamed of those disciples who are ashamed of him and his words at the time of the judgment. “To be ashamed” means “not to confess” or “to refuse to publicly acknowledge one's identification with [Jesus].” (CC p. 395)

This refers to those who hesitate to confess Jesus openly and live faithfully as His disciples. Though we may not suffer much persecution today, those to whom Jesus first spoke did suffer and even paid the ultimate price for publicly witnessing to their faith in the Gospel (21:112-17; Acts 5:40-42; 7:54-60; 12:1-5). (TLSB)

*me and my words* – με καὶ τοὺς ἐμοὺς λόγους—The person of Jesus and the words of Jesus are inextricably connected so that the one who hears the words of Jesus responds to the person of Jesus. (CC p. 395)

*when he comes* – ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τῶν ἁγίων ἀγγέλων—This is a reference to the second coming. This eschatological coming will be anticipated in the next passage, when Jesus gives a glimpse of that end-time glory in the transfiguration. Already now we have a foretaste of the glory that has not yet come. (CC p. 395)

Whoever loses his life on account of Jesus *will save it* (Lk 9:24b). This happens in the reverse of 9:26: the returning Son of Man will *not* “be ashamed” of him on the Last Day. He will say, “Yes, these persons are with me, ‘the children whom God has entrusted to me’ ” (Is 8:18; Heb 2:11–13). (CC p. 398)

**9:27** *but I tell you* – Ὁν λέγω ὑμῖν, see comments at 4:24. This is used alongside ἀληθῶς here, making this an even more significant statement. There is also an indirect connection here to an “I say to you” statement by Jesus in 14:24, where none of those who rejected the invitation to the great banquet will taste it. (CC p. 395)

*standing here* – αὐτοῦ—The genitive of αὐτός can be used as an adverb of place, sometimes with emphasis: “right here.” Luke uses it also in Acts 18:19; 21:4. (CC p. 396)

Jesus also solemnly promises that “some of those standing here” will see the kingdom of God before they die (Lk 9:27). This refers not to the eschaton, but to the breaking in of the new era of salvation and the kingdom that happens when Jesus consummates his own mission by bearing *his* cross and going to *his* crucifixion, then rising in glory. (CC p. 398)

*taste death.* Refers to physical death. (TLSB)

*kingdom of God.* Best taken as referring to the disciples' beholding of the resurrected Jesus, His ascension, receiving the outpoured Spirit on Pentecost, and so forth. Such signs were unmistakable proof that the messianic age had begun. (TLSB)

ἕως ἄν ἴδωσιν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ—This is a reference to the death and resurrection of Jesus. The kingdom comes when Jesus accomplishes the Father's plan of salvation. Thus within two verses Jesus refers to the kingdom that comes with his passion and resurrection (9:27) and the kingdom that will be consummated at his second coming (9:26). (CC p. 396)

**9:23–27** Because Jesus is the only way to eternal life, following Him demands that we reorder our priorities, putting Him in first place and setting aside whatever does not accord with His way. This proves impossible for us but not for our Lord, who embraces and bears our crosses and shame that He might present us righteous before His dear Father. • “ ‘Take up your cross,’ the Savior said, ‘If you would My disciple be; Forsake the past, and come this day, And humbly follow after Me.’ ” Amen. (LW 382:1) (TLSB)

### *The Transfiguration*

**28** Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. **29** And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. **30** And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, **31** who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. **32** Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. **33** And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. **34** As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. **35** And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” **36** And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

The great theophany of Jesus’ transfiguration also gives a glimpse of what the Christian’s future is. As Moses led the Israelites to the Promised Land, so now Jesus will lead his people to eternal glory. The second epistle of Peter reflects this application (2 Pet 1:12–15; cf. the reference to the transfiguration in 1:16–18). It speaks of the temporary nature of the body (“tent,” σκηνωμα [1:14]) and of the impending death of Peter as his “exodus/departure” (ἔξοδος [1:15]). Also in this exodus, disciples follow their Lord. Pilgrims on that path are privileged to lift up their hearts and enter into that heavenly conversation with Moses and Elijah and all the saints about the Lamb who was slain and raised again. This they do, when “with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven,” they sing, “Holy, holy, holy. ... Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. ...” and “O Christ, the Lamb of God. ...” (CC p. 404)

**9:28** *now about* – egeneto – It happened that. This is a new step forward in the ministry of Jesus. He was about to start out for Jerusalem to suffer and die. – This shows a continuity in the narrative from the OT. He will finish what had been promised. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1) (CC p. 399)

ἐγένετο δέ/καὶ ἐγένετο—This is a typical Lukan expression, a Septuagintism, seldom used in Mark but frequently in Luke. It is monotonous, but with it, Luke shows continuity in the narrative from the OT. Matthew uses it following the conclusions of five discourses. It is one of the ways Luke demonstrates the biblical-historical character of the narrative: “It came to pass.” (CC p. 399)

It is fruitful to consider the transfiguration event as “an anticipatory vision of the glory of Jesus at his resurrection or his parousia.” Luke opens the scene of the transfiguration in 9:28 by saying: “And it came to pass after these words, about eight days, ...” “These words” refers not only to Peter’s confession, but also “to the prediction of the passion, death, and resurrection (v. 22) and to the attendant saying about the nature of true discipleship (vs. 23–27).” This preserves the Lukan theme that suffering must always precede glory (cf. 24:26). But even more arresting in

Luke's approach is the "eight days," which is first introduced in the transfiguration narrative. This may well refer to the eighth day as the day of the new creation, the first day of a new week. Many early Christian communities understood Sunday as the eschatological eighth day, the day of resurrection, the day of the new creation. It is attractive to conclude that the unique Lukan parallel between the transfiguration and the resurrection suggests that Luke is subtly tying these two passages together. In 24:1, he simply says "the first of the Sabbath," which is Sunday. Sunday is both the first and the eighth day. (CC p. 404)

*About eight days.* Frequently used to indicate a week. (CSB)

Matthew and Mark have six days. Luke, however, may be using the phrase for its theological significance, for if the transfiguration is proleptic (in anticipation) of the resurrection, then this may be a reference to the new creation, to the eschatological eighth day. (CC p. 399)

ὡσεὶ ἡμέραι ὀκτώ—This is the only place where "eight days" occurs in Luke. (The only other occurrence in the NT is Jn 20:26, where Jesus appears to Thomas eight days after the resurrection.) Matthew and Mark have six days and seem to mean a *chronological* distance from the events of the previous pericopes. Luke, however, may be using the phrase for its theological significance, for if the transfiguration is proleptic of the resurrection, then this may be a reference to the new creation, to the eschatological eighth day (cf. the comments on the number "eight" in the section "Baptism as a Rite of Passage" in the introduction and on Lk 24:1). The use of ὡσεὶ and the loose grammatical connection of the phrase (a "hanging nominative") are consistent with this suggestion. (CC p. 399)

*after these sayings* – μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους—The antecedent is all that Jesus said from 9:18 to 9:27, thus connecting the transfiguration with Peter's confession, the passion prediction, and the disciples' cross-bearing. (CC p. 399)

*Peter, John and James.* These three were also with Jesus at the healing of Jairus's daughter (8:51) and in his last visit to Gethsemane (Mk 14:33). (CSB)

Among the first appointed as apostles (6:14), they were present also when Jairus's daughter was raised (see note, Mk 1:19). They were recognized as leaders among the Twelve. (TLSB)

*on a mountain.* Although Mount Tabor is the traditional site of the Mount of Transfiguration, its distance from Caesarea Philippi (the vicinity of the last scene), its height (about 1,800 feet) and its occupation by a fortress make it unlikely. Mount Hermon fits the context much better by being both closer and higher (over 9,000 feet; see Mk 9:2). (CSB)

The setting on the mountain is significant (see comments on 6:12). The OT theme of Mt. Sinai as the place of divine revelation is brought to mind by Luke's specific term "exodus" in 9:31. Later, Peter will refer to the mount of transfiguration as "the holy mountain" (2 Pet 1:18), again echoing Sinai language. (CC p. 402)

*pray.* Again Luke points out the place of prayer in an important event. (CSB)

Jesus frequently took time out to pray. This was especially true of the time preceding major events in his life. Luke makes more note of Jesus' prayer time than do the other Gospel writers.

Lord's purpose was to pray, to enter into intimate communion with His heavenly Father, for the purpose of getting wisdom and strength for His coming difficult work, for the Galilean ministry

was drawing to a close, and the days of the Judean ministry would be short. And God revealed Himself in a remarkable manner to His Son. (Kretzmann)

**9:29** *as he was praying* – ἐν τῷ προσεύχεσθαι αὐτόν—Luke is fond of the dative of the articular infinitive with ἐν (both present and aorist infinitive). The time is contemporaneous with the main verb. The articular infinitive is often used with the καὶ ἐγένετο construction and with αὐτόν as the subject of the infinitive. (CC p. 400)

*became dazzling white* – λευκὸς ἐξαστράπτων—A similar expression is used of the two men who appear at the tomb (24:4; ἐσθῆτι ἀστραπτούσῃ). Here Luke adds the prefix (ἐξ) for Jesus' appearance to distinguish his brilliance from that of the two angels in 24:4. Jesus was *extra-gleaming white*. (CC p. 400)

This linkage between the transfiguration and the resurrection is reinforced by other details. Two men appear in glory at 9:30, and there are two men at the tomb at 24:4. Luke uses the word ἐξαστράπτω, “flash like lightning” (9:29) to describe the dazzling nature of Jesus' clothing and ἀστράπτω, “flash” (24:4), a cognate, to describe the dazzling apparel of these angels. Luke uses ἔξοδος (“exodus”) in the transfiguration narrative to predict the passion (9:31), which Jesus fulfills in Jerusalem (chapters 22–24). The account of the empty tomb with its passion statement (24:7) looks back to Galilee and specifically to the passion and resurrection prediction in this context. As Peter, John, and James entered the cloud, they were afraid (9:34). As the women entered the tomb, they were perplexed and afraid (24:2–5). (CC p. 405)

Jesus' appearance was transformed; a divine brilliance radiated from Him. (TLSB)

**9:30** *two men* – ἄνδρες δύο—Again, the same expression, along with καὶ ἰδοῦ, is used of the two men who appear at the tomb (24:4) and at the ascension (Acts 1:10). Fulfilling the OT requirement of two or three witnesses, two witnesses testify to Jesus' appearance in glory at the transfiguration, the resurrection, and at his ascension into glory. (CC p. 400)

*Moses*. The premier OT prophet who served as a model for the coming Messiah. *Elijah*. Similarly connected to the advent of God's Chosen One. (TLSB)

*talking with Jesus* – συνελάλουν αὐτῷ—A durative imperfect, implying that the ongoing conversation is about Jesus' “exodus,” which he was about to fulfill in Jerusalem, i.e., his suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension. (CC p. 400)

*Moses and Elijah*. † Moses, the great OT deliverer and lawgiver, and Elijah, the representative of the prophets. Moses' work had been finished by Joshua, Elijah's by Elisha (another form of the name Joshua). They now spoke with Jesus (whose Hebrew name was Joshua) about the “exodus” he was about to accomplish, by which he would deliver his people from the bondage of sin and bring to fulfillment the work of both Moses and Elijah (see note on 1Ki 19:16 and on Mt 17:3). (CSB)

Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἠλίας—Moses represents the Law and Elijah the prophets, embracing the entire OT in its testimony to the passion and resurrection of Jesus. The topic of their conversation, indeed, the ongoing topic of conversation among the whole host of heaven, is about the Lamb who would be slain and would rise again (ἔξοδος). (CC p. 400)

There are some interesting connections between these two men, their successors and Jesus. Moses and Elijah were both associated with the “Law.” Their successors (Joshua and Elisha –



both whose names take the translation of “Jesus”) were more connected to Gospel. They finished the tasks of Moses and Elijah. They were imperfect humans. The perfect Christ puts the finishing touches on everything by his life death and resurrection. He is the perfect finisher. (CC p. 400)

**9:31** *appeared in glory* – οἱ ὀφθέντες ἐν δόξῃ—The referents are Moses and Elijah, who appear in glory with Jesus. Elijah was taken directly into heaven (2 Kings 2), and God himself had seen to the burial of Moses (Deut 34:6). (CC p. 400)

Moses and Elijah enjoy close fellowship with God in heaven and so reflect that divine brilliance. (TLSB)

*departure.* Greek *exodos*, a euphemism for Jesus’ approaching death. It may also link Jesus’ saving death and resurrection with God’s saving of his people out of Egypt. (CSB)

Lit, “exodus.” Because Jesus was soon to offer His life as a sacrifice for the sins of the world (vv 21–22), thereby freeing His people from slavery to sin and leading them to the promised land of eternal life, this comparison to the OT exodus from Egypt is fitting. (TLSB)

ἔλεγον τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ ἣν ἤμελλεν πληροῦν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ—The imperfect ἔλεγον continues the idea of the heavenly conversation first introduced by συνελάλουν. The clause ἣν ἤμελλεν πληροῦν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ clarifies τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ and shows that it is a reference to the events to take place in Jerusalem and its environs. In the LXX ἔξοδος is used to translate a variety of Hebrew words and constructions that refer to Israel’s departure from Egypt, as well as to other travels. It is the title of the second book of the Torah, and since the Torah was the first part of the OT to be rendered into Greek (ca. 250 B.C.), by the time of the NT era the word would certainly bring to mind the exodus event as well as that book of the Torah. The word occurs in the LXX of Ex 19:1; 23:16; Num 33:38; 35:26; and many later OT passages. In the NT it occurs in Lk 9:31; Heb 11:22; 2 Pet 1:15. (CC p. 400)

Between these two καὶ ἐγένετο (“and it came to pass”) statements, Luke places his unique material, which gives the hearer the theological significance of the transfiguration. He introduces it with a favorite phrase, καὶ ἰδοὺ (“and behold”). Only Luke uses ἔξοδος (“exodus”) in the transfiguration narrative (9:31) to refer to the passion that Jesus fulfills in Jerusalem (Luke 22–24). This calls to mind the exodus of the Israelites, the greatest redemptive event in OT history. That saving deed of God was a forward-pointing prophecy of the perfect and complete salvation to be wrought in this “exodus” of Jesus. Thus Luke juxtaposes Jesus’ suffering with his glory and shows that the order of the kingdom is that suffering must precede glory. Indeed, the “exodus” of Jesus embraces not only his suffering and death, but also the ensuing resurrection *and* ascension: (CC p. 403)

It is in this total glorification context that the “exodus” comment of Luke must be seen. For Jesus’ departure points not just to his death, nor even his resurrection or ascension; but it is a departure, an exodus, that ultimately will lead to the demonstration of glorious authority (Acts 10.34–43). Thus, *the exodus refers to his departure into the whole eschatological programme that is tied to Jesus.*” (CC p. 403)

This “exodus” is the topic of conversation between Moses and Elijah, i.e., it is the conversation of heaven that now continues on the mount of transfiguration. While much of the OT looks back to the exodus from Egypt as the great salvation event for Israel, many other passages look forward to a new and greater exodus that God promised to bring to pass. This new/second exodus theme is

especially prominent in Isaiah (e.g., Is 11:11–16; 43:16–20; 51:9–11). Strikingly, even the pagan Gentile nations who were Israel’s mortal enemies will be reconciled to her and to God and will participate in this new redemptive event (Is 11:11–16). Just as the first exodus was laden with baptismal overtones, as St. Paul expounds in 1 Cor 10:1–5, so also is the new exodus. In the first exodus the water was the means of death; in it the Egyptian foes drowned. The new exodus also involves death—the death of Christ—and those baptized into Christ die to sin as they die with Christ (Rom 6:1–5; Col 2:11–13). But in the new exodus God will pour out water to sustain his people in the arid desert of this world (Is 43:16–20), and this outpouring of water is accompanied by his outpouring of his Spirit on his people (Is 44:3; cf. Pentecost). The Father’s words at Jesus’ Baptism (Lk 3:22) are now echoed at his transfiguration (9:35). By means of the new exodus God will vanquish the primordial serpent, Satan, and redeem his people (Is 51:9–11). The fulfillment of all these themes can be seen in the depiction of Jesus’ “exodus” in Luke-Acts. (CC pp 403-404)

**9:32** *Peter and those who were with him* – ὁ δὲ Πέτρος καὶ οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ—Only Peter is mentioned by name to highlight his role in the narrative. Peter is set apart by Luke in a number of different episodes (cf. Lk 22:31–34; 24:12, 34). (CC p. 400)

*heavy with sleep.* Perhaps the event was at night. (CSB)

Apparently, Jesus prayed for a long time. (TLSB)

*saw his glory.* Because they were sleeping when Jesus’ appearance was transfigured, the disciples saw His radiance and brilliant clothing only after awakening. (TLSB)

**9:33** *master* – ἐπιστάτα—This title is only found in Luke’s gospel. See comments at 5:5. (CC p. 400)

*that we are here* – καλόν ἐστιν ἡμᾶς ὧδε εἶναι—εἶναι is placed at the end of the sentence to emphasize Peter’s interpretation of this moment: to be present on the mountain with Jesus, Moses, and Elijah in glory is good. (CC p. 400)

*three tents.* Temporary structures to prolong the visit of the three important persons: lawgiver, prophet and Messiah. The idea was not appropriate, however, because Jesus had a work to finish in his few remaining days on earth. (CSB)

Temporary shelters. Peter wanted to prolong the mountaintop experience. (TLSB)

These were temporary structures used in the OT celebrations. Peter uses them to stay in this “zone” of great feeling. He forgot that life goes in the plain and not in some cloistered place.

ποιήσωμεν σκηνας τρεῖς, μίαν σοὶ καὶ μίαν Μωϋσεῖ καὶ μίαν Ἠλίᾳ—It is not clear whether σκηνή here means something like the OT tabernacle or the kind of shelters made of branches in which the Jews stayed for seven days during Succoth, the Feast of Tabernacles, which celebrated Israel’s life under God in the wilderness. In any case, Peter wants to preserve the glory by building tabernacles for each of the three main participants. He is a true theologian of glory at this moment. He focuses on the heavenly glory but does not want to face the suffering that will and must precede it: the cross comes before the resurrection. But Peter does not want to move to what lies beyond this extraordinary revelation. (CC pp. 400-401)

*not knowing what he said* – μὴ εἰδὼς ὃ λέγει—Luke rightly reports that Peter does not know what he is saying. He does not understand the order of the kingdom—suffering must precede glory. (CC p. 401)

Peter did not understand the situation or the reason for the appearance of Moses and Elijah. (TLSB)

**9:34** *a cloud came* – ἐγένετο νεφέλη καὶ ἐπεσκίαζεν αὐτούς— In the OT, clouds often were evidence of the presence of God. Examples include theophanies such as the pillar of cloud during the exodus (Ex 13:21-22; 14:19-31; 33:9-10; 40:36-37), the cloud on Mt Sinai (Ex 19:16), and clouds over and in the tabernacle (Ex 40:34-38) and the temple (1 Kings 8:10-11). A similar expression is used at the conception of Jesus (Luke 1:35) to signal the presence of God. The overshadowing presence of God testifies both to the incarnation and exaltation. (CC p. 401)

*entered the cloud* – ἐφοβήθησαν δὲ ἐν τῷ εἰσελθεῖν αὐτούς εἰς τὴν νεφέλην—Who entered into the cloud? Only Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, or also the three disciples along with them? Some manuscripts (ϕ<sup>45 A D W</sup> Θ Ψ M<sup>1.13</sup> 33 M sy<sup>h</sup> sa) read ἐκείνους (“those”) instead αὐτούς (“they”); this clarifies the ambiguity by saying only Jesus, Moses, and Elijah entered the cloud. The oldest manuscript, ϕ<sup>75</sup>, has neither word! The more difficult reading is αὐτούς, including the disciples in the cloud. Thus their fear comes from entering into the holy presence of God. (CC p. 401)

**9:35** *my Chosen One*. Or “the Chosen One,” related to a Palestinian Jewish title found in Dead Sea Scrolls literature, and possibly echoing Isa 42:1. See 23:35. (CSB)

The Father affirms that Jesus is His Son, appointed before the creation of the world to bear the world’s sins on the cross. (TLSB)

ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἐκλελεγμένος—The perfect passive participle ὁ ἐκλελεγμένος, used as a title for Jesus, shows that he is the Son who from all eternity has been chosen to accomplish the plan of salvation. The beloved Son (cf. Jesus’ baptism) is also the Chosen One. The words here are a clear repetition of Ps 2:7 and the Father’s words at Jesus’ baptism; they also refer to Jesus as Israel reduced to one, the Suffering Servant of Isa 42:1. It is the eternal plan of God that Jesus suffer rejection and crucifixion and be exalted to glory, seen momentarily here and consummated at the resurrection. Clearly, Luke sees Jesus here as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, the Chosen One, the true Israel, whose “exodus” is about to be accomplished in Jerusalem. (CC p. 401)

*listen to him* – αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε—ἀκούετε is a present imperative. The phrase could be translated “continue *always* to listen to him!” Cf. Deut 18:15–20. On ἀκούω as a technical term for catechumens, see comments at Lk 5:1; the Sermon on the Plain (6:27, 47, 49); the parable of the sower (8:8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18); and Jesus’ discussion of the new kinship (8:21). Deuteronomy stresses the necessity of listening to God, and in particular Deut 18:15–20 mandates listening to the new Prophet God will raise up. (CC p. 401)

Echoes Dt 18:19 and confirms that Jesus is the long-expected prophet like Moses. (TLSB)

A voice from the cloud commands the disciples, “This is my Son, the Chosen One; listen to him!” The words of the angels to the women (24:5) presuppose the command of 9:35: my Son, the Chosen One, he is the living one; listen to him; remember his words! The identification of Jesus as the new Moses and the new Elisha was made in the feeding of the five thousand (9:10–17); it is now confirmed here with these words from Deut 18:15: “Listen to him!” Now that the eschatological prophet promised by Moses has arrived, the disciples are to heed his words. This is

both a statement of Christology and a command to Jesus' followers to hear his teaching as the final revelation from God. (CC p. 405)

**9:36** *kept silent* – Jesus was not the military conqueror that the people expected. Therefore, revealing the transfiguration at this time could only lead to misunderstanding. Only in the light of Easter and Pentecost did the meaning of this mountaintop experience come clear (cf 2 Peter 1:16-212) (TLSB)

The confession by Peter that Jesus is the Christ was a great moment. From that moment of clarity, things will become more and more clouded as the disciples will follow Jesus with increasing incomprehension. The passion prediction and call to cross-bearing was enough to create some confusion. The transfiguration sealed it. Their silence confirms their misunderstanding. So from 9:1 to 9:36, there is a progression from openness to complete silence: “And they were silent and reported to no one in those days anything of what they had seen” (9:36). This is the messianic passion secret (see comments on 9:18–22). As Jesus teaches concerning this messianic passion, death, and resurrection, he also gives the command to keep silent (9:21). The disciples obey (9:36). Some things are not yet fully in the open. His hour will come, as will the new day when the disciples shall once again preach. (CC p. 405)

**9:28–36** Through the transfiguration, Jesus allows His disciples to catch a glimpse of the glory that will again be His after His resurrection. Like Peter, we, too, like to prolong “mountaintop experiences,” leaving the toil and trouble of the world behind. However, Jesus has not called us out of the world, but rather to overcome it. Accordingly, He lifts us up and strengthens us when we are challenged, reminding us that He has already overcome the world for us. • “ ’Tis good, Lord, to be here! Yet we may not remain; But since Thou bidst us leave the mount, Come with us to the plain.” Amen. (LSB 414:5) (TLSB)

#### *The Healing of a Boy With an Evil Spirit*

**37 On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. 38 And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. 39 And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him. 40 And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.” 41 Jesus answered, “O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.” 42 While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. 43 And all were astonished at the majesty of God.**

The core of this miracle is framed by references to the *great crowd* (ὄχλος πολὺς) that meets Jesus as he comes down from the mount of transfiguration (9:37) and the response of astonishment at the majesty of God by *all* (πάντες) who witness the casting out of the demon (9:43a). Another frame may be the majesty of Jesus' transfiguration, witnessed only by the three apostles, and the majesty of God revealed through Jesus' miracle, witnessed by all (9:43). (CC p. 407)

This is more than just another miracle in which Jesus casts out a demon. It is the first of a series of passages (9:37–50) in which Jesus' disciples are portrayed as unaware of the meaning of Jesus' actions because of a lack of faith. This continues the theme introduced in the transfiguration when Peter did not know what he was saying when he proposed building booths for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. As Jesus' Galilean ministry comes to a close and the time of

instruction about the passion begins, the disciples move from the clarity of Peter’s confession into muddled confusion. This will be further evident in the disciples’ response to Jesus’ second prediction of his passion (9:43b–45), their argument among themselves as to who is the greatest (9:46–48), and their inability to discern who stands with them against Satan (9:49–50). (CC p. 407)

Luke combines his delight in showing details that portray Jesus as the compassionate healer with his theme of the disciples’ incomprehension at the ministry of Jesus. The hearer recalls a similar act of compassion in the raising of the widow’s son at Nain. Luke urges the hearer to recall that moment by using similar language in his time framework in 9:37 (7:11: ἐν τῇ ἐξῆς, “soon afterward”) and by calling the boy “only begotten” in 9:38 (7:12: μονογενῆς υἱός, “only-begotten son”). Vivid descriptions of the boy’s illness (foaming at the mouth) and little expressions of Jesus’ tenderness (he “gave him back to his father” after healing him) show once again that Jesus’ ministry is a demonstration of God’s *mercy*, and not his wrath. Luke even recalls the programmatic section of Jesus’ healing (4:31–43) by describing the astonishment of the crowds at his power over demons (9:43a) with the same word he used for Capernaum’s astonishment at Jesus’ teaching (4:32; ἐκπλήσσομαι). Luke’s choice of ἐκπλήσσομαι, “be astonished,” calls to the reader’s attention the themes of Jesus’ Galilean ministry: people’s astonishment at his teaching (4:32) and his miracles (9:43a), with teaching taking precedence over miracles. (CC pp. 407-408)

**9:37** *the next day* – ἡ ἐξῆς ἡμέρα—“The next *day*” is similar to the expression in 7:11 but with ἡμέρα (day) added. (CC p. 406)

Transfiguration likely occurred late at night (accounting for the sleepiness of the disciples). After daybreak, they descended. (TLSB)

*come down from the mountain* – κατελθόντων αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρους—The genitive absolute with the prepositional phrase of location connects this pericope with the transfiguration and the reference to the mountain in 9:28. (CC p. 406)

**9:38** *only child* – μονογενῆς—The widow of Nain’s son was also described as her only begotten (7:12), and the daughter of Jairus was his μονογενῆς (8:42). (CC p. 406)

Out of the crowd, as it drew near, one man came forward and cried to Him with a loud voice, in a pitiful prayer. He wanted Jesus to look upon his only son, with a view to helping him. (Kretzmann)

**9:39** *A spirit seizes him*. This evil spirit was causing seizures (Mt 17:15) and a speechless condition (Mk 9:17). Evil spirits were responsible for many kinds of affliction. (CSB)

Though the symptoms described here seem to match epilepsy, Luke clearly attributes this boy’s suffering to a demon. Both may have afflicted him. (TLSB)

κράζει καὶ σπαράσσει—The subject of the verbs “cry” and “convulse” is the unclean spirit, not the boy. (CC p. 406)

*convulses him* – συντριβον—This modifies ἀποχωρεῖ and describes simultaneous action: in the process of departing from the boy, the unclean spirit crushes him. (CC p. 406)

The demon, meanwhile, would distort and tear him until froth would appear at the mouth, and even after bruising the child fiercely, he would barely withdraw for a time. It was a case of severe epilepsy and lunacy caused by an evil spirit. (Kretzmann)

**9:40** *they could not* – The poor father had pleaded with the disciples that had remained in the valley whether they could help in this emergency, but they had not been able. (Kretzmann)

**9:41** *twisted generation* – διεστραμμένη—This word occurs once more in Luke (23:2), when Jesus is accused by the Sanhedrin before Pilate of perverting the nation (διαστρέφοντα τὸ ἔθνος). (CC p. 406)

But the new element here is the disciples' failure and Jesus' words about it. From this point on, the disciples will be cast in a rather dubious light. Their eyes will not be opened (see comments on 2:30) to the meaning of it all until after the resurrection in Luke 24. Jesus' declaration that they are part of an "unbelieving and perverted generation" (9:41) is an appropriate introduction to the picture of the disciples in the rest of the gospel. "Generation" (γενεά) was used for those who reject Jesus and his salvation in 7:31 (see comments there). It refers to a *kind* of people: unbelieving, twisted. Here the focus is on the disciples' lack of faith in the power Jesus gave them to cast out demons (cf. 9:1–6). This is a lack of faith in the Gospel that frees people from the oppression of the evil one. *But now the passion is part of the picture. The Messiah frees through his death.* The disciples' dim understanding and weakness in faith result in their inability to do the miraculous works they could do before. Jesus has but a brief time (9:41b) in which to prepare them to be apostles of the *crucified* one. (CC p. 408)

The cry of Jesus at this point: O unbelieving and perverse generation; people that have no faith and consistently go the wrong way! How long must I be with you and tolerate you? includes the people as a whole, also the father of the boy and, in a way, the disciples, as He told them afterwards. That was characteristic of the chosen people of God at that time: they were rejecting the Messiah of their salvation or following false leads and hopes in their dream of a temporal kingdom. Jesus then commanded the boy to be brought to Him. (Kretzmann)

Jesus repeatedly rebuked people's lack of faith with such terms (7:31; 11:29–32; cf Ac 2:40) because they failed to fully recognize Jesus' identity. (TLSB)

**9:42** *while he was coming* – ἔτι δὲ προσερχομένου αὐτοῦ—The antecedent of αὐτοῦ is the boy: "and while he (the boy with the demon) was still approaching." (CC p. 406)

*Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit* – ἐπετίμησεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἀκαθάρτῳ—Jesus also "*rebuked*" an unclean spirit and a fever after the sermon in Nazareth (4:35, 39; see note on 4:35). The "legion" of demons in the Gerasene demoniac was also called an "unclean spirit" (8:29) in identical terms, but a different verb is used there for Jesus' command. (CC p. 406)

Jesus relieved the boy of all his suffering, both physical and mental. (TLSB)

*healed the boy* – ἰάσατο—The casting out of a demon is considered by the evangelist to be a healing. This conforms with Jesus' view that sickness and demon possession are both forms of bondage to evil and that the purpose of his ministry is to release people from all consequences of sin (4:18–19). (CC p. 406)

The power of the evil spirit also in this case, as in all, goes only so far as Jesus permits it. For Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. (Kretzmann)

**9:37–42** On the way down from the transfiguration, Jesus rescues a demon-possessed boy. Like the disciples who appear in this episode, we, too, exhibit weakness of faith. Thankfully, Jesus does not simply rebuke such failures and then fall silent. Rather, He responds in compassion and forgiveness as well, and so rescues us from unbelief and the menacing power of Satan. • Lord Jesus, keep me strong in faith, that neither fear of death nor the threats of the adversary divert my eyes from You and the glories of Your Gospel promises. Amen. (TLSB)

**9:43** *all were astonished* – ἐξεπλήσσαντο—This occurs only two other times in Luke: when Jesus’ parents are astonished to find him alone in the temple at age twelve (2:48) and when the people of Capernaum are astonished at his teaching because his word was with authority (4:32). Here, a miraculous cure astonishes. (CC p. 407)

*majesty of God* – μεγαλειότητι—This rare word occurs only here in the gospels. (Elsewhere in the NT it is in Acts 19:27, where it refers to the magnificence of the great goddess Artemis, and in 2 Pet 1:16 of the majesty of Jesus.) BAGD notes: “*grandeur, sublimity, majesty*; in our lit. only of a divinity or of divine attributes” (CC p. 407)

Mighty acts of God are visible in the healing works of Jesus. (TLSB)

#### *Jesus Again Foretells His Death*

**But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, 44 “Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.” 45 But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.**

*marveling* – πάντων δὲ θαυμάζόντων—The second passion prediction begins as all who witnessed the healing of the epileptic were marvelling at Jesus’ deeds. (CC p. 409)

*everything he was doing* – ἐπὶ πάσιν οἷς ἐποίει—These are the mighty acts of Jesus, which include the previous healing. The imperfect ἐποίει indicates the ongoing character of these mighty deeds. The double use of πάντων/πάσιν links all the people’s marveling with all the works Jesus has done. οἷς is dative by attraction to πάσιν. (CC p. 409)

**9:44** Another prediction of Jesus’ coming death (see note on v. 22), an indication of how it will be brought about (see 22:21). (CSB)

*lett these words sink into your ears* – θέσθε ὑμεῖς εἰς τὰ ὦτα ὑμῶν—This expression is reminiscent of Ex 17:14 (LXX) and of the use of τίθημι with “heart” (Lk 1:66; 21:14; Acts 5:4) and “spirit” (Acts 19:21). ὑμεῖς is emphatic. On the whole, it is a solemn and urgent appeal. (CC p. 409)

Luke’s narrative indicates no change in the location between 9:43a and 9:43b. The transition is smooth, with all being astounded at the majesty of God in 9:43a and all marveling at the mighty works of Jesus in 9:43b. But the focus shifts markedly onto the disciples. Moreover, the *structure*

of the second passion prediction is framed by marveling in 9:43b and incomprehension and fear in 9:45. (CC pp. 409-410)

τοὺς λόγους τούτους—Both λόγος and ῥήμα (Lk 9:45) are used as technical words for the passion. (CC p. 409)

The second passion prediction follows quickly upon Jesus' first prediction in 9:22. The introductory statement is typically Lukan and heightens the significance of this second prediction: "You—put these words into your ears." The passion prediction is short and truncated. Luke has only the words "for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men" (9:44). Luke here leaves out the fact that Jesus will be killed (cf. Mt 17:23; Mk 9:31) and will rise after three days. This increases the suspense and misunderstanding. In 9:45 Luke heightens the messianic passion secret first commanded by Jesus in 9:21–22. *It is the disciples' inability to understand that Luke accents in this second prediction.* The necessity of suffering, death, and resurrection in God's plan is hidden from them, and they do not perceive it. (CC p. 410)

*hands of men* – εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων—The referent here is not explicit, but the first passion prediction referred to rejection by the elders, chief priests, and scribes (9:22), and the third passion prediction will speak of his being delivered over to the Gentiles (ἔθνεσιν; 18:32). (CC p. 409)

"To be delivered" (παραδίδοσθαι; 9:44) is part of the vocabulary of the passion and could even be considered a technical term for Jesus' *betrayal*, suffering, and death. This is especially significant since παραδίδομι, "deliver, betray," became incorporated into the church's formal liturgical language. Paul includes it in 1 Cor 11:23 (παρεδίδετο, a passive that suggests the ultimate agency of God). The context of the Last Supper was the betrayal of Jesus into the hands of sinful men. Luke uses this significant term in his passion predictions (9:44; 18:32), in the plots of the Jewish religious authorities and Judas to put Jesus to death (20:20; 22:4, 6), in predictions of the disciples' "passion" in the church (21:12, 16), in Jesus' recognition of his destiny during the Last Supper (22:21–22), in the actual entrance into the passion with Jesus' arrest (22:48) and crucifixion (23:25), and in reflections about what was prophesied and what took place in Jesus' passion (24:7, 20). A simple "remembrance" of Luke's use of παραδίδομι would recall for the hearer the passion of Jesus and the charges that were filed against him leading to his passion. In 9:44 it is a prediction of the arrest and trial in Luke 22–23. (CC pp. 410-411)

Or, "handed over," "betrayed." Refers to His arrest, trial, and execution. (TLSB)

**9:45** *they did not understand* – ἠγνόουν τὸ ῥήμα τοῦτο—They did not understand the word about the passion. The same expression for the passion is repeated at the end of the verse (περὶ τοῦ ῥήματος τούτου). Cf. 18:34; 24:8, 11. (CC p. 409)

*concealed* – ἧν παρακεκαλυμμένον—The passive voice implies God as the subject. This indicates divine action. God hid this understanding of the passion from them. (CC p. 409)

Only after the resurrection would God's plan of salvation become clear to the disciples (cf 24:44–47). (TLSB)

*they might not perceive it* – ἵνα μὴ αἴσθωνται—This is used as a synonym of ἠγνόουν, "to understand not." It is a purpose clause, "in order that they might not comprehend it." (CC p. 409)



Luke's description of the disciples' state upon hearing this is severe: "But they did not understand this word, and it was hidden from them in order that they might not comprehend it, and they were afraid to ask him concerning this word" (9:45). There are three different but related elements to this response. First, the disciples did not understand this word about the passion. The passion—the offense of the cross—is the *cause* of their misunderstanding. Second, it was hidden from them in order that they might not comprehend it. *God hid it. God intends that they not understand the word about the passion at this point.* When the hour comes and the new day dawns, their eyes will be opened and all will be revealed. The third part of this verse gives a further reason for their continuing in ignorance: they were afraid to ask him to clarify this saying. It is unclear whether they are afraid of more rebukes from Jesus (cf. 9:21, 41) or afraid to hear more of the shocking content of this new element in his words. In any case, the order of the kingdom, suffering preceding glory (24:26), is a mystery for them and so scandalous that it causes them to stumble into a state of confusion. (CC p. 411)

Luke subtly shows where such misunderstanding will lead by following the description of this incomprehension and fear with the first of two arguments among the disciples as to which of them is the greatest. These petty arguments are in stark contrast to Jesus' call for his followers to take up the cross and follow him. Only after the resurrection will the disciples gain the understanding that will enable them to embrace the cross. (CC p. 412)

*afraid.* Reason unclear. Plainly, it was not a pleasant topic. (TLSB)

**9:43–45** Jesus once more predicts His suffering and death, and once more the disciples fail to understand Him. Blinded by our own misplaced priorities, we may likewise fail to discern God's ways and plans for our lives. But Jesus remains with us every step of the way. With Him as our guide, we cannot be lost. • "Jesus, lead Thou on Till our rest is won. Heav'nly leader, still direct us, Still support, console, protect us, Till we safely stand In our fatherland." Amen. (LSB 718:5) (TLSB)

*Who Will Be the Greatest?*

**46 An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. 47 But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side 48 and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great."**

The reader is jarred by the movement from the disciples' incomprehension and fear at Jesus' second passion prediction (19:44–45) to the argument about who is the greatest among them. How could the disciples fight over an issue so foreign to the kingdom Jesus teaches and brings, especially after Peter had confessed that Jesus is the Messiah and after Jesus had appeared in glory before three of them in the transfiguration? Perhaps the prominence of Peter—or of Peter, James, and John, the only ones privileged to witness the transfiguration—sparked the controversy. Remarkably, a similar sequence occurs after the institution of the Lord's Supper. Immediately after Jesus has given his body and blood in bread and wine, the disciples quarrel about the same thing: "An argument also happened among them—the issue of who of them seems to be greatest" (22:24). The only possible explanation for such juxtapositions is that the disciples are completely at a loss as to the meaning of Jesus' passion for the coming of the kingdom. All fallen people by nature pursue a theology of glory, which seeks greatness without suffering, and are repulsed by the theology of the cross, which affirms that the order in God's kingdom is suffering before glory and the cross before the resurrection. Instead of seeing the passion as the culmination of the theme of the Great Reversal, where the glory of greatness comes only through

humble service, the disciples testify to their obtuseness by trying to assert their own “greatness.” (CC pp. 413-414)

**9:46** *an argument arose* – διαλογισμός—The meaning here is “argument” or “dispute,” but it is translated “thought” to remind the reader of a recurring theme; see textual note on 9:47 below. (CC p. 413)

*them.* The disciples, particularly the apostles. (TLSB)

*which ... would be the greatest.* A subject that arose on a number of occasions (see 22:24; see also Mk 10:35–45). (CSB)

The disciples were expecting an earthly kingdom in which they might occupy positions of power and prestige. They began to argue about leadership positions. (TLSB)

μείζων—As often in NT Greek, the comparative form stands for the superlative, hence “greatest.” The same expression is used in 22:24. (CC p. 413)

Just how great the spiritual denseness of the disciples was even at that time, appears from this incident. For while Jesus was concerned about the work of salvation, about the woe and weal of the whole world, the apostles were bickering, in petty jealousy, about rank in their own midst. There was a regular altercation about the question in their circle on this trifling matter. (Kretzmann)

**9:47** *Jesus knowing the reasoning* – εἰδὼς τὸν διαλογισμὸν τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν—A recurring theme in Luke is that Jesus knows the thoughts (διαλογισμοί) of others in fulfillment of the prophecy about him in 2:35. The “thoughts” in these verses are always symptomatic of a lack of faith in Jesus. See textual note and commentary at 2:35 and 5:21–22. (CC p. 413)

Jesus knew the apostles’ argument, even without hearing every word, and understood the thinking behind it. (TLSB)

*took a child* – The Master took a little child and placed it beside Him as He was standing in their midst, telling them that by receiving this little child they would receive Him, and therefore also Him that sent Him. The little and insignificant in the eyes of the world is great in the eyes of Jesus, if there is faith to be found. (Kretzmann)

**9:48** *receives...child...in my name* – πῖ τῷ ὀνόματί μου—A similar phrase is repeated in the next verse (9:49), where John refers to someone outside Jesus’ circle of disciples casting out demons “in your name” (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου). (CC p. 413)

Children are of relatively little importance from a functional point of view; they do not know much and cannot do much. (TLSB)

“My Name” – On account of Jesus and in conformity with His teaching. When Christians love and value a person because Jesus loves and values that person, they are fulfilling what Jesus commands here. (TLSB)

*who is least ... is the one who is great.* A person will become great as he sincerely and unpretentiously looks away from self to revere God. (CSB)

God's value system differs from those of the world. The believer who serves and helps others is greater in God's eyes than the influential person who seems so important in the world's eyes. (TLSB)

**9:46–48** Jesus corrects a misunderstanding about the nature of His kingdom, clarifying that true greatness comes from faith and service. We are just as mistaken when we think, as the disciples did, that our value comes from social position or material abundance. Instead, the grace manifested in Jesus' sacrificial death establishes our value. By the power of God's Spirit, our humble service produces things great in His eyes. • O Lord, grant me humility, that, being strengthened by Your Word and following the example of Your service to others, I might please You in all that I do and say. Amen. (TLSB)

*Anyone Not Against Us Is For Us*

**49 John answered, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us.” 50 But Jesus said to him, “Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you.”**

**9:49–50** Despite appearances, 9:49–50 belongs with the report of this argument. Structurally 9:46–48 is divided into a discussion by the disciples about who is the greatest (9:46) and Jesus' response (9:47–48). The key word linking the two verses is μέγας, “great,” with the comparative (as a superlative) μείζων in 9:46 and μέγας in the final emphatic position (9:48). The ensuing two verses (9:49–50) seem to go in a different direction, with John's report about someone casting out demons in Jesus' name, the disciples' attempt to prevent him (9:49), and Jesus' response (9:50). The key word linking those two verses is κωλύω, “to prevent” (ἐκωλύομεν in 9:49 and μὴ κωλύετε in 9:50). (CC pp. 413–414))

But “answering” (ἀποκριθεὶς), the first word of 9:49, strongly implies a connection between these two two-verse passage. John's statement about someone outside the Twelve casting out demons in the name of Jesus is a *response* to Jesus' statement about greatness. (CC p. 414)

For Jesus, greatness has nothing to do with any inherent quality the disciples might see in themselves, nor with their status as office-bearers, so a debate about who is greatest is absurd. Just as God alone is good (18:19), so also God alone confers greatness, and he does so purely by his grace in his Son, whom he had just declared to be great in the glory of the transfiguration. To illustrate how greatness comes by grace via the Great Reversal, Jesus has a child stand beside him. Children admire those greater than themselves, but very few would pick a child as the epitome of greatness. Jesus instructs his disciples to demonstrate their understanding of “greatness in the kingdom” by welcoming a child in Jesus' name. The child represents complete helplessness, a perfect representative of the “least among all you” (9:47), and therefore great. Children are great because, according to human standards, they are the least likely to be counted great and the least likely to further the kingdom of God. Greatness for Jesus is the opposite of greatness for the still-ignorant disciples and for the world. (CC pp. 414–415)

The incident that John reports to Jesus applies this truth. According to the disciples' view of greatness, only a select few are honored to be chosen (perhaps by their own worthiness or merit, they might imagine) and sent by Jesus to preach the kingdom and cast out demons (9:1–6). Only those who are as great as the disciples themselves are great (in their own eyes) should be permitted to do works the disciples were sent to do (9:1–6). However, with this attitude the disciples come dangerously close to the haughty arrogance of the Pharisees. The Pharisees

condemned Jesus for doing good on a Sabbath (6:6–11), and now the disciples condemn a man for doing good simply because he was not part of their elite group. (CC p. 415)

The ability of the disciples to exorcise *depends directly* on the power of Jesus, which is theirs by *faith* (cf. 9:40–41), not by status. Also others may have power over the evil one when they legitimately (in the faith) use the *name* of Jesus in their exorcisms. Here is the other link between 9:46–48 and 9:49–50: the child received in the *name* of Jesus (9:48; ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου) and the one who exorcises in the *name* of Jesus (9:49; ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου). The *name* of Jesus is the basis for considering persons great and for receiving them in the fellowship. When the disciples receive a child—or this unknown exorcist—in Jesus’ name, they receive Jesus, and therefore they also receive the Father, who sent Jesus (τὸν ἀποστείλαντά με; cf. 10:16). The disciples need to be thinking about who truly is with them, serving under the name of Jesus, and not about who of them is the greatest. Nor should they discriminate against servants of Jesus who do not meet the disciples’ own criteria for the “rights and privileges” of the office when Jesus himself approves of those servants. (CC p. 415)

“Receive” (δέχομαι) has a technical meaning for welcoming messengers of the Gospel. In both the commissioning of the Twelve (9:5) and of the seventy(-two) (10:8, 10), Jesus prepares them for the possibility of either reception or rejection. Between these two commissionings are these two examples that illustrate Jesus’ instructions. In 9:48, receiving a child in Jesus’ name is the same as receiving Jesus and the Father who sent him. δέχομαι (“receive”) is repeated four times, and ἐμέ (“me”) is placed in the emphatic position to signal that Jesus is the one who is being received. In 9:52–53, the people of Samaria do not receive Jesus because he had set his face to go to Jerusalem. Acceptance or rejection of Jesus and his disciples is a major Lukan theme. In Acts the apostolic church in Jerusalem will need to remember this teaching of Jesus in 9:47–53 as new missions begin through the efforts of the “least” like Philip and Stephen and Paul. (CC p. 415–416)

**9:49** *master* – ἐπιστάτα—This title is only found in Luke’s gospel. See comments at 5:5. (CC p. 413)

*casting out demons.* Using the powerful name of Jesus, an unidentified person was exorcising demons from people. (TLSB)

*tried to stop him* – ἐκωλύομεν—“We tried to prevent” is a conative imperfect. The same force is carried over into the present imperative in the next verse. μὴ κωλύετε, “Do not try to prevent ...” (CC p. 413)

The disciples were protecting their exclusive status with Jesus. (TLSB)

*does not follow us.* Jesus shifts the pronoun to “you” in v. 50, which may mean that the man had a relationship to Jesus of which the disciples were unaware. (CSB)

**9:50** *whoever is not against you is for you.* Spoken in the context of opposition to the disciples’ work (cf. 11:23, set in a different context). (CSB)

Jesus rebukes the disciples again for squabbling over leadership in the Church, to the neglect of serving people. Order and organization are important, yet we must not lose sight of why they exist—to dispense God’s mercy. Cf Nu 11:24–30. (TLSB)

**9:49–50** Jesus admonishes His disciples for poor attitudes about ministry. Like the apostles, we may keep certain privileges and opportunities for ourselves. That impulse, however, runs contrary to God’s mercy, which He would share with all people, not just those in our preferred circle. Thankfully, Jesus left the comfort of heaven to stand with us, bear our burdens, and deliver us from evil. • Lord, preserve us from that selfish impulse that would inhibit Your mercy and the proclamation of Your name. Help us to see that You desire the salvation of all people, that we acknowledge and put to appropriate use the gifts of others. Amen. (TLSB)

*Samaritan Village Rejects Jesus*

**51 When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. 52 And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. 53 But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. 54 And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” 55 But he turned and rebuked them. 56 And they went on to another village.**

There are good reasons to consider 9:51 *the* turning point of Luke’s gospel. Jesus’ death has become an explicit part of his messianic mission (9:22, 31), and now Jesus begins the journey toward his death in Jerusalem, “the place of the full manifestation of Jesus as the Christ.” The long journey to Jerusalem fulfills what Moses and Elijah discussed at the transfiguration (9:31): this *is* Jesus’ “*exodus*,” which he is about to fulfill in Jerusalem. Jesus is reenacting Israel’s exodus from Egypt and journey of going up to the Promised Land, but Jesus is doing so in perfect obedience. Even though Christ accompanied Israel on that first exodus journey (1 Cor 10:1–13), the people repeatedly fell into idolatry, grumbling, and rebellion. But now, Jesus goes up to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice for the sin of Israel—and the sin of the whole world. (CC pp. 426–427)

**9:51** *when the days drew near* – ἐγένετο δέ—This phrase helps mark 9:51 as the turning point in the gospel. The focus shifts from Galilee to Jerusalem. Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem extends through 19:28. (CC p. 426)

The phrase ἐγένετο δέ, “and it came to pass,” alerts the reader to something especially significant, and the combination of critical phrases in the opening articular infinitive (dependent clause) reinforces the verse’s importance. The “*days* of his being taken up” refer to that time period leading up to the *day* of his departure/ascension. “Were being fulfilled” conveys the passing of time, as if the narrator were watching the clock or marking off days on a calendar. Jesus adheres to a timetable for the climactic event. The clock is running. Jesus fulfills prophecy as he follows the Father’s schedule (cf. Acts 1:7; Gal 4:4). (CC p. 427)

FOR HIM TO BE TAKEN – ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὰς ἡμέρας—This typical Lukan expression (ἐν τῷ plus the infinitive with the accusative subject) describes the inexorable destiny of Jesus in Jerusalem as the *fulfillment* of the divine plan and of prophecy. The present infinitive suggests the process of the passing of days until the arrival of *the day*. Jesus’ destiny is marked by journey notices again in 13:22 and 17:11. (CC p. 426)

Refers to Jesus’ death, resurrection, and esp ascension into heaven (24:50–51; Ac 1:2, 9–11). (TLSB)

*taken up* – τῆς ἀναλήμψεως αὐτοῦ—In 9:31, Luke referred to the passion, resurrection, and ascension events in Jerusalem as τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ, “his exodus.” Now the events are represented

by a similar image, “his being taken up,” a reference to his exaltation at the ascension, but also including his death and resurrection. Cf. ἀναλαμβάνω in Acts 1:2, 11, 22; also LXX 2 Ki 2:11. (CC p. 426)

*set his face to go to Jerusalem.* Lit. “set his face to go to Jerusalem” (cf. Isa 50:7). Luke emphasizes Jesus’ determination to complete his mission. This journey to Jerusalem, however, is not the one that led to his crucifixion but marks the beginning of a period of ministry in Judea, of which Jerusalem was the central city. Mk 10:1 notes this departure for Judea, which John more specifically describes as a journey to Jerusalem during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles (Jn 7:1–10). (CSB)

Place of Jesus’ death and resurrection, which fulfill God’s plan of salvation. (TLSB)

αὐτὸς τὸ πρόσωπον ἐστήρισεν—This graphic description depicts Jesus turning to face Jerusalem. (CC p. 126)

“He himself set his face” alludes to Jesus’ prophetic role. For God to “set his face” *against* a person, city, or region (Jer 21:10; Ezek 13:17; 14:8; 15:7; 21:2 Ezekiel as God’s spokesman in Ezek 6:2.) is for God to show his wrath. The opposite is for God to “make his face shine on you and be gracious to you” (Num 6:25). But here Jesus “sets his face” to go to Jerusalem not to show wrath or mercy to Jerusalem, but to face and overcome all temptations and opposition that would turn him aside from traveling to the cross. Lk 9:62 balances 9:51 with a proverbial summation of what it means to “set one’s face.” The words of 9:52–61 illustrate some of the potential distractions. (CC p. 427)

OT precedents offer further illumination on the significance of the fact that Jesus “set his face.” God made Ezekiel’s forehead as hard as flint so that the prophet could endure the hostility of rebellious Israel (Ezek 3:8–9). The Suffering Servant says,

“I have not rebelled; I have not drawn back. I gave my back to the smiters, my cheeks to the pluckers. *I did not hide my face* from mockings and spit. The Lord Yahweh will help me; therefore I will not be ashamed. *Therefore, I have set my face like flint*, and I know that I will not be put to shame” (Is 50:5–7). (CC p. 427)

Jesus, the Servant, is resolutely determined to go to the cross, fully aware of the torture and humiliation involved. He trusts in eventual vindication by the Father (Is 50:8–9), and he knows that the cross is the only way to procure salvation for humanity (compare Is 50:8–9 with Rom 8:31–34). (CC p. 427)

On this journey, Jesus will pass through many towns and villages and encounter many different people. He has much to teach.

Luke is very careful to note Jesus’ audience in every instance. To each group, furthermore, Jesus speaks quite different sorts of words: to the crowd, he issues warnings and calls to conversion. To those who convert and become disciples, he gives positive instructions on discipleship. Finally, to those who resist his prophetic call, he tells parables of rejection.

Luke gives dramatic structure to these sayings by carefully alternating the audiences. Throughout the journey ... Luke has Jesus turn from one group to the other, from crowd to disciples to Pharisees. (CC p. 428)

Ever in motion toward his goal, Jesus gives revelatory instruction for others making pilgrimage from birth to death and from rebirth in Baptism to resurrection and eternal life in the new Jerusalem. (CC p. 428)

In firm resolve. Evokes numerous passages from Ezk (6:2; 13:17; 21:2) and so reinforces Luke's characterization of Jesus as God's ultimate prophet. (TLSB)

*out for* – τοῦ πορεύεσθαι—As part of Luke's journey vocabulary, this word signals Jesus' movement toward his goal of death and resurrection. J. Fitzmyer calls this Luke's "pregnant use of the verb *poreuesthai* ... [where] the context is one of opposition and hostility, and the implication is that his destiny is to be reached despite such opposition. Further noteworthy instances of it are to be found in the travel account in particular (9:51, 52, 53, 56, 57; 10:38; 13:33; 17:11; 19:12) though its use is not confined to this section" (*Luke I–IX*, 168–69; see pp. 164–71 on Luke's geographical perspective). (CC p. 126)

*Jerusalem* – εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ—Jerusalem is the goal of the journey and the place of destiny. (CC p. 426)

**9:52** *sent messengers* – ἀπέστειλεν ἀγγέλους πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ—This is a practical necessity because of the size of the group. But the wording also points to Jesus as the Prophet like Moses (cf. Ex 23:20). Luke 9 ends as it began (9:2), with Jesus sending out the disciples to prepare for his mission. (CC p. 429)

As Jesus begins to journey to Jerusalem, he meets rejection in a village of Samaria. Except for Mt 10:5, only Luke among the synoptic gospels refers to Samaria and the Samaritans (9:52; 10:33; 17:11, 16). This could reflect Luke's later concern for the Samaritan mission, the second stage of the sequence in Acts. Hostility existed between Jews and Samaritans at the time of Jesus, and although the natural route for pilgrims from Galilee to Jerusalem was through Samaria, many travelers would bypass Samaria by going south on the eastern side of the Jordan. Jesus deliberately passes through Samaria in his journey to Jerusalem. There must be preparation for the journey so that Jesus might be received hospitably (ὡς ἐτοιμάσαι αὐτῷ, "in order to prepare for him"; 9:52). Although it does not explicitly say that the messengers were sent preaching the kingdom of God (as were the Twelve and the seventy[-two], "the principle of 10:16 would apply to them," namely, that "the one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me; and the one who rejects me rejects the one who sent me." The language of commissioning (ἀπέστειλεν, "sent"; 9:52), hospitality or rejection (οὐκ ἐδέξαντο, "they did not receive"; 9:53), and journey (ἐπορεύθησαν, "journeyed"; 9:56) is repeated here. (CC p. 430)

Likely sent to proclaim the kingdom and call for repentance. On that understanding these envoys anticipate the upcoming appointment and sending of the Seventy-two (10:1-16). (TLSB)

*who went and entered* – πορευθέντες—See comments at 9:51. Immediately following the announcement that Jesus must now journey to Jerusalem, the evangelist shows movement toward that goal. The language of journey (πορεύομαι) is repeated at 9:53, 56, 57. (CC p. 429)

*village of the Samaritans*. Samaritans were particularly hostile to Jews who were on their way to observe religious festivals in Jerusalem. It was at least a three-day journey from Galilee to Jerusalem through Samaria, and Samaritans refused overnight shelter for the pilgrims. Because of this antipathy, Jews traveling between Galilee and Jerusalem frequently went on the east side of the Jordan River. (CSB)

This is the only place that Luke, who has special concern for Samaritans, records their hostility. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 3)

Unfortunately, those sent by Jesus to the Samaritans had no success. (TLSB)

**9:53** *face set toward Jerusalem* – The Samaritans, obviously, would rather see Jesus heading for Mount Gerizim than for Jerusalem. This difference on where to worship comes up in Jesus conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well in John chapter 4. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 3)

ὅτι τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἦν πορευόμενον εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ—Luke uses journey language to reiterate Jesus’ destiny in Jerusalem. Regarding “face,” see the commentary on 9:51. “Face” is used with “journey” (LXX πορεύομαι, reflecting פָּנֶיךָ) in 2 Sam 17:11.

**9:54** *fire to come down*. As Elijah had (2Ki 1:9–16). James and John were known as “Sons of Thunder” (Mk 3:17) (CSB)

The disciples expected that harsh judgment would come down on the Samaritans. Their request was perhaps inspired from the ministry of the prophet Elijah (2Ki 1:9–12) and also by centuries-old antagonism between Jews and Samaritans. (TLSB)

James and John misunderstand 9:5. Not only do they want to shake off the dust, but they also want to blow them away. They obviously share the ingrown hostility of their people toward Samaritans. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 3)

For a first-century Jew, the natural enmity between the Samaritans and Jews would explain the Samaritans’ failure to receive Jesus. After all, he was journeying toward Jerusalem, which they considered to be a false place of worship. The Samaritan Pentateuch version of Ex 20:17; Deut 5:21; 12:5 specified Mt. Gerizim as the place of worship ordained by God. But the hearer of the gospel knows that Jerusalem is the city of Jesus’ passion; Jesus is rejected also in anticipation of his destiny to be rejected there. The disciples believe that the lack of hospitality showed by the Samaritans to Jesus should be countered with wrath and vengeance. They have not understood Jesus’ mission as the Messiah who is a Suffering Servant. He himself will “be baptized” with the fire of heavenly wrath (12:49–50). His mission as Messiah is one of mercy and compassion, not of condemnation (Jn 3:17). Punishment of those who reject the Gospel will come in the eschaton. Thus “he rebuked” (ἐπετίμησεν) James and John, just as he had rebuked demons (Lk 4:35; 9:42), a fever (4:39), and the disciples’ speaking of an incomplete confession (9:21). Each rebuke counters hindrances to his bringing of the kingdom through his death and resurrection in Jerusalem. (CC p. 431)

**9:55** *rebuked them*. Third time Jesus reproved the attitudes of His apostles (cf vv 46–50). The disciples still had much to learn about the Christ-like attitudes necessary for ministry. (TLSB)

The rebuke added between 9:55 and 9:56 in some manuscripts provides a reason for Jesus’ rebuke of James and John (similar to Mt 16:23, where Jesus calls Peter “Satan”): “You do not know of what sort of spirit you are,” implying that the judgmental attitude of James and John is inspired by the devil. (CC p. 431)

The promise of Jesus that the Gospel would reach Samaria (Acts 1:8) will soon be realized in Acts 8 through Philip’s efforts; God’s plan goes forward according to his schedule. Even though



the Samaritans reject Jesus here, they are spared fire from heaven so as to be able to hear the Gospel another day. Soon Luke will report: “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee *and Samaria* had peace and was built up; and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit it was multiplied” (Acts 9:31). (CC p. 431)

So long as the world stands, there exists the call and opportunity to preach the Gospel to unbelievers in the hope that they will repent and be saved. Those who fail to preach the Gospel and instead utter imprecations are of a different spirit—not the Spirit who descended on Christ at his baptism (Lk 3:21–22). While there is only weak textual support for including that thought in the addition between 9:55 and 9:56, the theology remains biblical, as John will later realize (1 Jn 3:11–24; 4:7–21; cf. also James 1:19–20; 2:1–9; 4:1–7, though the book of James may have been written by the brother of the Lord, not the apostle). The other logion in the addition, “for the Son of Man did not come to destroy souls of men, but to save,” is also weakly attested but is similar to Jn 3:17. (CC p. 431)

**9:51–56** When Jesus’ overture to the Samaritans is rejected, His apostles imagine that harsh retribution is in order. Such thinking is typical, unfortunately, as age-old conflicts die hard. We may easily resort to similar bad judgment. Yet, Jesus makes peace, not only with God but also between people. In Christ, all who repent are fully reconciled to the Father. • Lord, remove all sinful division and enmity from Your Church, that we love just as You have loved us. Amen. (TLSB)

#### *The Cost of Following Jesus*

**57** As they were going along the road, someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” **58** And Jesus said to him, “**Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.**” **59** To another he said, “**Follow me.**” But he said, “**Lord, let me first go and bury my father.**” **60** And Jesus said to him, “**Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.**” **61** Yet another said, “I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” **62** Jesus said to him, “**No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.**”

**9:57** *As they were going.* Continuing their journey through Samaria to Jerusalem. (CSB)

πορευομένων αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ—The journey motif continues; the added expression ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ describes Jesus’ journey as being “along the way.” (CC p. 432)

These sayings of Jesus are spoken *while journeying along the way*. Jesus has begun that pilgrimage that will lead to his departure (cf. ἀπέρχη, “you go” [9:57]; ἔξοδος, “exodus” [9:31]). It makes him “homeless” on earth and distinct from the “dead” who are at home in this world. To journey with him means “departing” from all that belongs to this world (cf. ἀπελθών, “departing” [9:60]). Unlike foxes and birds, the Son of Man has no place to lay his head (see comments on 8:19–21). (CC p. 433)

*I will follow you – ἀκολουθήσω*—See comments at 5:11 on ἀκολουθέω as a term for discipleship. It is repeated three times in this pericope (9:57, 59, 61). (CC p. 432)

Elsewhere, Jesus always initiated the call to discipleship. (John 15:16) Remarkably, the Gospels never tell us about anyone offering to follow Jesus and then successfully becoming a disciple. In each case, Jesus seems to challenge the self-confidence. (TLSB)

**9:58** *no where to lay his head* – During Jesus’ ministry, He had no home of His own. He depended on hospitality, just as the apostles did when He sent them out. (TLSB)

**9:59** *bury my father*. If his father had already died, the man would have been occupied with the burial then. But evidently he wanted to wait until after his father’s death, which might have been years away. Jesus told him that the spiritually dead could bury the physically dead, and that the spiritually alive should be busy proclaiming the kingdom of God. (CSB)

**9:60** *leave the dead bury their own dead* – ἀπελθὼν διάγγελλε—“Departing” shows that one can be in Jesus’ band of pilgrims and serve the cause of the kingdom without *literally* following his physical presence (cf. also 8:38–39). Nevertheless, the man is to abandon his old way of life with its natural cares and priorities. “Proclaim far and wide” (BAGD s.v. διαγγέλλω, 1; cf. Rom 9:17) is used only here with “the kingdom.” (CC p. 432)

Jesus is the visitation from above, the Dawn from on high (1:78). The new era of salvation is present in him; he brings the new world of the kingdom of God. Those who enter this kingdom, this new world, are snatched and transferred out of the power of darkness (Col 1:13). To be “fit,” “suitable” for this kingdom and its proclamation entails subordinating all family ties and other worldly cares (“let the dead bury their own dead”; Lk 9:60) and focusing on the task that lies ahead (“no one having puts his hand to the plow and still looking at the things behind is fit for the kingdom of God”; 9:62). This will put Jesus’ disciples at odds with the world and will distinguish them from their own earthly families, as in 8:19–21. (CC p. 433)

The kingdom is so important that its proclamation pushed even venerated duties and traditions into the background. (TLSB)

**9:61** *say farewell* – ἀποτάξασθαι—Greetings, blessings, and salutations were very important in the ancient world, particularly those spoken on the road, as one first arrives at a house, and as one takes leave of the house. Jesus overturns some of these priorities. Here he discourages a would-be disciple from going back to give his family the customary departing benediction. Examples of such departing blessings in the OT include Gen 31:55; 32:29 (MT 32:1, 30); 2 Sam 19:39 (MT 19:40); 1 Ki 8:66. In sending out the seventy (-two), Jesus will forbid them from greeting others on the road and also will offer a new greeting on arrival at the house: “Greet no one along the way. Into whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house’ ” (Lk 10:4–5). (CC p. 432)

Lk 9:57–62, along with 9:23–24 and 14:25–35, gives a rather stark picture of the radical nature of the call to discipleship. To take up the cross daily (9:23–24) is to proclaim *the kingdom of God* (9:60—action/function) and to be fit for *the kingdom of God* (9:62—status/being), both of which will bring rejection for the disciples. But here they follow the pattern of their Lord. Twice at the end of his Galilean ministry, before he set his face to go to Jerusalem, Jesus spoke of his rejection (9:22, 44). His rejection on the cross foreshadows the rejection of Jesus’ disciples, a theme in the journey narrative of Luke and a reality in Acts. The way of new life is not an easy, painless way. It is the way of death for the old man, in daily contrition and repentance. It requires staying on the hard road of pilgrimage that leads to the cross, through death, and finally to resurrection. It calls for an unhesitating departure from ties to the old life, even the ties to family. The family that matters, says Jesus, is the family of God (Lk 8:19–21). We may be born of human mothers into a human family, but the new birth into God’s kingdom is through Baptism, and the true family of God has Christ as its head (Jn 3:3, 5; Col 1:18). Luke does not record the responses of the three would-be disciples in this pericope, suggesting that more important than the question of whether

*they* heeded Jesus' words is the question of whether *you*—the hearer or reader of Luke's gospel—will respond in faith and persevere on the journey with Jesus. (CC p. 433)

A third candidate for discipleship is shocked by Jesus' demands. Clearly, following Jesus means a radical reordering of value and priorities. (TLSB)

**9:62** *hand to the plow and looks back* – ἐπιβαλὼν τὴν χεῖρα ἐπ' ἄροτρον καὶ βλέπων εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω—The first participle, ἐπιβαλὼν, is an aorist, showing that the act of setting hand to plow comes first; the second participle, βλέπων, is present, suggesting that the act of looking back is ongoing and connected to the (implied) action of plowing. The image here is vivid. One who turns his head and looks back while he is plowing the field is sure to make a crooked furrow instead of a straight one. It is hard enough to plow a straight furrow when one keeps his eyes forward and concentrates on the task at hand. (CC pp. 432-433)

*is fit* – εὐθετός ἐστιν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ—One must be made “fit” for the kingdom in order to continue to journey toward the kingdom or to announce the kingdom far and wide. This involves a particular posture of having *set one's face* (cf. Jesus in 9:51, 53) and of having left this world behind. (CC p. 433)

*looks back* – He is to focus on the tasks that are to be done now that are right in front of them and not get caught up in habits and rituals of the past.

It took one's full attention to hold and press down on a plow with one hand as it cut through the earth. The plowman's other hand held a goad for the animal pulling the plow. (TLSB)

**9:57–62** In three brief exchanges with would-be disciples, Jesus shows that the cost of discipleship is high. Obviously, were it up to us to achieve our place in the kingdom of God, we would never make it. Thankfully, then, Jesus invites us and by grace makes it possible for us to become members of His eternal communion. • “O Lord, rescue us from the captivity of the sins which have oppressed us, so that we may attain the dwellings of the heavenly Jerusalem; through Jesus Christ. Amen.” (Sarum Breviary, *TLWA*, p 228). (TLSB)