

CAPITOL STUDIES

APRIL 9, 2025 • WEEK 13



LUKE FOR LEGISLATORS

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Theme Verse

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man has come to **seek** and to **save** that which was **lost**.



Seeing Jesus as Never Before



AS DARRELL BOCK HAS NOTED: “The juxtaposition of this event of the transfiguration has always caught the eye of artists. One of Raphael’s most famous paintings, *The Transfiguration*, places [the] two scenes [from Luke 9:28-43] side by side. The mountaintop experience is followed by an everyday failure to trust. Such an up-and-down spiritual record is often the product of failing to trust God.”¹

“But there is also a practical lesson here, for we can have a spiritual ‘transfiguration’ experience each day as we walk with the Lord. Romans 12:1–2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18 tell us how. As we surrender body, mind, and will, the Lord transforms us from within so that we are not conformed to the world. As we behold Him in the Word (the mirror), we are ‘transfigured’ by the Spirit ‘from glory to glory.’ The theological name for this experience is sanctification, the process by which we become more like the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the Father’s goal for each of His children (Rom. 8:19; 1 John 3:2).”² The more time we spend beholding Jesus in His Word, the more our faith grows and our spiritual record holds steadfast.

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INTRODUCTION

In Luke 9:23-27, Jesus explained the cost of discipleship to His followers. All three of the synoptic Gospels say He ended that discussion with, “there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.” That sentence occurs right before the Transfiguration. “The word for ‘kingdom’ can be translated ‘royal splendor.’ Therefore, it seems most natural to interpret this promise as a reference to the Transfiguration,”³ which *some* of the disciples—Peter, James, and John—witnessed about a week later.

I. JESUS’ GLORY

Luke 9:28-31

Some eight days after these sayings, He took along Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white and gleaming. ³⁰And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, ³¹who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure [Greek: “exodus”] which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.⁴

Apparently, Jesus had taken the three disciples with Him up a mountain where they could be alone and pray. While Jesus prayed, talking with His Father, His face and His clothing started to glow (cf. Matt. 17:2), and Moses and Elijah appeared. Moses represented the law and Elijah the prophets. Both had gone up on a mountain to meet with God. Both had foretold Jesus’ death, which they were now discussing.

Luke 9:32-36

Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him. ³³And as these were leaving Him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah”—not realizing what he was saying. ³⁴While he was saying this, a cloud formed and began to overshadow them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!” ³⁶And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen.

The three disciples fell asleep, and it took them a while to fully wake up. Imagine their bewilderment awakening to Jesus, with Moses and Elijah, enveloped by the Shekinah glory cloud (cf. Numbers 9:15-23). Jesus was not transformed. He was transfigured. “The Three are only seeing to the core of what Jesus has been all along [God]. He becomes luminous.”⁵ In awe and confusion, Peter suggested they make “tabernacles” for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. He was likely referring to the “booths” where the Israelites dwelt for seven days during the Feast of Tabernacles. Peter thought it would be great to camp out with these three important “men.” He, however, mistakenly placed Jesus on the same level as Moses and



Elijah. Before he even finished his suggestion, he was interrupted by God the Father, Who basically said, “Don’t even think about putting a man on the same level as My Son. He is the ‘Chosen One’ (Isaiah 42:1). Listen only to Him!” (Cf. Matt. 3:17). “It was God’s unqualified endorsement of the Lord’s life from His birth to that hour.”⁶ Instantly, the disciples were silenced, and Moses and Elijah vanished.

II. JESUS’ FRUSTRATION

Luke 9:37-40a

On the next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met Him.³⁸ And a man from the crowd shouted, saying, “Teacher, I beg You to look at my son, for he is my only boy,³⁹ and a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly screams, and it throws him into a convulsion with foaming at the mouth; and only with difficulty does it leave him, mauling him as it leaves.⁴⁰ I begged Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not.”⁴¹ And Jesus answered and said, “You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and put up with you?”

After a mountaintop experience the night before, Jesus came down to once again meet with needy people tortured by the power of sin and Satan. A man whose only son (cf. 7:12, 8:42) was afflicted with severe demonic seizures begged Jesus to cast out the demon. He explained that he had first begged Jesus’ disciples to do so, but they could not. This made Jesus very upset. “Whatever caused Jesus’ emotion to swell, it is clear that the root of the apostles’ powerlessness was their unbelief. Their failure was not because they did not try.... Their problem was, they had subtly moved from trust in God to faith in the process, which is to say faith in themselves. They had cast out demons before—certainly they could do it again. This is evidenced by their lack of prayer, as Jesus briefly notes in Mark’s account (cf. Mark 9:28, 29). True prayer is an act of faith. And vital, authentic faith, believing, exists only in a life of perpetual, dependent prayer.... Jesus’ indictment was a blanket indictment of the ‘unbelieving ... generation’ he ministered to and of the disciples who had begun to depend on themselves and not on God.”⁷ This was not an epileptic seizure. Luke, the physician, would have recognized epilepsy. The fact that the boy was healed when the unclean spirit was cast out confirms the demon possession (cf. Mark 9:23-29).

Luke 9:41b-43a

“Bring your son here.”⁴² While he was still approaching, the demon slammed him to the ground and threw him into a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy and gave him back to his father.⁴³ And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.

Jesus commanded, “Bring your son to Me.” “Even as the father attempted to obey, the ferocious demon threw the lad to the ground and tore at him.... Jesus at once rebuked the demon and healed the child. What a red-letter day that would be in the life of this lad! The day his daddy led him to Christ! That is what fathers are for.”⁸ *And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.* We should all be this amazed at the grace of God demonstrated on our behalf every day.





Luke 9:43b-45

But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples, ⁴⁴“Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.” ⁴⁵But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.

Though there was excitement and joy in the freedom and healing brought to this boy and others, Jesus reminded the disciples of what they had discussed on the Mount of Transfiguration. Soon He would be betrayed and sentenced to death. God purposefully kept them from truly understanding, but they would remember it and understand in the days to come. At the moment, however, they were too afraid to ask.

III. JESUS' SERVANTS

Luke 9:46-48

An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest. ⁴⁷But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, ⁴⁸and said to them, “Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great.”

The verb translated ‘argument’ is *dialogismos*. They dialogued, or debated, the merits of each man to determine who should hold which offices when Jesus established the new kingdom.”⁹ The disciples aren’t alone in their desire for position and recognition. We see it often in today’s world. “This condition is typically very interior, but it has a telltale aroma, and others can smell it, especially those outside the church. Sometimes it is an acrid air of condescension or subtle, smiling hostility, or aloofness, or clubbish exclusivity, or doubt about God’s blessing on all who are not in the approved circle. This stench has kept multitudes away from the church and, more important, a knowledge of Christ.”¹⁰ True servant leaders are hard to find. The least is the greatest.

Luke 9:49-50

John answered and said, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us.” ⁵⁰But Jesus said to him, “Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you.”

Without acknowledgement or recognition, this unnamed man had a mission to free demon-possessed captives, and he did it in the name of Jesus. How awesome was that? Yet, John objected because the man was not a part of Jesus’ twelve. Jesus directed John’s attention to what the man was doing, instead of who his companions were. “John later came to see that the only legitimate tests of another person’s ministry are the test of doctrine (1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 7-11) and the test of fruit (1 John 2:4-6, 29; 3:4-12; 4:5, 20).... This man would have passed both tests.”¹¹



IV. JESUS' MIND

Luke 9:51-53

When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem;⁵² and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him.⁵³ But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem.

This begins a new section in Jesus' life and ministry. No longer will Galilee be His home base. He had begun His journey to Jerusalem, which would culminate in His death and resurrection. Jesus' mind was set. He would not be deterred from the mission for which He came. "Every story He told, every miracle He performed, every conversation in which He engaged from this point on had the cross pulsating in the back of His mind."¹² Ultimately, this was the beginning of the end of His earthly life. Though traveling through Samaria was the shortest way from Galilee to Jerusalem, most Jews would not dream of going through the country of these idolatrous half-breeds (half Jew, half Gentile). Samaritans, on the other hand, "despised Jews as religious snobs and took issue with their building a temple in Jerusalem when God had been worshiped on Mount Gerizim for centuries. Therefore, when the inhabitants of one Samaritan town heard that Jesus was headed for Jerusalem instead of Gerizim, they did the unthinkable; they refused hospitality—a sacred duty that only the lowest, most despicable people neglected (Deut. 23:3-4; Judg. 8:5-17; 1 Sam. 25:2-38)."¹³

Luke 9:54-56

When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"⁵⁵ But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of;⁵⁶ for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." And they went on to another village.

Can you see where James and John got their nickname, the "Sons of Thunder"? Their question referred back to the story of a previous Samaritan king, Ahaziah, who sent soldiers to take Elijah captive because of his prophecy that Ahaziah would die of illness for seeking the help of Baal, rather than the God of Israel. Elijah responded by calling down fire from heaven on two different regiments (cf. 2 Kings 1:9-14). Jesus was not deterred by the refusal of hospitality, but He was greatly displeased with the judgmental spirit of James and John and told them so. "Unlike His pharisaical counterparts, Jesus embraced the Samaritans as people in need of saving, not unlike their Jewish cousins."¹⁴ This was why He had come through Samaria in the first place. There were other villages. Someone was in need. Someone needed to be saved.

V. JESUS' ROAD

From here to His Triumphal Entry in chapter 19, Jesus is on the road. Luke continually reminds us of this fact (9:51-57; 10:1; 11:53; 13:22,





33; 17:11; 18:31, 35; 19:1). No more will He come back “home.” “Jerusalem now looms large in the Savior’s thoughts. He will soon walk through everything involved in his being ‘taken up to heaven’ (v. 51)—that is, his betrayal, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. The walls of Jerusalem, the city of destiny, rise ominously over all that follows, standing taller with each event from here to the middle of chapter 19.”¹⁵

Luke 9:57-62

As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, “I will follow You wherever You go.” ⁵⁸And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” ⁵⁹And He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.” ⁶⁰But He said to him, “Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.” ⁶¹Another also said, “I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.” ⁶²But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Imagine Jesus walking on “the road to Jerusalem,” thinking of all that is to come. People are enamored by Him. They want to follow. He knows what lies ahead. They do not. He will remain steadfast. He knows they will not. When testing comes, they will leave. He is going to Jerusalem—to the cross—for them. Everything else is secondary. For them, other things are first. Jesus is secondary. How that must hurt! “The fatal flaw in the last two men leaps out at us. Both of them said, ‘Me first!’ Any man who wants to start his discipleship with such words simply does not qualify.”¹⁶ What kind of followers are we? Do we walk the road with Jesus only until the storms come or the mountains grow steeper? Or have we set our face to walk with Him to the New Jerusalem—no matter what?

CONCLUSION

“William W. Borden was the heir of a wealthy Chicago family. In 1904 and 1905, at the age of eighteen, he traveled around the world. This was followed by a brilliant education at Yale and then Princeton Seminary, where he committed his life to seek to win the Muslims in China to Christ. Before he left, Borden gave away some \$500,000 (equivalent to \$10,000,000 in the 1990s) and served at the age of twenty-three as a trustee of Moody Bible Institute. In 1913, in his twenty-sixth year, he left for Egypt and never looked back. It was the final year of his life, because in Cairo he contracted cerebral meningitis. As he lay dying, he scribbled this note: ‘No reserve, no retreat, no regrets.’ That is the kind of attitude Christ was calling for in Luke 9.”¹⁷

Chaplain Arin Hess

FOOTNOTES

1. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: The IVP New Testament Commentary Series*, IVP Academic, 1994, pg. 175.
2. Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Volume 1, Victor Books, 1996, pg. 207–208.
3. John MacArthur, *MacArthur Study Bible*, pg. 1424.
4. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.
5. Michael Card, *Luke: The Gospel of Amazement*, InterVarsity Press, 2011, pg. 125.
6. John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Luke: An Expository Commentary*, Kregel Publications, 2009, Lk 9:28–36.
7. R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Crossway Books, 1998, pg. 358.
8. Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Luke*, Lk 9:37–45.
9. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on Luke*, Zondervan, 2012, pg. 246.
10. Hughes, *Luke*, pg. 364.
11. MacArthur, *MacArthur Study Bible*, pg. 1533.
12. Swindoll, *Insights on Luke*, pg. 253.
13. *Ibid*, pg. 254.
14. *Ibid*.
15. Hughes, *Luke*, pg. 369.
16. Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Luke*, Lk 9:57–62.
17. Hughes, *Luke*, pg. 374.



WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Meeting during the
109th Legislature's
First Session

SENATORS

6:45 – 7:45 A.M.
Wednesdays
Capitol Office #1004

STAFF

12:00 – 1:00 P.M.
Wednesdays
NE State Office Building
Morrill Room



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