

# The Book of Luke

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Unless otherwise noted, the ESV (capitalized) will be used throughout.

A centurion has requested of Jesus, through some Jewish elders, to come to his house and heal his servant.

Luke 7:6–8 Jesus then traveled with the Jewish elders towards the house of the centurion. When they were not too far from the house, the centurion had sent some friends to meet up with Jesus and to speak on his behalf. They said to Him [speaking for the centurion], “Lord, please do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy for You to come into my house. In fact, I do not even see myself as being worthy to meet with You. Instead, say the word and my young servant will be healed. For I am a man who is under authority; and I have also soldiers who are under me. I say to this one, ‘Depart,’ and he departs; to another, ‘Come in,’ and he enters in; and to my slave, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” (Kukis paraphrase)

First, this centurion sent some Jewish elders to speak with Jesus, to ask Him to come and heal his servant. But then, as Jesus is walking to the centurion’s home with these elders, the centurion rethinks his request and he sends friends of his to speak to Jesus. Now, the centurion wants to dissuade Him from coming personally to his house.

The centurion understands authority; this is a basic part of his life. In fact, we have two examples of people who have acted on behalf of the centurion. He asked the Jewish elders to speak to Jesus and they did; then he asked his friends to go out and speak to Jesus, and they did as well.

Therefore, he understands that Jesus is able to address various underlings to do this or that. Or, in the alternative, Jesus can command the elements of nature, and they will respond to Him. The centurion did not necessarily know the exact mechanics of Jesus curing an illness beyond those being under His authority would act to effect the cure.

Now, as an aside, this centurion has a close relationship with the Jewish elders and he may have a better understanding of the Jewish Messiah and the authorities above and below Him. He has had, no doubt, many conversations with these Jewish elders and he may even attend the synagogue which he built.

Jesus will now respond to this back-and-forth with the centurion’s friends.

Luke 7:9a When Jesus heard these things, He [Jesus] marveled at him [the centurion],...

This man—the centurion—has properly conveyed a correct understanding of Jesus and what He is able to do. Furthermore, the centurion has the right attitude. He has shown reverence towards the Lord, and respect; and he recognizes the power and authority that Jesus has.

Jesus, in His humanity, had grown up Jewish and had learned the Scriptures. Yet, here is a gentile who likely knew some of the Scriptures (remember that he paid for the building or rebuilding of the synagogue in his city); and he seemed to understand Jesus far better than the scribes and pharisees did.

So far, Jesus has not encountered anything like that in Israel. We can confirm this based upon what we have studied between chapters 4b–7a in the book of Luke.

Now, what did the centurion understand? He understood that Jesus Himself did not necessarily to cause a person to be cured (as, for instance, a doctor might). He understood that there were layers of authority, and that Jesus could, from anywhere, cause a cure to take place without physically being there. Did the centurion understand the exact nature of these authorities? I don't think that he did; but then, most people reading this passage do not understand exactly what takes place when someone is cured by Jesus.

Let me explain some areas of confusion. First of all, Jesus does not cure someone with His omnipotence as God. In the plan of God, Jesus took the place of a servant. He did not walk throughout Judæa and Samaria as Almighty God. Jesus physically walked from place to place, fully as a man. Any cure which takes place is done through the omnipotence of God the Father. Jesus may speak to the Father in prayer (mental prayer); or when Jesus is faced with a malady, he may understand this as an opportunity to present His credit card as Messiah. Again, this does not mean that Jesus from His omnipotence effects a cure, but that Jesus goes through whatever channels God the Father has established to effect a cure (perhaps this is done through an angel; at times we know that this is done by throwing a demon out of the body of the sick person).

Sometimes, there is actual power which works through Jesus in some way (remember those who were healed by simply touching the hem of his garment?). But in this case, that is not what is going to happen. Jesus will not even be in the same room with the person who needs to be healed.

I will offer two options on exactly how this healing will take place. (1) Jesus silently prays to God the Father to heal the servant. God the Father heals the servant by sending healing angels to heal the man. (2) Jesus understands that this is a part of God's plan for Him and that, this interaction taking place will result in the healing of the servant, an action written up in the divine decrees billions of years ago. The healing will take place either by God's omnipotence or through healing angels; but that act was simply destined to take place at this time as a sign as to Who Jesus is (overall, there will be dozens of witnesses to this miracle). Exactly how this cure is effected is actually immaterial to this narrative. The point is to highlight the faith of the centurion and the power of God working through Jesus the Messiah.

Can you or I effect a cure in this same way? We can pray to God the Father, based on our relationship to Him through Christ Jesus, to heal this or that person. Most of the time, the sickness of that person is a part of the plan of God and it will continue. However, there are times when our prayers are answered positively, and God the Father effects a cure for our friend, associate or relative.

How is this different from a healing done by Jesus the Messiah? When Jesus performed a healing (which, for the most part, meant that He would have some sort of physical contact with the sick person), God the Father always effected a cure. This is because

Jesus is God's Son Whom He sent. If the Lord's success rate was 50%, He would not have been acclaimed as our Messiah, the Great Physician. On the other hand, when we pray for a person who is sick, we have no guarantees whatsoever from Scriptures (and if our prayers are made while out of fellowship, then our prayers are not even prayers). Perhaps God answers a prayer for healing 1% of the time.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, God wants to hear from us and certainly our prayers are taken into consideration (again, *if* we are in fellowship with God while praying). We are assured that God will hear our prayers; even though we do not know what God will actually do, having heard our prayers.

Luke 7:9b ...and turning to the crowd that followed Him,...

Now Jesus did not engineer any of what is taking place. He did not have a prearranged plan with the centurion to seek Him out with Jewish elders. Jesus, very likely, will never even meet this man during His incarnation. God the Father, in eternity past, put this servant's sickness into His plan as a part of His divine decrees.

Jesus, when approached by these Jewish elders understood that it was an opportunity for Him to act. His humanity perceived all of these events (which we are studying) in real time.

Jesus then turned to those who had been following Him. He will use this centurion as an example, hoping to teach His followers something.

Luke 7:9c ...said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith."

Jesus told those who are with Him that He has not found such a great faith as exhibited by this man, the Roman centurion.

Such words of praise from Jesus speak of what is to come in the future, when God will turn to the gentiles because of their positive volition.

Luke 7:9 When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed Him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith."

In many ways, this gentile centurion forecasts the response to Jesus from the gentile world.

There are certain different ideas as to what is occurring in the mind of Jesus. Some believe that He knows everything that He is about to do, everything that is about to happen, based upon His omniscience. Personally, I reject that interpretation. The only difference between Jesus being approached by first the Jewish leaders and then by the friends of the centurion and us being approached by the same men is, Jesus can read people better than we can. We often get conned by people; but Jesus, because He was brilliant and understood mankind so well, He could meet and speak with various people and get a read on them right away. I don't believe this to be by any supernatural power, but simply from being able to read people.

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<sup>1</sup> Obviously, I have no idea what this percentage is.

Another theory is, Jesus somehow has complete access to the plan of God for His life (let's simply set aside the time aspect of this, whether it is for a day or a week or a month). Jesus in His humanity had complete and full access to the Scriptures. He had heard them, He had read them, He had memorized them—and the Scriptures speak of Him. But there is no indication that somehow Jesus had—beyond the Scriptures—a complete blueprint of what He was supposed to do each day. I believe that, when Jesus walked into a town, people approached Him, that these interactions informed Jesus as to what He should do. When He was on a level plain, and there were thousands of people there, Jesus understood that this would be a time first to heal those who had come to be healed; and then to teach them.

Jesus does what we should do. He took the information which was in His soul, as informed by God the Holy Spirit Who was within Him, and combined this with the circumstances before Him and then He would act—taking all of these things into consideration.

There are two obvious places where we, as believers, can have this process break down on us. If we are not in the Spirit—that is, there is unconfessed sin in our lives—then we are useless. Have you ever plugged in an electrical device into a dead circuit and nothing happens? That is what we are when we are out of the Spirit (not in fellowship with God). We are a dead circuit. The power is off.

Secondly, God gives us the opportunity to take in Bible doctrine. If we are positive toward His plan, then God will provide the necessary information that we need. If our souls are bereft of spiritual information, then we will not be able to act with knowledge. The illustration I have given several times is myself as a three year old nailing a piece of scrap wood to the subflooring of the house my father was building. I had the tools, I had some knowledge of how to work a nail and hammer and board (by watching my father). However, I had no knowledge of the overall plan, so that my scrap piece of wood nailed to the subfloor was never a part of the final structure of the house. It had no place on the plans for the house. So you can be filled with the Spirit as a believer, but contribute as much to the plan of God as I did as a three-year-old helping my dad build our house.

On the other hand, if we are filled with the Spirit and growing spiritually, then we are imitators of Jesus, and we contribute to the plan of God.

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**Lesson 202: Luke 7:6–10 Matthew 8:5–13****Parallel Accounts**

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There was a centurion who had a very sick servant, and when Jesus came into his city, the centurion sent some Jewish elders to ask Jesus if He would be willing to heal the centurion's servant.

As Jesus met the elders and made the decision to go to the centurion's house, the soldier has been thinking all of this time. He recognized that Jesus really did not need to enter his home—and, besides, he was a gentile and an unworthy man at that (in his own

estimation). The centurion sent friends of his to meet Jesus before He arrived at the centurion's home.

Luke 7:6–8 Jesus then traveled with the Jewish elders towards the house of the centurion. When they were not too far from the house, the centurion had sent some friends to meet up with Jesus and to speak on his behalf. They said to Him [speaking for the centurion], "Lord, please do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy for You to come into my house. In fact, I do not even see myself as being worthy to meet with You. Instead, say the word and my young servant will be healed. For I am a man who is under authority; and I have also soldiers who are under me. I say to this one, 'Depart,' and he departs; to another, 'Come in,' and he enters in; and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it." (Kukis paraphrase)

Friends of the centurion found Jesus coming toward the home of the centurion and told Him, "You do not need to actually come to his house. Just say the word, and his servant will be healed." And this is what Jesus did.

Luke 7:9 Upon hearing these things, Jesus marveled concerning the centurion and his message, and He turned to the crowd following Him and said, "I say to all of you, I have not found so great a faith as this in all Israel." (Kukis paraphrase)

Jesus indicates that He has a great deal of respect for this centurion, who understood what was taking place (many people 2000 years later do not understand how Jesus healed).

Luke 7:10a And when those who had been sent returned to the house,...

There was a delegation of the centurion's friends sent to intercept Jesus before He arrived at the house. After some realistic soul searching, the centurion recognized that he was unfit to have the Lord in his home.

They made the request and Jesus honored the request of the centurion, and He said the word which would result in the healing of the slave. He said, "Go; let it be done for you as you have believed." (Matthew 8:13).

That delegation now returns to the house of the centurion.

Luke 7:10b ...they found the servant well.

Those sent as a delegation from the centurion to Jesus return to find that the slave of the centurion is in good health. He had been cured instantly. Jesus did not have to touch the servant; offer up a quiet prayer for him, or even let him touch the hem of Jesus' garment. Through some sort of system of authorities, probably involving angels, Jesus was able to call for the healing of this servant, and the angels obeyed Him. The servant received healing.

Luke 7:10 And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.



Now let's look at these parallel passages and see if we can make sense of them. The key to reconciling these separate passages is, the centurion does not actually speak directly to Jesus, but he speaks *through* two delegations of people whom he has sent on his behalf. These delegations would speak for him. They would say the very words that the centurion would say to Jesus, had he met Jesus in person.

If Lucy sent a letter to Charlie Brown, someone may later report (accurately), that Lucy Van Pelt said these things to Charlie Brown, so that it sounds as if they spoke face to face. However, since we understand the entire context, we know what she said to him was actually written in a letter. Most of the quotations in Matthew are as if spoken directly from the centurion to Jesus. However, these can be the words of the centurion without the centurion actually being there face to face with Jesus.

The ESV; capitalized will be used below. I will insert some additional text in brackets, under the assumption that Jesus never speaks directly with the centurion.

### The Parallel Accounts of Matthew and Luke

Matthew 8 text	Luke 7 text	Commentary
Matt. 8:5 When He had entered Capernaum,...	Luke 7:1 After He had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum.	Jesus has delivered the sermon on the plain in Luke 6; and this first part of Luke 7:1 hearkens back to that. Matt. 8:5 also occurs, apparently, after the sermon on the mount (but with at least one intervening incident in the first 4 verses of Matt. 8).

The context of these two narratives suggests to us that, at this point in His ministry, Jesus taught a set of similar topics when He was before a large group. This also suggests that the sermon on the mount and the sermon on the plain probably took place around the same time period—possibly within the same month.

Jesus very likely taught every day (if not to a group of followers, to His disciples as a comparatively small group), and that there were overlaps in what He taught (Jesus did not teach new material each and every day). In fact, most of what Jesus taught was the Law of God, but without all of the additions and misinterpretations of the pharisees.



## The Parallel Accounts of Matthew and Luke

Matthew 8 text	Luke 7 text	Commentary
<p>Matt. 8:5b–6 ...a centurion came forward to Him [being represented by a group of Jewish elders, apparently], appealing to Him, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly."</p>	<p>Luke 7:2–3 Now a centurion had a servant who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him. When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to Him elders of the Jews, asking Him to come and heal his servant.</p>	<p>Although it appears in Matthew as if the centurion is speaking directly to Jesus, this is actually several Jewish elders pleading his case (word-for-word, apparently).</p> <p>Matthew tells us that the problem is paralysis; Luke tells us that the request is for Jesus to come heal his servant.</p>
<p>There is an alternate way to understand this. The centurion comes to Jesus directly and appeals to Him. The centurion returns home, but soon after, a Jewish delegation of elders come to Jesus in order to plead his case once more before the Lord. I believe that my first explanation—that the centurion never actually meets Jesus face to face—is the accurate one. But it is not the only explanation which integrates these two narratives into a single account.</p>		
<p>When two accounts appear to be contradictory, there are often several ways to deal with the apparent contradictions. In some cases of two or more solutions, we can make a logical guess as to which best fits the actual event; but that is speculation.</p>		
<p>Matt. 8:7 And He said to him [Jesus speaking to a Jewish elder specifically making the request], "I will come and heal him."</p>	<p>Luke 7:4–5 And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with Him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have You do this for him, for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue."</p>	<p>Luke tells us that this Jewish delegation makes a plea for this man based upon his relationship to the Jews. Since Matthew concentrates on specifically what the centurion said (speaking through his emissaries), the arguments of the Jewish elders are left out.</p> <p>Matthew tells us that Jesus agrees to come and heal the servant.</p>

## The Parallel Accounts of Matthew and Luke

Matthew 8 text	Luke 7 text	Commentary
<p>Matt. 8:8 But the centurion [now speaking through some friends of his] replied, "Lord, I am not worthy to have You come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed."</p>	<p>Luke 7:6–7 And Jesus went with them. When He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy to have You come under my roof. Therefore I did not presume to come to You. But say the word, and let my servant be healed."</p>	<p>The second thing that the centurion says to Jesus is actually made by second delegation, a group of friends sent to intercept Jesus before He actually arrives at the front door of the centurion's house.</p> <p>What the Centurion says, according to Matthew's account, is contained in the quote found in Luke's account.</p>
<p>I offered two explanations which make these parallel narratives coincide: (1) the centurion never speaks directly to Jesus, but only through these Jewish elders from his city; or (2) the centurion does speak to Jesus, but these Jewish elders come and speak to Jesus soon thereafter, worried that the servant does not have much time remaining.</p>		
<p>(1) So, when the centurion says, "I did not presume to come to You," (in Luke) he is speaking of coming to Jesus to speak to Him face to face. (2) If the centurion has spoken directly to Jesus, then the Lukian account may be appended as follows: "I did not presume to come to You [a second time]."</p>		
<p>I believe the first explanation, where the centurion's exact words are given by two separate groups of people, to be the accurate explanation.</p>		
<p>Matt. 8:9 For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."</p>	<p>Luke 7:8 For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."</p>	<p>Although I did not compare the Greek text side-by-side, there might be the difference of a word or two, left out by Matthew.</p> <p>In both cases, the centurion is probably speaking to Jesus through the friends of the centurion.</p>
<p>In Matthew, it sounds as if all of this takes place in one interchange directly between Jesus and the centurion. In Luke, there are more details, which indicate that two separate delegations were sent to Jesus and that what we read are two sets of conversations.</p>		

## The Parallel Accounts of Matthew and Luke

Matthew 8 text	Luke 7 text	Commentary
Matt. 8:10 When Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who followed Him, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith."	Luke 7:9 When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed Him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith."	As Jesus traveled towards the home of the centurion, a crowd of people followed Him.  Jesus will not continue this walk toward the centurion's home, as this is no longer necessary.
Jesus' full statement was probably, "Truly, I tell you, with no one, not even in Israel, have I found such faith."		
Matt. 8:11 I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."	(No parallel in Luke)  There are many Old Testament passages which attest to this: Psalm 22:27 98:3 Isaiah 2:2-3 11:10 49:6 52:10 are examples.	Jesus teaches some additional material in Matthew that the Jewish people cannot depend upon their blood relationship to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for their salvation.  Those coming from the east and west will be gentiles. Many gentiles will believe in Jesus and become a part of His fold.  Jewish people, hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ through their Scriptures will be angry for not heeding this call themselves.
In this context, there are Jews who should have recognized the Messiah, but they did not due to their hardness of heart. How many gentiles of this era, who use the words, <i>Jesus</i> , <i>Christ</i> and <i>Jesus Christ</i> as expletives, will find themselves in the same circumstances. That is, the Lord's name was right there on the tip of their tongue—they used His name again and again—but they never bothered to learn more about the Man Whose name they used so much.		

## The Parallel Accounts of Matthew and Luke

Matthew 8 text	Luke 7 text	Commentary
Matt. 8:13 <b>And to the centurion</b> [through the delegation of friends of the centurion] <b>Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.</b>	Luke 7:10 <b>And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.</b>	Matthew reveals to us what Jesus actually said; Luke tells us what happened when the friends returned to the centurion's home.  In Matthew's account, Jesus would be speaking to the representative of the centurion, as if speaking to the centurion himself.

So, there are two, possibly three, ways to reconcile these narratives; and each requires once or twice the words of a delegation to be the exact words of the centurion. In both cases, the dialogue recorded is spoken directly from words of the centurion to Jesus (that is, the message is in the 1<sup>st</sup> person speaking to Jesus in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular, as if the centurion is right there in front of Jesus).

In order to reconcile two accounts which seem inconsistent, I do not have to provide exactly the way in which this event took place. If I can show that they can potentially be put into agreement with one another in at least one way, then I have done my job reconciling the accounts.

There is a third explanation that these are different centurions, but with similar requests. I do not see that as a completely unreasonable explanation. After all, on many occasions, people have come to similar conclusions without ever conferring with one another.

Whether we study this event in the book of Matthew or in the book of Luke, we have all the information that we need in those respective narratives. What is key is, the gentile centurion had a good understanding of how Jesus' power functioned. He understood that there was a system of authorities involved. A healing never required that Jesus be right there in order for it to occur.

There is a parallel here. The centurion is able to speak to the Lord without coming directly to the Lord himself. Jesus is able to effect a cure in the centurion's servant without coming directly to the servant and being in the same room with him.

There are perhaps a half dozen places where I will take 2 or more accounts found in the gospels, set them side-by-side, and reconcile them. I will not do this each and every time there is a possible inconsistency. It is far too easy to be bogged down in the narrative if I do that.

**Luke 7:1–10** (a graphic); from [Holy Textures](#); accessed July 21, 2022. I cropped this graphic so avoid have an image of Jesus with long hair. Quite obviously, based upon our study, the centurion did not actually come before Jesus.

Luke 7:10 **And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.**

I would like you to think about this entire incident for a moment and understand what God the Holy Spirit had Luke record it. This centurion, a gentile, never actually meets Jesus face to face, but he is clearly saved. He believes in the Lord; He believes that Jesus is the Messiah promised to the Jewish people. That means he is saved.



The big picture is this: we are reading about how most gentiles are saved. They never actually meet Jesus (the opportunity that many Jews in the 1<sup>st</sup> century enjoyed), but they heard about Him and they believed. Because they believed, they were saved. This describes the experience of every gentile in the book of Acts and every gentile saved since then. We heard about Jesus and we believed in Him; and so God saved us.

## Lesson 203: Luke 7:11–12

## At the Gate of Nain

This graphic gives us an idea of what to expect in the next increment in our study

**The Miracle at the Gate of Nain Luke 7:11-17** (a graphic); from [Christian Library](#); accessed July 22, 2022.

In my opinion, the palate with the dead child is probably held aloft on the shoulders of those who are carrying his body. Also, the young man (or child) probably is not draped. That is, the body could be seen.





Luke 7:11a **Soon afterward....**

There are five Greek words in the transitional phrase. Literally this reads, *And it came to pass on the next [day]...*

The word *next* here is *hexês* (ἑξήτης) [pronounced *hex-ACE*], which is a word used exclusively by Luke in the New Testament (Luke 7:11 9:37 Acts 21:1 25:17 27:18). This is the kind of word that would be used in narrative exposition. It refers to the next event in a succession of notable events. Many translators suggest that this means *the next day*, and that is not a bad translation, given that every day must have had notable events occur in it.

This could also refer to the next journey that they go on.

The book of Luke is roughly broken down into 3 sections: (1) A series of events placed in (mostly) chronological order; (2) a recording of some of the Lord's most notable teachings (which are not necessarily out of chronological order); (3) the final days of the 1<sup>st</sup> advent. Because we are in the first section, we find these sorts of connectives throughout. They simply indicate that Jesus and His disciples were doing one thing (or a series of things) in vv. 1–10, and this is the next (recorded) event in their lives.

Luke 7:11b **...He went to a town called Nain,....**

They are traveling toward a city called Nain, a city only named here in the Bible. This would suggest that this event—since we do not find the city *Nain* elsewhere—is unique to the book of Luke.

This incident is a very big deal because this is still early on in the Lord's ministry.

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Various commentators either report based upon their reading of the text; or they speculate somewhat. This may be more than you want to know about Nain.

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### **Nain (various commentators)**

Hawker: *Nain [is] A city of Palestine, rendered memorable from the Lord Jesus raising the widow's son from death at the gate of this city. (See Luke 7:11) The word is derived from Naham, beauty.*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Hawker, *Poor Man's Concordance*; Published in 1828; public domain; taken from E-Sword; Topic: Nain.

## Nain (various commentators)

Easton: From Heb. *nain*, “green pastures,” “lovely”), the name of a town near the gate of which Jesus raised to life a widow’s son (Luke 7:11–17). It is identified with the village called *Nein*, standing on the north–western slope of *Jebel ed–Duhy* (= the “hill *Moreh*” = “Little hermon”), about 4 miles from Tabor and 25 southwest of Capernaum. At the foot of the slope on which it stands is the great plain of *Esdraelon*.<sup>3</sup>

Fausset: [*Nain is the*] scene of Christ’s raising the widow’s son (Luke 7:12). Now *Nein* on N.W. verge of *Jebel ed Duhy* (*Little Hermon*) where it slopes down to *Esdraelon* plain. The rock west of the village abounds in cave tombs, also in the east side. Eighteen miles from Capernaum, where Jesus had been the preceding day. Josephus (*Ant.* 20:5, section 1) notices *Nain* as on the way from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very way Jesus was going.<sup>4</sup>

ISBE: *Nain* [*is*] *nâ’in* (*Naiv, Naín*): This town is mentioned in Scripture only in connection with the visit of Jesus and the miracle of raising the widow’s son from the dead in Luke 7:11. The name persists to this day, and in the form of *Nein* clings to a small village on the northwestern slope of *Jebel ed–Duhy* (“Hill of *Moreh*”), the mountain which, since the Middle Ages, has been known as *Little Hermon*. The modern name of the mountain is derived from *Neby Duhy* whose wely crowns the height above the village.

ISBE continues: There are many ancient remains, proving that the place was once of considerable size. It was never enclosed by a wall, as some have thought from the mention of “the gate.” This was probably the opening between the houses by which the road entered the town. Tristram thought he had found traces of an ancient city wall, but this proved to be incorrect. The ancient town perhaps stood somewhat higher on the hill than the present village. In the rocks to the East are many tombs of antiquity. The site commands a beautiful and extensive view across the plain to Carmel, over the Nazareth hills, and away past Tabor to where the white peak of *Hermon* glistens in the sun. To the South are the heights of *Gilboa* and the uplands of *Samaria*. The village, once prosperous, has fallen on evil days. It is said that the villagers received such good prices for *simsum* that they cultivated it on a large scale. A sudden drop in the price brought them to ruin, from which, after many years, they have not yet fully recovered.<sup>5</sup>

This is a great deal of information for a city which occurs only here in Scripture.

Luke 7:11c ...and his disciples...went with Him.

The Lord’s disciples are with Him, which includes far more than just the 12.

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<sup>3</sup> M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*; 1897; from e-Sword, topic: *Nain*.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Robert Fausset, *Fausset’s Bible Dictionary*; from e-Sword, topic: *Nain*.

<sup>5</sup> *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: *Nain*.

Luke 7:11d ...and a great crowd...

There is also a large crowd with the Lord, and this is interesting to me. Why are these not considered as a part of His disciples? This would suggest to me that there were many people there who were entertained by all of this; there were many religious types who were observing the Lord, determining what to make of Him and to gather information to bring back. There were likely other people with Him who might be there for this trip, but must peel off, as something more important in their life comes up (more important by their own standards).

It is very difficult for a person in the midst of human history to understand what is significant and what is not. In my generation, most of us know right where we were when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, and this event has filled our imaginations ever since, with dozens of books, hundreds of theories, and many specials and movies on this event. I still know individuals with whom I could have a very animated conversation regarding Kennedy's assassination, despite it taking place nearly 60 years ago.

In the grand scheme of things in U.S. history, that assassination was not the major event that most of us thought that it was (apart from ushering in the Lyndon Johnson presidency, which was one of the most consequential presidencies of my lifetime). But we (meaning, my generation) have assigned great importance to this event, some believing that it signaled the takeover of the United States government (it was nothing of the sort). My point being, what many of us thought was a very significant event (the assassination of JFK) really was not, apart from the man his death placed into office.

My point in all of this is, we are studying the greatest period of time in man's history, namely, the public ministry of Jesus the Messiah. Many people observed it; but there were also those who began following Him, but peeled off later. That is, they were right there, in the center of the greatest series of events ever witnessed by man, and yet, they found other stuff to do instead.

Luke 7:11 Soon afterward He went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with Him.

Jesus has large crowds of people who joined with Him on many occasions. This is early on in His ministry, this series of events taking place in the first year. Some who are with Him are dedicated disciples, who have put their own lives on hold to follow Jesus. However, there are many others also following Jesus for a variety of reasons, and this is apparently, a large number of people. Some of them would probably become disciples of the Lord.

Luke 7:12a As He drew near to the gate of the town,...

Jesus and this very large crowd is coming up to the city. The city is only mentioned here, so this might even be a unique convergence of people. Outside of the city, there are Jesus' disciples and a large crowd of people who might be seen as somewhat skeptical;



or merely as observers, trying to draw a conclusion. Some, as mentioned, were religious types who were already hostile to Jesus.

Luke 7:12b ...**behold, a man who had died was being carried out,**...

This is a pretty important deal that is happening right here. All of this is significant. What appears to be the case is, this is a young man who has died, although his age is uncertain.

Luke 7:12c ...**the only son of his mother, and she was a widow,**...

The body being brought out of the city in a large procession is that of a boy (or a young man), and he is the only son of his mother, who is a widow.

The significance of this is, this woman no longer had anyone to take care of her. Her husband was dead; and now her only son is dead. In that era, women were very dependent upon men for protection and sustenance.

Today in the United States, every attempt has been made to shift this burden from men to the government. These many acts of human good (that is, the series of state and federal legislation which has been passed) have resulted in the destruction of the family unit, which has made things much worse in the United States. Human good always makes things worse. The United States, as a country, has become much weaker because of the destruction of the family unit. Replacing the man of the house with a government welfare check is one of the worst changes in American society to ever come about.

Luke 7:12d ...**and a considerable crowd from the town was with her.**

There is a very large crowd of people with the mother. This would suggest that a great many people know this mother and her son; and that this is a great loss for all.

#### **Lessons 204–205: Luke 7:12– 16**

#### **Jesus and the Widow's Deceased Son**

Luke 7:11 **Soon afterward He went to a town called Nain, and His disciples and a great crowd went with Him.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus has come to a town called Nain, and there is a gate. Jesus and those following Him approach the gate.

Luke 7:12 **As He drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus approaches, with many people, the gate of the town of Nain, and He (also with a crowd of many people) comes face to face with this funeral procession.

Jesus is following the plan of God. This does not mean that He knows in advance everything that is going to happen; nor does this mean that God the Father has told the humanity of Jesus what to expect. It simply means that, as Jesus comes face to face with certain situations, and He determines on the spot what He ought to do in these various circumstances. He makes these decisions based upon the doctrine in His soul which He learned (remember Luke 2:40, 52).

Luke 7:13a **And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her...**

Jesus had human emotions and He felt compassion for this woman. Jesus' human emotions are not tempered or altered by His Deity. There is no blending of His essence as a man and His essence as God.

The actual word found here is the somewhat less genteel than how it is usually translated: it is the aorist (deponent) passive indicative of *splagchnizomai* (σπλαγχνίζομαι) [pronounced *splangk-NID-zom-ahee*], which means, *to be moved as to one's bowels, hence to be moved with compassion, to have compassion, to feel sympathy, to pity*. Strong's #4697. I know that many people search out very literal translations, but do you really want a translation which speaks of *being moved in one's bowels* or, *to have the bowels yearn*? The Awful Scroll Bible has *came to be of bowels of compassion*; the Exegesis Companion Bible has, *has a sympathetic spleen on her*. Jonathan Mitchell tries to combine the two approaches, and translates this very long word, *was on the spot affected in His inner parts and felt tender compassion upon her*.

Jesus immediately understands what is going on. Now, did He know at this time that she was a widow with no husband and no other sons? Absolutely He did; but not by His omniscience. Jesus knew these things by simply observing the woman, who is clearly in mourning. He can see that there are no other men or children close to her mourning in the same way.

Today, when you go to a funeral, you can often determine who the loved ones are by where they sit or stand and how they dress, and sometimes by the emotions they are expressing. It would have been the same in that era. There would be a number of visual clues from which one might ascertain these facts.

I have suggested that Jesus is able to see the body of the deceased, which would have been one way that He knew it is the only son of the woman who had died.

This was an incredibly sad circumstance because she has no one, at this point, to take care of her or to look after her. This is obvious in that, she appears to mourn alone without members of a family being there with her.

Jesus' motivation from His humanity is compassion. He has determined exactly what is going on, and He knows exactly why God the Father has placed this right before Him.

Luke 7:13b **...and said to her, "Do not weep."**

What Jesus says here might surprise you. He says, "Stop crying." No doubt, you have comforted someone in great emotional pain, and they are crying and you say, "That's alright, dear; just let it all out;" meaning, *just keep crying as much and as hard as you want to. No one is judging you.* But Jesus says the opposite. "Don't let it all out," He says, "Just stop crying for a moment."

Now, why does Jesus do this? He needs her attention; He needs her focus. She cannot focus on Him while in such an emotional state. We might understand this to mean, "Listen to Me, now, dear (and turn off the water works)."

**Luke 7:13 (NIV)** (a graphic); from [the Word for the Day](#); accessed July 21, 2022.

**Luke 7:13** And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep."

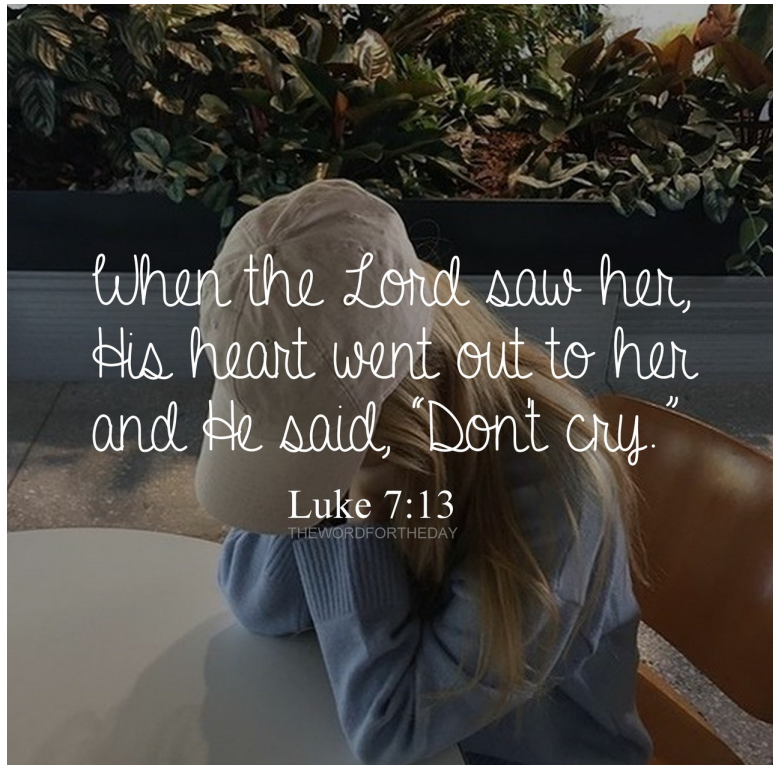
From a human standpoint, it seem incongruous that Jesus has compassion for this woman, and yet He tells her to stop crying. However, Jesus needs this woman's attention. As the widow with the son who has just died, this woman is the focus of the funeral procession. You know who needs to be the focus of this procession? Right now, Jesus. She needs to focus on Him, and the rest of

the people from these disparate groups also need to focus on Jesus. This is not because Jesus needs to be the center of attention, and this funeral was taking from that. Jesus is the Savior of every person there, and what they are about to see is going to be the most amazing sight of their lives. This is done that the people there might believe on Him.

**Luke 7:14a** Then He came up and touched the bier,...

The word *bier* is the hapax legomena *soros* (σopός) [pronounced *sor-OSS*], which means, *an urn, coffin, funereal receptacle, a bier; receptacle for keeping the bones of the dead; the funeral couch or bier on which the Jews carried their dead forth to burial.* Strong's #4673. Most of the dictionaries suggest that this is an open wooden frame upon which dead bodies are transported.

Jesus gravitated toward the bier that was being carried and He touched it.



I do not know exactly what their coffins looked like then, whether a board upon which the son was laid or a box in which his body was placed. I lean towards the former, as the widow is not wealthy.

The NET Bible: *Although sometimes translated “coffin,” the bier was actually a stretcher or wooden plank on which the corpse was transported to the place of burial.*<sup>6</sup>

Any sort of contact with the dead made a person ceremonially unclean. This is why Jesus did not touch the son directly.

Luke 7:14b ...and the bearers stood still.

The men carrying the bier stopped. It was the odd event of this stranger to stop the procession and then to touch the wooden plank upon which the body laid. There is always the possibility that they had some idea who Jesus was. After all, He is there with hundreds of other people who are following Him (including a large number of people who apparently have not made up their minds about Jesus yet).

Jesus coming up and touching the bier stopped the proceedings immediately. No one knows what to do, but moving forward with the body seems out of the question (Jesus is standing right in front of them; and behind Him are perhaps a few hundred people). Given the time frame—early in the Lord’s ministry—what Jesus was about to do had not been done before. So, no one really knew or even had an inkling of what would happen next—except for Jesus.

Also, remember that there are two sets of people there. There are those who are following death (the woman’s son laying on the wooden bier); and those who are following Life (the ones who are following Jesus). They come face to face, and Jesus is between them.

Bear in mind that these are real events which actually took place; but there is also a grand representative nature to this particular event.

Insofar as we know, perhaps Jesus stood in front of them with his flattened hand against the wooden stretcher, using the universal symbol for *stop*.

Jesus coming up and touching the bier would have been a very odd thing for someone to do—particularly a stranger. This would have caused a person to be ceremonially unclean; and this has probably never happened at a funeral before (again, Jesus appears to have touched the bier and not the dead body).

No doubt, some of the people there knew Who Jesus was; others, likely, had no idea. But, just someone touching the bier would have been a very unusual thing for anyone to do; and that brought the entire procession to a dead halt.

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<sup>6</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?luk7.htm> (footnote); accessed November 3, 2019.

Jesus was with a very large crowd and He encounters the funeral procession, which is smaller. 2 minutes ago, the focus of everyone in the funeral procession was upon the widow or upon the dead son. Now everyone is looking at Jesus.

A funeral procession generally does not stop until they have come to the grave site. Jesus has stopped the procession, and no doubt, everyone is quiet and looking at Jesus (perhaps there is a gasp or two in the crowd). Whatever the case, Jesus now has everyone's attention. The people in the procession are no longer focused upon the woman or her deceased child. Everyone is looking at Jesus, and no one has any idea what is about to take place.

Even the woman has stopped crying.

Everything has come to a halt, and Jesus speaks to the (dead) boy:

Luke 7:14c **And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise."**

Jesus spoke to the young man upon the bier. Jesus tells him to rise up. I really do not have a clue as to the son's age. According to the word used, he is probably less than 40 years old.

The funeral process has come to a halt, because Jesus stood in front of those carrying the bier and he touched it. And now, Jesus speaks to the deceased.

Although Who Jesus was and what He has been doing was no doubt spread far and wide by this time—even this early into His ministry—let me postulate that He was not universally known; and certainly not universally recognized.

However, what Jesus is doing and saying has the full concentration of everyone there. For those who have no idea who He is, they are surely going to ask around.

Luke 7:14 **Then He came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise."**

Jesus has prematurely stopped the funeral procession, and then, He has made it all about Him, rather than about the grieving mother. He speaks to the dead son.

How did Jesus, from His humanity, decide to do this? Let me suggest that this is all about time and place. Jesus would have been aware, in His humanity, of people being raised from the dead in the Old Testament (I don't recall how many; one or two?). But we will later note a passage from Isaiah which speaks to this. So, when Jesus comes face to face with a funeral procession, and He is offering life eternal to those who believe in Him; it would be logical for Him, as the Messiah, to raise the dead person up.

Luke 7:15a **And the dead man sat up...**



All of this narrative would have taken a very short amount of time. The two groups of people were there—the followers of Jesus and the followers of the funeral procession. Jesus moved forward to the casket, touched it, and spoke. This took perhaps a minute or so—and everyone is looking at Him.

And just so that you understand, in God's plan, there were many occasions where circumstances made Jesus the center of the event taking place. Jesus does not make Himself out to be the center of this event out of ego. He does not require the admiration of hundreds of people to feel fulfilled. He grabs their attention and puts Himself in the center of this event, because He—the actual Person of Jesus—is their salvation. He is the only way to God. All attention should therefore be upon Him, particularly during a funeral procession. Making Himself the central figure is for our benefit.

In any case, after Jesus speaks, the boy sits up.

Think about the symbolism of these two groups of people, with Jesus standing between them. There are those who follow Jesus, Who is life; and there are those following along the funeral procession—they are following death. The key is Jesus. Life is found with Jesus. Jesus gives life, even to the dead. And Jesus stands in the midst of these two crowds.

Luke 7:15b ...and began to speak,...

Then the boy starts to speak. We have no idea as to the content; but previous believers who have been healed often glorify God.

Everyone can see the boy (since he is lifted up), and everyone can hear him. Jesus shows again that He has the power over death, something that no other man has.

Luke 7:15c ...and Jesus gave him to his mother.

Jesus apparently lifts or helps the young man off the bier; and then Jesus hands him to his mother.

In the alternative, those carrying the bier set it down, and Jesus gives a hand up to the young man. Jesus then presents the living son to his mother.

**So he who was dead sat up**



**and began to speak** (a graphic); from [Redeeming God](#); accessed July 22, 2022.

Luke 7:15 **And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.**

We do not know exactly what physically took place here. My thinking at first was, Jesus picked up the boy and handed him over to his mother—which is what made me think that he might be around 10 years old. However, the verb *to give* can also mean *to present*. So, assuming that the pallbearers set the bier down, the boy (young man) stands up and is guided by Jesus' hand to his mother.

Exactly how this all takes place is speculation. In any case, the details are superfluous to what is being taught here. In Jesus is life. Being touched by Jesus is life. Everyone there is a witness to this. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Him.

Obviously, the mother is going to hug the child at this point.

Luke 7:14–15 **Drawing near, Jesus touched the coffin, and those carrying it stopped. Jesus spoke to the young man, saying, “Rise up!” And the previously dead child sat up and began to speak. Jesus then gave him to his mother.** (Kukis paraphrase)

What is remarkable about this is, everyone in the town apparently knows the mother or the child; and they all know that the kid is really dead. But, Jesus speaks to the dead boy, and suddenly, the boy is alive. Again, this event is both real and symbolic, as it symbolizes how we are saved. We believe in the Lord—we hear His voice<sup>7</sup> and we respond to it—and we are made alive.

One thing should be made clear: the boy has *not* been resurrected; this is not his resurrection body. He has been resuscitated; which means, he is alive now, at whatever age that he is, and he will live a normal life from this point on. However, he will die at some point in the future. Maybe 40 years hence; maybe 60 years hence.

Luke 7:16a **Fear seized them all,...**

Everyone there was taken aback by fear. Most of them, because they recognized that this was the work of God (no doubt, none of this affected most of the religious types who were there).

Quite obviously, the people in both crowds have never seen anything like this before. There were no doubt rumors and stories about Jesus, but everyone there was seeing this quite close up. When faced with the power of God, even when it is gentle like this, fear is a natural reaction.

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<sup>7</sup> I am speaking metaphorically here; not literally. By hearing the voice of Jesus, I mean, we often hear the words of Scripture spoken, by a friend, a pastor or an evangelist.

Luke 7:16b ...and they glorified God,...

When the initial shock began to wear off, the people then began to give glory to God. They recognize that what has happened is the power of God.

Luke 7:16c ...saying, "A Great Prophet has arisen among us!"

How the people glorified God is by saying these two things. Some said, "The Great Prophet has been raised up among us." So, many of them recognized that Jesus was the Great Prophet of the Old Testament.

Moses describes Him in Deuteronomy 18:15–16a [Moses is speaking] *Jehovah your God shall raise up to you a Prophet from among you, of your brothers, one like me; you shall listen to Him, according to all that you desired of Jehovah your God...* Deuteronomy 18:18 [God is speaking] *I shall raise up a prophet to them from among their brothers, one like you; and I will put My Words in His mouth; and He shall speak to them all that I shall command Him.* (Green's Literal Translation; capitalized)

The *Great Prophet* would be the Messiah. He would be more than simply a prophet, and many people recognized Jesus.

Luke 7:16c ...saying, "A Great Prophet has arisen among us!"

Throughout the gospels, Jesus looks to be properly identified by others; to be witnessed to by others. He does not stand before the people and say, "I am God come in the flesh; believe in Me." The people observing this event have identified Who He is.

God is glorified when you recognize Who He is and what He is doing.

Luke 7:16d ...and "God has visited His people!"

Others there said, "God has visited His people." This also glorifies God. Again, they recognize God's work being done among them.

**Luke 7:16c-d (NASB)** (a graphic); from [Daily Prayer](#); accessed July 21, 2022.

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel. (ESV; capitalized)

Matthew 1:23 "Behold, the virgin





shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel" (which means, God with us)." (ESV; capitalized)

Bear in mind that, for 400 years, God has been silent towards Israel. There have been no miracles, no prophets, no men of God, in the sense that they actually communed with God and brought information from God to Israel.

Although there are some writings which were done in these interim years, they are not taken to be divinely inspired (nor do they claim divine inspiration).

No one appears to question this miracle. It would be a very difficult miracle to question.

## **Lesson 206: Luke 7:11–17**

## **The People of Nain are Seized by Fear**

This is what we have been studying:

**Luke 7:11** Soon afterward He went to a town called Nain, and His disciples and a great crowd went with Him.

Jesus and his disciples went to a town called Nain, and he had His usual disciples with Him but there were others also with him who were simply interested in what was happening. Perhaps it was sort of like following a circus, but Jesus and what He did is what everyone was talking about.

**Luke 7:12** As He drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her.

Now, as the people with Jesus come near to the gate of the town, there is a group gathered on the other side of the gate, walking toward them (heading out of the gate). This is a funeral procession involving a mother, who is widowed; and her only son was being carried lifeless on a slab. Many people from Nain were attending this funeral.

Jesus would have determined, within a few seconds, who had died, who his mother was, and that there was no husband. The grieving mother would have been easy to pick out. The relationship of her to the deceased would have been easily determined, if the body of the deceased was not covered up. The fact that she did not have a husband would be observed simply because there was not a man of her age comforting her.

**Luke 7:13** And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep."

Jesus, as a man, has compassion. But instead of telling her to cry and let it all out, Jesus tells her to give it a rest. "Stop weeping," He tells her. This is so Jesus would become the

focal point and so that she can concentrate on Him (along with everyone else who is there).

Luke 7:14 Then He came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise."

Then Jesus comes to the bier (the board upon which the body was lying) and He touched it; and those carrying the bier stop right there in their tracks. Jesus tells the man to rise up.

Luke 7:15 And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. (ESV; capitalized)

The young man, who had been dead, sits up and he begins to speak. Jesus presents him to his mother.

Luke 7:16 Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited His people!"

The people at the funeral correctly assess the situation. They recognize that Jesus is a great prophet who has arisen before them. They recognize that God is visiting His people. This breaks a 400 year silence, as God has not spoken to His people directly since the close of the Old Testament.<sup>8</sup>

Kretzmann makes an interesting observation here: *At this manifestation of almighty power which they had seen with their eyes, a fear and dread of the supernatural fell upon, took hold of, all the people. They felt the presence of God in this Man of Nazareth. But they did not acknowledge Him as the Messiah in spite of the greatness of the miracle. Merely as a great prophet they heralded Him; only as a visitation of God's grace did they look upon His coming. Their faith and understanding fell far short of that of the centurion of Capernaum. A mere recognition and acceptance of Jesus as a great prophet and social reformer is not sufficient at any time. All men must know Him to be the one and only Savior of the world. Only this knowledge and trust will bring salvation.*<sup>9</sup> Kretzmann's commentary here really needs to be discussed:

I am thinking on this. Are all of these people saved? I would suggest that those who made those two observations—that a great prophet had risen up among them and the God has now visited His people—and those who believed them, are now eternally saved.

The more that I think about this verse, along with Kretzmann's high bar for salvation, the more that I think these people were saved. Did they know and understand everything about the Lord at the time of exercising this faith? No. Did they know enough? I would

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<sup>8</sup> With the notable exception of John the baptizer.

<sup>9</sup> From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/kpc/luke-7.html> (vv. 16–17); accessed November 4, 2019.

say, yes. They appear to recognize that Jesus is the promised Great Prophet (promised by Moses) and that Jesus represents a visitation upon Israel from God. Do they understand that Jesus is actually God visiting them? Probably not. They do understand that God is visiting them insofar as, a prophet and miracle worker is there among them. That they seem to understand and believe.

What about Kretzmann's point that, *Their faith and understanding fell far short of that of the centurion of Capernaum*. He is right about this, but does that mean that these people are not saved? The centurion's faith was unusual inasmuch as he understood, far more than others—in fact, he understood more doctrine than Jesus' Own disciples. The centurion knew that Jesus Himself could command a cure, and that He was not actually performing the cure Himself (there are believers today who don't know this). The centurion had not simply believed in the Jewish Messiah; he understood more about Jesus than the average Christian today does. Now, does a person have to reach his level of faith and understanding in order to be saved? Absolutely not!

We have to separate salvation from living the spiritual life. Many people who are saved never grow spiritually a single millimeter. In fact, this describes the spiritual life of most believers. Most do not take advantage of the rebound technique (name your sins to God and God temporally forgives you that sin and cleanses you from all unrighteousness—1John 1:9). The person who does not employ 1John1:9 is perpetually out of fellowship, meaning that it is impossible for him to grow spiritually.

This generation of Jews—many of them believers, but not all of them—might be very similar to the Exodus generation; those who left Egypt as adults. They saw great signs and miracles of God wrought by the hand of Moses and Aaron; and they believed in their God. But, they never advanced beyond this point, spiritually speaking.

Now, you may wonder about the importance of learning God's Word. Perhaps you have been a Christian for 5 years, 10 years or even more; and your life is definitely better than it was; but you don't really rebound (unless you are emotionally moved to), and you don't really give a rip about dispensations, theology, soteriology, etc. Surely, this does not mean that such a person has not grown?

What is happening in this situation is very common and we see this in groups of Christians all over. Many people, when they become believers, stop drinking too much, stop taking drugs, work harder, take their relationships with the opposite sex more seriously, etc. A young man might stop hound dogging around (I guess I need an updated word for this); and a young woman might stop making herself open to the public. The end result is, they are living better lives and, in their minds, *who cares about all this other stuff?*

For most believers, the key to their life is, they are living lives which are closer to the concepts found in the laws of divine establishment. They may not rebound very often; they make not take in very much doctrine; but they regulate their own lives more carefully and they commit fewer overt sins than they did prior to salvation. This is all well and good. Such people are leading fine, moral lives. There is nothing wrong with this. The laws of

divine establishment are for believers and unbelievers both. If anyone obeys these laws, they are going to have a much better life. What you won't be doing is living life abundantly; nor will you be producing divine good (although life might be so good following the laws of divine establishment, that you may think that you *are* living a more abundant life). That requires being in fellowship and knowing what to do.

Every person, no matter what, lives a better life when adhering to the laws of divine establishment. This always works. This always makes things better. But, this does not mean that you are advancing spiritually. You may sin less, you may do all things in moderation, and you may be easier to get along with as compared to who you used to be. This is character development and there is nothing wrong with it; but it is not spiritual growth. Whatever the unbeliever can do is not the Christian life.

What I am simply doing is describing what most people believe is the Christian way of life. They cut back on the overt sins, they go to church every Sunday and maybe Wednesdays; and everyone they know would agree that they are better people. And, from a human perspective, they are. But, from a divine perspective, they are not moving forward in the Christian life.

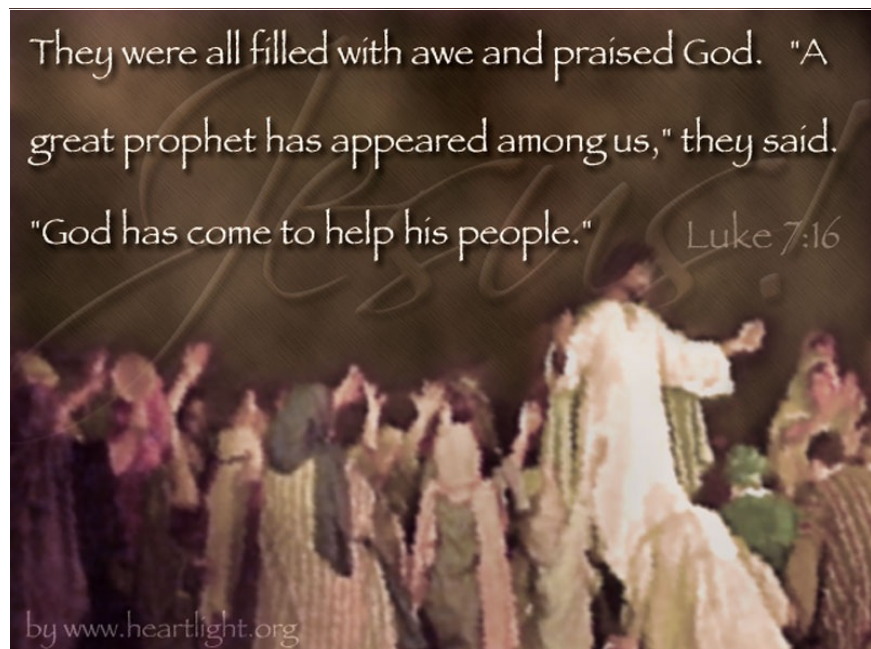
See **Christian Basics** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) and/or **Living the Christian Life** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) for more information in this regard.

**Luke 7:16 (NIV)** (a graphic); from [Heartlight](#); accessed July 21, 2022.

Luke 7:17a **And this report about Him spread through the whole of Judea...**

Jesus' ministry has just begun, and what He did here—raising this child from the dead—was unheard of. The entire town knew about it; all those who were with Jesus knew about it; and they began to broadcast this information throughout all Judæa.

If you can imagine something like this happening, then certainly, you are going to tell everyone that you know, using any method of sharing this information that you can think of.



Luke 7:17b ...and all the surrounding country.

They also spoke about Jesus throughout the entire region, which would have included many places where Jews and half-Jews lived.

This should have been accepted by others all around with great enthusiasm.

Luke 7:17 And this report about Him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.

Despite lacking a 24 hour news cycle and radio, people who witnessed something as amazing as a dead person rising up from the dead, are amazed beyond belief. Quite obviously, they are going to tell everyone they know (the exceptions are those who are against Jesus).

Luke 7:17 What Jesus did here became news throughout all Judæa and throughout all of the surrounding regions. (Kukis paraphrase)

This is a transitional verse, as shown by *The Voice*:

**Funeral Crowd:** A tremendous prophet has arisen in our midst! God has visited His people!

News of Jesus spread across the whole province of Judea and beyond to the surrounding regions. When these reports reached John's disciples, they brought news to John himself, *who was known for his preaching and ritual cleansing*. John sent two of his disciples to ask the Lord, "Are You the Promised One, or shall we keep looking for someone else?"

This verse takes this particular incident, and many others, and they are broadcast about the land of Judæa and all of the surrounding land as well. John the baptizer (whose ministry is in Judæa<sup>10</sup>) hears these things. At this point, he is probably in prison, but he has disciples who come to him, provide him with necessities and interact with him.

If you remember our earlier studies, you may be asking yourself, *isn't John dead?* What happened was, when we studied John's ministry, Luke simply included in that study that fact that John would die at the hand of Herod (not the Great; but one of the others). However, Luke, the author, was simply looking off into the future, sort of putting a period on the end of that particular narrative. *Here is John's ministry; and here is what John's fate will be*, is essentially what Luke wrote.

However, at this point in time, John is alive and likely in prison. Yet he still has disciples.

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<sup>10</sup> Most of Jesus' ministry took place in what would be considered *the northern kingdom*.

Now John, like many others, has a view of what the Messiah would be. Most people in this era understood the Messiah to be a political and military leader. They expect Him to come and destroy the armies of those who oppress the Jews (which they understood to be Rome); and then to lead the country as King, as David's Greater Son. However, this was not how Jesus would manifest Himself during the first advent (and, as an aside, no one at this time realized that there would be a first and second advent of the Messiah<sup>11</sup>).

## Lessons 207–208: Luke 7:18–20

## John's Disciples/Intercalation

It is easy to be reading along in your Bible, come to the subheading for the next section, and not realize just how this previous section leads very naturally into the next. These are not disjoint sections, despite having two very different narratives. We have just studied raising the widow's son in Nain; and this next section is about disciples of John coming to observe Jesus.

John the baptizer has some disciples in this crowd in Nain. John did not necessarily send these disciples to get the low-down on Jesus; they just happened to be there. These events were so remarkable, that they believed that they needed to tell John about them. It is possible that they wanted to hear John's perspective on Jesus, based upon what they were observing.

Luke 7:18 *The disciples of John reported all these things to him* [to John].

All of these stories about Jesus are going about and John's disciples come to him with a report. They would have come with stories about what they have seen or heard about, such as, this young boy being raised from the dead. We do not know if they are eyewitnesses or not to everything that they tell John about. Certainly, they would be aware of various miracles performed by Jesus from word of mouth.

There are two implications from this passage. The first is, John is in jail, under the principle *He [Jesus] must increase and I [John] must decrease*. That was to be the natural progression of his own ministry. John's ministry would have come to a sudden halt when he is thrown in jail by one of the Herods. The implication is, since these disciples are coming to John and telling him what is going on, that he is in prison and they have come to communicate with him there because he is cut off from the rest of the world and its events (particularly in the spiritual realm).

The second implication of this passage is, they have received or are receiving teaching about the Messiah (which teaching would make sense). John is teaching that Jesus is the Messiah, the Promised One. So then, it would make sense that these men—and much of the country—would be discussing the Messiah and Who He would be. How this would come about is open for speculation. Does John the Herald teach about the coming

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<sup>11</sup> Jesus apparently did, as He carefully separated the prophecies from the two advents when He spoke in the synagogue in Luke 4.



Messiah? It would make sense that he would (although we do not know if he has any sort of a teaching ministry from prison). We do know a little bit about what John was teaching in the desert-wilderness. We also know that John did identify the Lord when He came on the scene.

Are some synagogues looking at Messianic passages and including them in their readings? That would make even more sense. If the country is thinking about the coming Messiah, then would not their synagogues respond by the reading and then sometimes explaining many of the messianic passages? Some rabbis might even be teaching certain passages in order to discredit Jesus (“Does this sound like what this Jesus is doing or saying?”).

In fact, this brings us to another area of speculation—was time given over in the teaching from the synagogues and elsewhere about the Messiah and did any of them speak about Jesus in particular? I cannot recall any Scripture dealing with this. We do know that Jesus read Scriptures and explained them in the synagogues, which He appeared to attend from a very young age (the first assertion in this sentence is true; the second is a logical deduction).

Luke 7:19a<sup>12</sup> **And John, calling two of his disciples to him,...**

John picked out two of his disciples—indicating that he continue to have some sort of ministry at this time, albeit from jail. John’s disciples apparently have been communicating to him about what is happening in Israel—particularly in the northern area around Galilee, which is where Jesus conducted most of His public ministry.

There is an important lesson to be learned here, assuming that John is in jail. John’s ministry did not end because the government took him prisoner. His ministry ended when God removed him from planet earth.

Consider also—some of the greatest epistles written by Paul come from him while he is imprisoned. He certainly tried to get out, and he legally pursued all his options, as we see in the book of Acts. But, when in prison, Paul depended upon God to guide him, and he wrote four letters (epistles) that we read and study today.

John the disciple was banished to the Isle of Patmos, and we might think, “Well, his ministry is over. He is in contact with almost nobody now.” But that is when John’s ministry took off, so to speak. He is probably 90 years old (or thereabouts) and he writes the gospel of John, his three epistles and the book of Revelation. These are some of the most amazing writings of the New Testament, and John does all of that writing as a very senior citizen banished to an island. So, do not think that, when you come into retirement that God expects you to just coast out your life until you die.

John (the herald) asks two of his disciples to go to Jesus and ask Him something directly.

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<sup>12</sup> For reasons which are not clear to me, *and John* is actually found at the end of v. 18 in the ESV. It is not like that in the Greek text.

Luke 7:19b ...sent them to the Lord,...

This portion of v. 19 has a textual discrepancy in it. Most manuscripts have, ...sent them to Jesus,... However, some very important manuscripts have, ...sent them to the Lord,... Although there is some difference between the two words (from John's point of view, he probably sent his disciples to speak to Jesus, as he was questioning Who Jesus was). But in terms of understanding Luke's gospel to be written in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscient point of view, either word will do. Interestingly enough, this is actually a pretty significant difference; but, to the average reader, not all that meaningful or worrisome (which is the case for most textual discrepancies—most of which, I do not bother to point out).

John sent these two disciples to speak to Jesus. John's disciples recognize his authority, even though he is in jail. There is no indication here that there was any resistance from his disciples, despite this being a long and inconvenient trip.<sup>13</sup>

Luke 7:19c ...saying, "Are You the One who is to come, or shall we look for another?"

John's question is, "Are you the Messiah? Did we get this wrong? Should we look for another?" This tells us that even John's expectations were not matching up with his perception of Jesus' ministry.

The fact that John sends disciples rather than go to Jesus himself, suggests that he is in prison and cannot go.

Wilbur Pickering notes: *John was puzzled and disillusioned. If Jesus was the Messiah, why was he, John, in prison? Why didn't Jesus set up His Kingdom and deliver John? Everyone was looking for the Messianic Kingdom to be set up forthwith.*<sup>14</sup>

There is one translation that suggests that John sends these disciples to Jesus for their benefit; but this is for the benefit of John. He was not fully understanding events as they were unfolding; and this small delegation was going to provide him with some clarity. John needed some direct answers from Jesus.

When Jesus began His ministry, and He spoke in the Nazarene synagogue, He stood up, He read a very limited passage (most would have read the equivalent of a chapter or more) and then He sat down. When all eyes were on Him, He said, "Today, this passage has been fulfilled in your ears." This was a passage about the Messiah. By saying those words as He did, Jesus was saying, "I am the Messiah, and I am fulfilling the prophecies of this verse."

Jesus is doing the same thing here with John's disciples. That entire passage from Isaiah 35 has information from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> advent of Jesus Christ. Jesus, in His words

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<sup>13</sup> People made such trips all of the time, but that does not mean that they were easy.

<sup>14</sup> Wilbur N. Pickering, ThM PhD, *Wilbur Pickering New Testament*; from e-Sword, Luke 6:19 (footnote).



for John, says enough to where John should be able to say, “He is fulfilling this passage in Isaiah, the prophecy of the Messiah.” John would not have understood the concept of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> advents, with the Church Age being intercalated (inserted) between them, but he would have known this passage and he would have recognized that it is being fulfilled.

There are very important terms being used here in the discussion of intercalation.

Intercalation Vocabulary	
Word/Phrase	Meaning
1 <sup>st</sup> advent	That there would be two separate advents was unknown to believers during the time of Jesus. He was going to appear twice in Person in Israel’s history. The first time, He comes as the Great Physician, Who would heal the people. Now, had Israel, as a whole, recognized Jesus and accepted Him as their King, then He would have continued to fulfill the rest of God’s plan for Him.
2 <sup>nd</sup> advent	Because Israel rejected the Lord, His fulfillment of the rest of the prophecies about Him was put off as a future event. This future event is called the Second Coming (of Christ) or the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Advent. Jesus will return to Israel, at the end of the Tribulation, and destroy their enemies (who will have surrounded Israel at the time).
Age of Israel	From Abraham (circa 2100 B.C.) to Christ, God would act primarily through nation Israel. God would raise up various representatives from among the Israelites (such as, kings, prophets and priests) and they would represent God to Israel (and to the rest of the world). Nation Israel would also be responsible to write and preserve the Scriptures of God.
Church Age	The Church Age is an era unknown to Old Testament prophecy. At this point in time, God would go to the gentiles and give them the good news of His Son (God would be acting through His ambassadors, which includes the disciples and us). The nation Israel, as God’s central spiritual force on earth, would be temporarily set aside.
Intercalation	Throughout the Old Testament, there are over 30 extended prophecies about the Messiah, where the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> advents are treated as a singular event. However, because the Jews rejected Jesus as their King, a period of time known as the Church Age was inserted (intercalated) between these two advents.

The complete **Doctrine of intercalation** is here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Luke 7:19 **And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are You the One who is to come, or shall we look for another?"**

Now, recall the Jesus and John are related somehow (even though your English Bible may be very specific as to how, the Greek is not). Mary, the mother of Jesus, had gone to the home of Elizabeth while they are both pregnant with their respective sons (remember that Mary was very young at this time, and Elizabeth quite old). I say this, so John can send messengers to Jesus and be confident that he will get a straight answer. Perhaps Jesus has a timetable that John is not aware of?

The words discussed above—the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> advents of Christ, the Age of Israel, the Church Age and intercalation—are things John would have no understanding of. He has never heard any of these terms before.

At this period of time, many were expecting the Jewish Messiah to seize political power, and thrust off the chains of the Rome. After a bloody rebellion they expected the Messiah to establish God's kingdom on earth. This is certainly a part of what Messiah would do—most Jews believed this (and it is clearly taught in the Old Testament). Now, although Jesus was proclaiming the Kingdom of God had come to the people, He was not going any further with it in the direction that John had expected.

Jesus is not presenting Himself as the King of the Kingdom of God. Although He is being followed by many disciples, Jesus is not training them to revolt against Roman authority (as David may have done with his crew when he was on the outs with Saul). Jesus is simply teaching and healing.

In the Old Testament prophecies, there is no distinction between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> advents of the Lord (the 1<sup>st</sup> advent, when Jesus walked this earth, is now historical; and the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent, when Jesus returns as King, is future). But in the Old Testament, this distinction between the two advents is not clearly made. Jesus came to Israel and offered Himself as their King and Messiah (but without proclaiming, "I am your King; I am your Messiah!"). The nation could have wholly embraced Him—based upon their understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures—but they did not. They will, in fact, crucify the Lord. Religious types and the common people alike plotted against the Lord (which we will study at the end of the book of Luke). They did not all believe in Jesus (although tens of thousands did). Nation Israel, as a whole, will reject their Messiah, and they will crucify Him. So, Jesus as the King of Israel, as the Conquering Hero of Israel, is now a future event, reserved for a time when Israel will accept their King (and they will).

In the Old Testament, there are many prophecies about the Messiah, and most of them present the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> advents as a singular event. Some examples of this will follow.

*Intercalation* means *insertion*; the Church Age occurs in between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> advents. So the Church Age is *inserted* between these two events.

I have come up with 33 Old Testament examples of this, where we find the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> advents of the Lord together in the same passage; but doubtless, there are more. Only six examples of intercalation will be given below.

The light blue is the 1<sup>st</sup> advent; the dark blue is the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

An Edited Summary of the Intercalation of the Church Age		
1 <sup>st</sup> Advent	2 <sup>nd</sup> Advent	The Text and Commentary
Num 24:17a	Num. 24:17b–19	"I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth. Edom shall be dispossessed; Seir also, his enemies, shall be dispossessed. Israel is doing valiantly. And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion and destroy the survivors of cities!"

This is a very good illustration of the two advents. There is the incarnation of the humanity of Jesus Christ (also called *the 1<sup>st</sup> advent of Jesus Christ*); and then there is the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent where the Lord first destroys the opposing armies surrounding Israel; and then, after that, He rules over the world. The first part of v. 17 is understated; but, in the rest of the passage, power and authority of Jesus Christ is unmistakable.

Jesus will be descended from Jacob, but He shows no similarity at this time to vv. 17b–19 in this prophecy of Baalim.

When He arises as a Scepter, that is Jesus as ruling over Israel. Jesus will rule over all of these territories, dispossessing those who have opposed Israel. All the enemies of God will be destroyed at this time.

Psalms 2:7	Psalms 2:6, 8–9	Yea, I have set My king on My holy mount on Zion. I will declare concerning the statute of Jehovah: He said to Me, You are My Son. Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give the nations as Your inheritance; and the uttermost parts of the earth as Your possession. You will break them with a rod of iron; You will dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.
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Here, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Advents of our Lord are mixed together. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent, our Lord will sit as King over all on Mount Zion; God will give to Him all the nations as His possession. When He first returns at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent, He will destroy the nations plaguing Israel and in open revolt against Him.

## An Edited Summary of the Intercalation of the Church Age

1 <sup>st</sup> Advent	2 <sup>nd</sup> Advent	The Text and Commentary
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In the 1<sup>st</sup> Advent, Jesus will come as the Son of God, begotten of man.

Ps. 72:12–14	Psalm 72:15–17	<p>For He delivers the needy when He calls, the poor and him who has no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence He redeems their life, and precious is their blood in His sight. Long may He live; may gold of Sheba be given to Him! May prayer be made for Him continually, and blessings invoked for Him all the day! May there be abundance of grain in the land; on the tops of the mountains may it wave; may its fruit be like Lebanon; and may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field! May His name endure forever, His fame continue as long as the sun! May people be blessed in Him, all nations call Him blessed!</p>
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Delivering the needy and the poor, and having compassion for the weak and the poor describes Jesus in the 1<sup>st</sup> advent. However, when there is this great abundance of blessing, and His name continues to endure, that is the Millennium, when all nations will call Him blessed. Jesus will appear at the end of the Tribulation; and, having destroyed Israel's enemies, rule over the earth during the Millennium.

Psalm 110:3b	Psalm 110:2–3a	<p>Jehovah shall send the Rod of Your strength out of Zion. “Rule in the midst of Your enemies. Your people offer themselves willingly in the day of Your power, in the holy mountain. Out of the womb of the morning, to You [is] the dew of Your youth.”</p>
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Much of Psalm 110 is about the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent of our Lord; however, this speaks of Jesus Christ in the Millennium, ruling in the midst of His enemies (all the nations which surrounded Jerusalem were enemies of the Jews; and, therefore, enemies of Jesus Christ).

The final phrase speaks of the Messiah and from whence He comes—out of the womb of the morning, to have, like all men, the dew of youth.

An Edited Summary of the Intercalation of the Church Age		
1 <sup>st</sup> Advent	2 <sup>nd</sup> Advent	The Text and Commentary
Isaiah 9:6a	Isaiah 9:6b–7	For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.
God sent His Son in the form of a man, both fully man and fully God. Jesus will, in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> advent, assume all power over the earth.		
Isaiah 61:1–2a	Isaiah 61:2b	The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor; He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.
In a synagogue, Jesus quotes the portion of this passage which applies to His 1 <sup>st</sup> advent, and He does not quote the final line of v. 2. <b>And then He said to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."</b> (Luke 4:21). This is because those in the synagogue were witnesses to His 1 <sup>st</sup> advent but not to His 2 <sup>nd</sup> . Jesus made this distinction, which other scholars of Scripture were not making.		
I do not recall if I used the ESV (capitalized) or the NASB above.		
These are 6 examples from the 33 given in the <b>Doctrine of Intercalation</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).		

Luke 7:18 **The disciples of John reported all these things to him** [to John].

Some disciples of John had observed the Lord, and went to John with a report. John decides to confirm their report and to ask Jesus a very specific question.

Luke 7:19 **And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are You the One who is to come, or shall we look for another?"**

John, from jail, sends two of his disciples to Jesus, to find out if He is truly the Messiah. This would have been an odd circumstance, as John is the herald to the Messiah. Did he herald the wrong man? When John was baptizing disciples by the Jordan River, recall that

Jesus came to him, requiring John to baptize Him. John recognize Jesus as the *Lamb of God*.

Recall that John and Jesus are related in their humanity; and John believes that he can send messengers to Jesus and be given an honest and straightforward answer.

Luke 7:20a *And when the men had come to Him,...*

The disciples of John went to Jesus.

This is an interesting phenomenon found in the gospels: if someone is looking for Jesus, they appear to be able to find Him; and, in most cases, they find themselves able to speak to Him face to face. We have the examples of John's disciples and the Jewish elders sent by the centurion in this chapter; we have the example of the pharisee who came to Jesus in private in John 3.<sup>15</sup> Yet, when unbelievers seek Him, it is a more difficult proposition for them to find Jesus. When evil men go to take Jesus prisoner the night before the crucifixion, they will need Judas to point out to them which one is the Lord.

Luke 7:20b *...they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You,..."*

They tell Jesus that John the Baptist has sent them to Him.

There is no mention of John being in prison (most believe that he is at this time). We have already been told that John is in prison in the Lukian narrative, but Luke, in his gospel, sometimes jumps ahead from the time that particular narrative began and presents where that particular thread of narrative will end.

Luke 7:20c *...saying, 'Are You the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'"*

John's disciples repeat his question almost exactly to Jesus.

They ask if He is the Messiah (literally, *the Coming One*) or if they should look for another. Jesus, of course, understands their question and their confusion.

Interestingly enough, back in v. 19, John used the correlative pronoun *héteros* (ἕτερος) [pronounced *HEH-ter-oss*], which means, *another of a different kind*; but his disciples use the masculine singular adjective, *allos* (ἄλλος) [pronounced *AL-lohs*], which means, *another of the same kind*. John, by the use of the pronoun *héteros*, was expressing doubt that Jesus was the Messiah. However, when his disciples encounter Jesus face to face, they use the pronoun *allos*. Perhaps close up, they recognized that Jesus was clearly someone different or messianic or something. He was clearly not some random teacher.

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<sup>15</sup> There are innumerable examples of this to be found in the gospels.



John the baptizer had become confused by Jesus' actions, as they had been reported to him. He sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus some direct questions.

Luke 7:20 *And when the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the One who is to come, or shall we look for another [of the same kind]?"*"

John was confused by the information that was being given to him about Jesus. In his mind, he saw something else different from what Jesus was (based upon the Scriptures, as he did not distinguish between the two advents).

We do not know what Jesus said next. Did He look the men over and suggest that they sit down, take a rest, drink some water? Did He say, "Hang around for a bit and tell John what you see"? It seems likely that Jesus said something along those lines, as John's disciples will take some time to observe what is taking place.

Jesus certainly understands the question and John's confusion.

Their fundamental question is this: *Jesus, are You the Christ?* That is, *are You the Messiah?* This is the fundamental question about Jesus throughout the gospels. There are many questions about Jesus and many objections to Him; but the fundamental question is, *Who is Jesus really?* The excellent website *Got Questions?* lists over [200 questions](#) about Jesus which the staff of believers (overseen by CEO S. Michael Houdmann) attempts to answer (the things I have read on that website seem to be very accurate to me).

In any case, Jesus does not sit John's disciples down and begin by saying, "Okay, let Me explain exactly Who I AM and what My game plan is." He instead says something like, "Follow Me around; take mental notes as we go. Then return to John with your report."

Luke 7:21a *In that hour He healed many people of diseases...*

Although this literally reads, *in that hour*, based upon the description, this probably took place over a period of several hours. This phrase could be understood to mean, *at that time*.

John's disciples are there and Jesus, before answering their question specifically, begins healing people. Perhaps He said to them, "Watch carefully what I am doing." Perhaps He said, "Walk with Me," and began healing dozens of people of serious maladies.

People had many diseases in the ancient world, cleanliness not being as much of a thing to them as it is to us (we have the benefit of clean running water in much of the world today). The ancient world exception to this is the Hebrew people, who were given laws which had a great many restrictions which would have kept the people safe from many ancient world diseases.

Luke 7:21b ...and plagues...

There word here is *mastiges* (μάστιγες) [pronounced *MAS-tihg-ehs*], which means, *plagues, scourgings, whippings* (literally the Roman flagellum for criminals; figuratively *diseases*). Strong's #3148. So, these are blows or injuries. Some of the work that men did was quite dangerous and it was not unusual for a man to sustain a great injury at his work.

Because this word literally means *scourging, whipping*; it is very possible that some people came to Jesus and had been so abused by Roman soldiers.

Luke 7:21c ...and evil spirits,...

There were apparently a considerable number of people who were possessed by demons (= evil spirits); and Jesus was able to, without any sort of ritual, throw them out (that is, throw the demons out of the bodies of the possessed).

Luke 7:21d ...and on many who were blind He bestowed sight.

There were blind who came to Him and He gave them sight.

This is one of the great healings, because this speaks of what happens when a person sees Jesus or begins to understand Jesus; his eyes are opened and he sees the (metaphorical) light. The crust is removed from his eyes and he can see.

Luke 7:21 In that hour He healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind He bestowed sight.

It appears that Jesus, after receiving this question, said something like, "I want you to stick around and observe."

Jesus cured a myriad of diseases, most of which had an outcome which was clearly observable.

Bear in mind that, these people who were cured had been ill or traumatized over a period of time. Some may have had this malady since birth. God used their maladies and sicknesses to point toward Jesus has having God's power.<sup>16</sup>

**Application:** If God was able to use those diseases—some of them being lifelong disabilities—then we may rest assured that God is able to use similar maladies today to achieve His purposes. Now, I do not mean that people are sick today so that they might be healed miraculously. I am saying that God uses all circumstances and all difficulties in life in order to further His plan.

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<sup>16</sup> As we have studied, Jesus is not making use of His Deity, but depending upon God the Father to heal those who require it.

Luke 7:21 In that hour He healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind He bestowed sight.

Jesus wants these disciples of John's to soak in all that they could. He is not insulting them or talking down to them; He wants them to be able to bring back a report of things which they have seen with their own eyes. Jesus is not going to simply tell them what He does; He is going to show them.

However much time passes, whether this is an hour or several hours. Then Jesus tells John's disciples the answer that they should bring to John:

Luke 7:22a And He answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard:...

Jesus wanted them to observe with their own eyes, so that they were not simply repeating what others have said, but these two men could act as witnesses to Jesus.

These men have come to Jesus, sincerely, at the request of John; and there seems to be some concern whether or not Jesus is the Messiah. Everyone is expecting a conquering King, and this does not appear to be Who Jesus is. So Jesus now sends them back, telling them to tell John exactly what they have seen and heard.

What they see and hear will be unlike anything that they have ever seen or heard before. Nothing like this has ever been observed before.

Luke 7:22b ...the blind receive their sight,...

Those who were blind received their sight.

For these kinds of miracles, one after another—this has never happened before in human history. Not like this; not this many all at once.

The action verbs are all in the present tense, which is linear aktionsart, meaning that they keep on doing this.

Luke 7:22c ...the lame walk,...

Those who had been lame are now walking about.

One of the things which we observed is, people who were lame—perhaps for years—and are healed by Jesus, do not require months of physical therapy to get them back to normal. When Jesus made them whole, they were whole, as if they had never been lame. They had muscle tone and coordination from the start.

Luke 7:22d ...lepers are cleansed,...

Lepers—a third category of diseases which were thought to be incurable—were also being cleansed. These were people with various skin diseases. One could just look at them and recognize physical destruction of this disease. Seeing a leper cured would have been remarkable.

There is a passage that Jesus appears to be quoting from here, Isaiah 35:5, which reads **Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.** There is one thing missing, and that is the cleansing of a leper. Jesus is cleansing lepers, but this is not found in Isaiah 35:5.

A leper is cleansed one time in the Old Testament. It is Naaman, the commander of the army of the king of Syria, who is a great leader, but he is also a leper. A letter is sent to the king of Israel at the time, who does not know what to do about leprosy, but he tears his clothing as a response to the letter. Elisha the prophet hears about the king tearing his clothing. So he tells the king, "Send Naaman to me, so that it is known that there is a prophet in Israel." So, Naaman actually shows up at Elisha's door, but Elisha does not come out. Instead, he sends out a messenger who tells him what to do: **And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean."** (2Kings 5:10; ESV)

Despite having these directions, the commander is upset. "He can't come out and talk to me? He can't wave his hand over me and cure me? And I need to go to the Jordan river? Does he expect me to do all of the work? Couldn't I have gone to Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus instead?" So Naaman storms off in a bit of a rage. But his servants calm him down and say, "You heard the words of the prophet—so let's go to the Jordan and be cleansed there." And he did and he was.

In any case, this was an interesting thing for Jesus to mention. It is not found in the prophecy of Isaiah, but it does allude to being cleansed in the Jordan River (which is where much of John's ministry took place).

Luke 7:22e **...and the deaf hear,...**

Jesus made those who could not hear able to hear again.

Luke 7:22a-e **And He answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear,...**

Let's view the prophetic passage in Isaiah 35:4–6 **Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.** For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;... As you can read, the things which Jesus is doing is promised as a future event *when God comes...[to] save you.* (ESV; capitalized; emphasis mine)

Jesus does not quote the entire passage. He confines Himself to a certain portion of this passage. You will recall that we have discussed the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> advents most recently. What I have bolded, what Jesus was more or less quoting, is from the 1<sup>st</sup> advent. The other material on both sides of the bolded section is all about the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent.

Jesus does not take the time to explain to them the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> advents. He has done things before the eyes of John's disciples which are described in the Old Testament in a passage which is clearly messianic.

Luke 7:22a-e **And He answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear,...**

I am assuming by this that, Jesus knew that John knew these passages; and I would further suggest that John has taught these passages to his own disciples. This is why *what* Jesus is doing would be significant to John. John's focus could have been on other aspects of the Messiah (namely, the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent); but these words of Jesus bring John back to earth, as it were. Now, if John did not know this passage, then it does not really clarify anything by sending John's disciples back with this message.

John's disciples would return to John and tell him what they have observed. John's disciples are essentially reporting that Isaiah 35:5 is fulfilled by Jesus.

When John hears what is happening, and then he thinks about Isaiah 35:4–6, there is no other explanation other than, this is God. That is what the prophecy tells us. He may not fully understand all of what is happening (the two advents of the Messiah), but he cannot simply dismiss Jesus, based on what his disciples report.

There is also one more remarkable thing:

Luke 7:22f **...the dead are raised up,...**

Even more impossible than the previous healings mentioned was this—those who were dead were being revived. There is another passage in Isaiah that is brought to mind:

Isaiah 26:19 **Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead.**

This is fascinating to me the way the Jesus uses this passage. The bodies of the dead will rise in the final days, when they are resurrected before the Great White Throne. But Jesus is causing men to rise from the dead at this time, and this is clearly significant. How could anyone apart from God (or a representative of God) raise anyone from the dead? Who but God could take the lifeless and given them life?

Even more important is this final thing:

Luke 7:22g **...the poor have good news preached to them.**

Those who were needy, those who were poor, they had the good news proclaimed to them. In many cases, people with great needs are more willing to hear the gospel message and believe it. The person who has everything is more likely to be entangled with his money and possessions, and he sees little need to seek God.

All of the examples given by Jesus also have spiritual implications or spiritual parallels.

Isaiah 61:1 **The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor; He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;...**

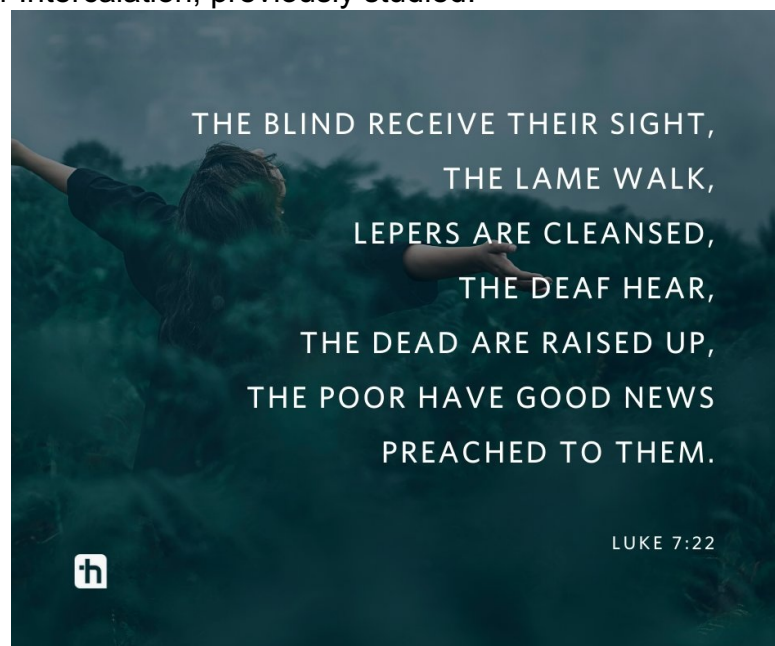
Both Isaiah 35 and 61 have both advents of the Lord laid out. These two passages appeared to most people to be but a single event; a single occurrence. This is what confused many people in that era. However, some were confused, like John, and all they needed was enough information to tell them that Jesus is the Messiah. Now, there were others who were confused, but they chose to be confused because they were negative towards the Son of God.

Jesus explained everything as He went along. Had Israel accepted and believed in Him, then He would have established God's kingdom on earth. But His Own did not receive Him. John (the Apostle) records this. John 1:11–13 **He came to His Own, and His Own people did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (ESV; capitalized)**

You may recall that earlier, near the beginning of His ministry, Jesus quoted Isaiah 61:1–2, but stopped partway through this passage and just sat down (Luke 4:18–19). All this is covered in detail in the Doctrine of Intercalation, previously studied.

**Luke 7:22b-g (ESV)** (a graphic); from [the Hebron Church on Twitter](#); accessed July 22, 2022.

Luke 7:22 **Jesus answered and said to them, "[After] returning [lit., *having traveled*], bring [this] report to John [concerning] what you have seen and heard: blind [people] are receiving [their] sight, [those who are] lame are walking about, lepers are being cleansed, and [those who are] deaf are hearing, the dead are waking up, and the needy have the gospel proclaimed [to them]. (Kukis mostly literal)**





Jesus is *not* saying, "I am the Messiah that you have been proclaiming." Instead, He has had John's disciples watch what He is doing in this given day, and then they are to go back to John and tell them exactly what they have seen with their own eyes. Jesus would rely upon John to synch up His works with the appropriate messianic prophecies.

Essentially, Jesus is telling John, "Here is the witness of your own disciples; and this is what they saw. Who do you say I am?" Now, this is the very nature of the gospel. "Who do you say I am?" The answer given here determines whether a person has believed in Him or not.

When it came to Jesus saying Who He was, He most often allowed others to draw their own conclusions. "This is what you are seeing; so Who am I?"

Isaiah 35:5–6a *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.* (ESV)

Luke 7:22 *And He answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them."*

Jesus asks John's disciples to accurately describe what they have seen, and discuss this further with him.

Then Jesus adds these final words, which I believe were also to be taken to John.

Luke 7:23 *And blessed is the one who is not offended by Me."*

Jesus notes blessings (happiness) to those who are not offended by Him.

The person offended by Jesus has rejected Jesus as their Savior. The words that Jesus says, the things that Jesus does—all of these are offensive to the unbeliever who rejects Jesus.

Many people who write for television and movies are offended by Jesus. If we were to gather all of the scripts written for HBO and Showtime, and look for the most commonly used proper nouns, that list would not be the names, *Bob*, *Jim* or *Colin*; the most commonly used proper nouns of these two channels is *Jesus* and *Christ* and *Jesus Christ*.

In movies and shows written in the 1950s and before, there was no profanity. There would be an occasional *hell* or *damn*, but the Lord's name was not used in vain. And, for several decades after, if a newer movie (from the 1960s and later) was aired on television, any profanity would be bleeped out.

However, with the advent of cable television, the use of profanity and obscenity has increased a hundredfold, revealing the hearts of the writers, producers and actors. And

for those who say, “These shows only reflect what is said in the real world;” they are wrong. People who swear like this are always over-represented on certain cable networks, just as gay and trans folks are also over-represented by the media. They are not holding up a mirror to society; they are trying to urge society to move in a more godless and perverted direction.

As Isaiah wrote: “But the LORD of hosts, Him you shall honor as holy. Let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken.” (Isaiah 8:13–15; ESV; capitalized)

The Lord is called a *stone of stumbling*, as those who come to Him, not believing, will stumble over Him. His Presence and Person are so big, that man ought to recognize Him for Who He is, but too often, they reject Him.

Luke 7:22–23 Jesus, having allowed them to observe for a few hours, then said, “When you return to John, tell him exactly all that you saw and heard. Blind people are being made to see; the lame are now walking; lepers are being cleansed; deaf people are having their hearing restored to them; those who were dead are now living again; and the needy are hearing the gospel proclaimed to them. Blessed is he who is not offended by Me.” (Kukis mostly literal)

The comments of the messengers (if any) are not recorded. Their report to John and his response are also not recorded.

However, Jesus will have a great deal to say about John.

## Lesson 211: Luke 7:24–25

## Jesus Speaks of John the Baptizer

John the Herald sent a number of his disciples to talk with Jesus and find out if He is the True Messiah. Jesus did not give them a simple *yes or no* answer to John’s question. Instead, He had the disciples shadow Him, and then report what they saw back to John.

Luke 7:24a When John's messengers had gone,...

As far as we know, the messengers from John made no comments; they simply left, but ready to reveal to John all that they had seen. They would have a great deal to tell John.

Now, remember that Jesus, as described in the Old Testament, would return as a conquering King; but this will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent. John and many others had a theological view of Who Messiah would be. This view was wrong and it ignored several very important Scriptures. They wanted to hail a Conquering Hero, but instead were perceiving Someone entirely different.

The Messianic passage which was chiefly being ignored was Isaiah 53. However, in nearly every prophetic passage about the Messiah, certain things were recognized, and other things were not.

This also teaches us that, in general, we cannot emphasize one set of Scriptures in the Bible and ignore the passages that we do not like.

Luke 7:24b ...Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John:...

Jesus here would commemorate John the Herald. He looked into the eyes of those around Him and He began to speak.

It seems likely and logical that many of Jesus' followers had previously been disciples of John's. No doubt, most people there were aware of John's ministry.

Luke 7:24c ..."What did you go out into the wilderness to see?"

Many of the people there who were following Jesus—they had gone out into the desert-wilderness to see John. They had heard about him and went out to hear his message.

I suggested that, given John's very unusual birth and his life, such as it was, people thought about him and what God would do with him for a very long time. I believe that people went out into the desert-wilderness to see John teach because they remember the very unusual circumstances of his birth. But some would have gone for another reason.

As a man, John also had a very unusual reputation. This was described earlier in the book of Luke (in the first half of Luke 3).

Superficially, people would have had a number of reasons to go out and see John; but the fundamental motivation was positive volition toward the Word of God. The people recognized that the Word of God being taught.

Luke 7:24d A reed shaken by the wind?

First of all, going out to the desert-wilderness, near the Jordan River, where John was baptizing, there would have been tens (hundreds?) of thousands of papyrus reeds being blown by the wind. In one sense, this would be like saying, "Did you go out to the desert to look at a speck of sand?" Few things could be more common than that; and John the Herald was anything but common. Where John was speaking, there a great many reeds growing in or near the Jordan River.

However, there is a further meaning that we should take by this reed. A reed shaken by the wind means, today this doctrine seems to be well-favored, so he teaches this doctrine. Tomorrow, some other doctrine is favored by society, and so he teaches that doctrine. So often, false information is popularized by society; and the teacher blown by the wind would

teaching things which are false, in order to have a good response from the people. That is what a reed does when blown about by the winds of culture.

**Application:** Today, there is a very strong political movement led by the LGBTQ community to normalize homosexuality and virtually all kinds of sexual relations (notice, I did not qualify this by saying, *between consenting adults*). An add-on to this group would be the transgender groups—who make up a tiny fraction of Americans—but there are those who support them, which increases their numbers. These groups are pushing for two things: (1) an integration of their beliefs and thinking into Christian churches (and many Christian churches accept homosexual behavior and transgendered people as living legitimate lifestyles); and, simultaneously, (2) they would like to move Biblical Christianity out of the public square. It is very clear that, no matter what any local church does, the Bible is very clear on both of these topics (yes, the Bible is very clear about transgenderism).

**Application:** In some churches, where there is an activist movement of these type, there is pressure for various denominations to accept homosexuality as a normal thing. I have been in a Lutheran church where a lesbian couple was expressing very overt affection for one another during the Christmas service. This was in a very liberal city; and the pastor there (whatever he is called by Lutherans) was a reed, being blown in that direction by the winds of cultural influence. The wind blew this way, and he moved that way; the wind blew in the other direction, and he moved in that other direction. When the wind told him that homosexuality is a valid lifestyle expression, then he was blown in that direction.

The implication of what Jesus said is, *this was not John*. John was not some reed in the wind, allowing the wind to determine his point of view.

The Translation for Translators does a nice job here: *You did not go there to listen to a man who constantly changed the nature of his message [MET], like a reed that is blown back and forth by the wind [RHQ]*. John's message was clear and straight ahead; he did not change his message to suit the people who were there to see him. He did not tone it down nor did he speak in esoteric, nice sounding terms.

**Application:** As an aside, a church does not necessarily need to be antagonistic toward sexual deviants who wander in. Every unbeliever is a sinner; every believer is a sinner saved by grace. A pastor (or the board of deacons) needs to develop a policy of what they would accept in terms of overt behavior. Two women showing up together in the same car (who may live in the same home) and sit together in church—there is nothing in the world wrong with that, no matter what they do or don't do behind closed doors. If you start making assumptions here about their behavior, then you are judging them (whether you are right or wrong is irrelevant). But, if two members of the same sex begin showing signs of adult affection towards one another—beyond what two friends would show—there needs to be a policy in place to curb that overt behavior. Obviously, if they wore buttons or shirts with various pro-LGBTQ slogans on them, this would be inappropriate wear for the church.

**Application:** Any prostitute in the city should be welcome in your church (and, I daresay, this would be the case in an overwhelming majority of churches). What they are not welcome to do—and 99.9% of prostitutes would understand this without anyone telling them—is to ply their trade while out in the parking lot.

**Application:** Similarly, those who have abused drugs are welcome to come into virtually any church. What they are not welcome to do is to shoot up heroin during the service or out in the parking lot.

Luke 7:24 *When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?"*

Some people there would have known who these men were, these messengers from John the Herald. Was Jesus giving them the brush off? Was Jesus merely saying, "Stick around as long as you want, and then go back to John and tell him what you observed."

For the benefit of those who knew what was taking place, who knew that these were John's disciples, Jesus speaks about John. The implication of Jesus' words is, *John was no reed shaken by the wind.*

Luke 7:25a *What then did you go out to see?*

Jesus asks the question again—not exactly the same, but a similar question.

Jesus is speaking to people, presumably, who went out to see John and to hear his teaching. Others, who knew of John's ministry, could listen to Jesus' words and consider what they knew about John.

Luke 7:25b *A man dressed in soft clothing?*

Did you expect to see a man wearing an expensive suit? There are some sadducees that the people might follow in order to see that. The religious hierarchy was often successful and they often had the better threads.

Luke 7:25c *Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing...*

I picture Jesus as motioning to the religious crowd who were there; they are no doubt well-dressed; and Jesus makes a sweeping motion toward them. "Look at these men with their glorious clothing!" He exclaims, with a grand sweep of his hand.<sup>17</sup>

The people did not go out to the desert-wilderness to see people arrayed in nice clothes. They could have seen this at their local synagogue or at the Temple.

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<sup>17</sup> Obviously, I am reading this hand sweep into this passage.

You may recall that John was a rather rough person when it came to looks and behavior (it has been my theory that his parents may have died when he was young, and that he possibly raised himself). Whatever it was, John did not have a normal upbringing. The period of time that he was in the desert-wilderness could have been extensive (he may have lived in the desert from his youth up). And some of the things said about John could simply be the result of his living out in the desert-wilderness for a period of time.

Let's get back to the nice clothing:

Luke 7:25d ...and live in luxury are in kings' courts.

The religious crowd had gotten religion to work for them. Religion had been very, very good to them. They lived in relative luxury as a result (wealth is always a very relative concept; so that, even when the poor are reasonably well-off, they always compare themselves to those who have more).

We have this today (and for some time now) of men who have learned how to make this work in politics. They have managed to take a healthy salary and multiply it greatly, because of how the law works. If you have an inkling as to how corrupt our politicians are today and how they take advantage of the system to become wealthy; then this is how the people were who were associated with Judaism in that era.

I really like the way that the Translation for Translators renders this: *Then what kind of man did you go there to see [RHQ]? Was he [RHQ] a man who wore expensive clothes? No! You know very well that people who wear beautiful clothes and live in luxury are in kings' palaces, not in the desolate areas!*

You don't go out to desolate places in order to find people nicely dressed, speaking in refined tones about esoteric things. What John wore made no difference. It was all about his message and his message was straightforward and easy to understand. It was solid truth, not blown about by the winds of cultural changes.

## Lesson 212: Luke 7:25–27

## Criticizing Pastor Teachers

Jesus is speaking about why people went out to see John the baptizer in the desert-wilderness.

Luke 7:25 *Who did you go out to see? A man wearing a soft [luxurious] garment? Behold these [who wear] glorious clothing and they are living in kingly luxury.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

### Judging Pastors and the Doctrines which They Teach:

Let me carefully make some comments about these words of Jesus and today's clergy. First of all, it is not wrong or immoral for a pastor to be paid a good salary; or for him to live



in a nice home (bear in mind that this is true of only the smallest percentage of pastor-teachers). I do not want to name any names here, but they may pastor a mega-church and they may write books which are best-sellers. What they make and how they spend their salary is between them and the board of deacons; and between them and their publishers (and their readers). I see two pastors in particular who are attacked quite often on the internet and in memes. This is going to happen among unbelievers who want to find a reason to object to this or that. These men are easy targets for them. However, we as believers are to hold our peace. Now, if you have a problem with a particular pastor-teacher, then you just do not attend his church. That is as far as you take it. You do not post anti-Charley Brown (assuming that to be the name of the person that you do not like) memes on the internet, even if you think he lives a lifestyle that is too extravagant. Again, this is not your business.

Let's just make the assumption, for a moment, that one or two of these wealthy pastors is deserving of divine discipline; and that God does not approve of what they are doing. Do you know the likely reason that God has not stepped in to discipline them? Because you are judging them! Because you are posting vicious memes about them (which is a form of judging them). When you judge someone else—rightly or wrongly—the discipline that they deserve comes to you. Given the number of memes that I have seen concerning these various pastors, it is no wonder that they continue to receive heaps of blessing and no discipline (assuming, again, that they deserve some discipline). People who judge them as, in essence, running interference for them. They are acting like the blockers for a quarterback. They may not mean to do this, but this is exactly what they are doing.

When God tells you not to judge (not to assign sins to people) and not to gossip about people, that is what He means. You do not look at a pastor and make assumptions concerning who he is or what he does.

And, quite frankly, people who complain about a pastor who is financially well-off, most of the time, those complainers are motivated by jealousy, a mental attitude sin. The pastor has it and they do not.

Now, if you are aware of specific doctrines which are being taught in a church that you disapprove of (for whatever reason), and these doctrines are clearly anti-Christian, then stick with the doctrines themselves. It is a good idea to avoid criticizing pastors by name; as you might face great discipline for doing so. And if you attach certain doctrines to that pastor—I would even be careful about that. One particular pastor I am thinking of—and I am *not* going to name him—has been associated with teaching the prosperity gospel. The prosperity gospel loosely means, give as much as you can to the church, and God will bless your pocketbook in response. I have heard this pastor on several occasions and have heard him quote Scripture, relevant Scripture to what he was teaching; but I have never heard him even come close to teaching the prosperity gospel. Does he? It is not really my business nor is it incumbent upon me to listen to his entire archive in order to search out such a teaching. He is not my pastor nor am I on the board of deacons for his church; therefore, I do not have a say in the matter.

Can I teach that the prosperity gospel is incorrect? Absolutely. Should I attach this to some church or to some pastor? Absolutely not! My point here is, you can say or teach the truth without naming anyone's name.

The few times I am asked about going to a good church, I have recommendations, and my recommendations are positive. "I think that so-and-so in your area is a good pastor, and this is because he emphasizes teaching the Word of God in his ministry."

There are rare times when you might offer a negative opinion about a pastor, and when you do, I would suggest that you guard what you say very carefully. There have been pastors who have come out of Berachah Church; and have started their own churches. One that I am aware of became a charismatic teacher; others have (and I do not know which ones specifically) have abandoned dispensational teaching for covenant theology. Those deviations from the truth are significant. But again, it is better to teach the weaknesses of the tongues movement or of covenant theology, and leave the pastor's actual name out of it.

Let's say that you are concerned about people attending a church that teaches covenant theology, and you know that is the wrong approach to the Bible. Do you spend some time teaching about what covenant theology is and why it is wrong and then do you spend some time listing the pastors who teach that? Absolutely not! Teach the principle and then allow your congregation (or whomever it is who hears you) to take it from there. Let's say you are aware of 50 people who teach covenant theology as pastors of a church. Does it seem wise to name all 50, when there are thousands of pastors who teach this? Use that extra time to give more information about dispensationalism as over-against covenant theology; and do not waste your time naming a single pastor.

Let's consider this list of 50 pastors that you have. How did you get it? Did you go and listen to every one of these pastors teach and wait until you heard the offending doctrine, and then add his name to your list? Do you go to the 50 different websites and locate their statement of faith (which may or may not be there) and look through that? That time, if you are a teacher, would be far better spent exploring correct doctrinal teaching. Leave the teachers who teach something which is false to God to deal with. You do not need to help God in this regard.

I have seen doctrinal churches put up lists of other acceptable doctrinal churches (where the emphasis is upon teaching the Word of God). I believe that this is reasonable; and I have a list myself of churches which I believe are doctrinal which I also list. **The List** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

If you want to recommend a church or several churches; of course, go ahead and do that. If you want to make an emphatic statement that this or that *doctrine* is wrong (covenant theology, churches who adhere to the latest liberal thinking, charismatic teaching), then that is certainly legitimate. However, the moment you begin to say the words *Pastor*

*Charley Brown*, you had better be damned careful about what comes out of your mouth next. A pastor works for God, ultimately. Let God handle the discipline, if any; but you stay out of it. If God has a lightning bolt he is about to send *Charley Brown's* way, then do not stand between him and the lightning bolt.

I have come into contact with a variety of churches and pastor-teachers in my life. You will note that I am very careful to try to avoid naming any specific church or any specific pastor, if my comments are negative. I use these as illustrations; but I am being careful not to tread on someone else's ministry.

As an aside, I have heard the argument, *well Paul in his epistles named specific men by name and said negative things about them in particular*. Two points on that observation: (1) Paul was an apostle and, as such, had authority over those pastors. Neither you nor I have authority over any pastor-teacher anywhere. Secondly, (2) as far as we are concerned, when Paul names a pastor specifically, it is equivalent to me saying, *Charley Brown*, as you don't know to whom Paul is referring apart from him being some historic person. What we get from this are the doctrinal points that Paul is making. When Paul said something negative about a specific person, what we gain out of that is his reason that he criticizes him.

Back to the topic at hand:

Luke 7:24–25 After the messengers of John departed, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John. “What exactly did you expect to see when you went out into the wilderness, having heard about John? Did you think he would be a weak reed, blown about by the winds? Who did you go out to see? Did you think he would be wearing a soft and luxurious garment? Behold these men over here—motioning to the religious crowd who were there—they wear glorious clothing and they live in the lap of luxury. (Kukis paraphrase)

Jesus speaks highly of John. He does not criticize John for having questions about His ministry.

Luke 7:26a What then did you go out to see? A prophet?

Jesus asks, for the third time, *who did you go out to see?* Many of the people standing before Him went out to see John in the desert. This time, He is asking, “Do you really know who you saw in the desert? Has this penetrated your thinking? Was he a prophet?”

Jesus' questions are penetrating because many of the people standing before Him had ideas about who John was. John did not present himself as the Messiah, but some people believed him to be the Messiah. For many of the religious types, John seemed to be trouble to them; and they may have thought he was an unimportant nobody.

The basic question, at this time, would be, what did John talk about (as a prophet)?

Now, as an aside, we too often think of a prophet who foretells the future (which John does, to a very limited extent, as he told that Jesus was coming). But, key to the person of the prophet is, he speaks God's message to man. This is what John was doing.

So, the idea is for the people to think about who John is, exactly; to put John into perspective. Understanding who John is explains who Jesus is.

Luke 7:26b **Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.**

"He was not just a prophet," Jesus told them, "But an extraordinary prophet." This is going to be because, John's ministry is spoken of in the Old Testament. How many prophets were first prophesied about in the Old Testament?

Luke 7:26 **What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.**

Jesus continues to speak about John. John is more than just a prophet as, he is a prophet about whom a prophecy has been written.

Luke 7:27a **This is he of whom it is written,...**

There is prophecy about John is found in the Old Testament. To the people there, that is equivalent of saying, *John is found here in your Bible*.

Now, there is no prophecy about me in the Bible; and there is not even a prophecy about Paul in your Bible; but there is Old Testament Scripture which looks forward to John.

Luke 7:27b **..."Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,...**

Then Jesus quotes from a passage, Malachi 3:1, which applies to John the Herald. Malachi 3:1 **"Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord Whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant in Whom you delight, behold, He is coming, says the LORD of hosts."** (ESV; capitalized)

Who is John preparing the way for? **And the Lord Whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple;...** Who is the Lord? Whose Temple is the Temple of God?

Luke 7:27c **...who will prepare Your way before You.'**

What Jesus is telling those listening to Him is, *if you understand who John is, then you understand who I Am*. What Jesus quotes is the first half of the verse, which refers to John. The second half of the verse—which many in the audience know—that is all about Jesus.

Jesus has been speaking to His disciples about John the baptizer. He quoted a portion of Malachi 3:1.

All of Malachi 3:1 reads: "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me. And the LORD, Whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in. Behold, He shall come," says the LORD of hosts. (Niobi SB)

God is speaking, and He will send His messenger—John—to prepare the way before Him. Then God speaks of the LORD in the third person. This is Jesus, of course: "And the LORD, Whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, Whom you delight in. Behold, He shall come,"...

Now, if you will carefully read Malachi 3:1, God is speaking and He says of John, "...and he shall prepare the way before Me." The point of contact with the Divine throughout the Old Testament is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Trinity; Who is God, Who reveals Himself as God; and is the Revealed Person of the Trinity. Most often, in the Old Testament, when you read the proper name *Y<sup>e</sup>howah*, we are speaking of Jesus in His pre-incarnate Person.

In context, this is God (the Son) speaking, and God says of John, "he will prepare the way before Me." Jesus chose, at this moment, not to quote the text verbatim; and every scholar in the audience should have caught that (Jesus is not even quoting the LXX, which is in agreement with the Masoretic text here). The scholars, hearing what Jesus said, may have thought, that is *not exactly* the way this passage reads. But when they go back and read it, to confirm their suspicion, they see that here is another claim to Deity by the Lord. This is what Jesus says:

Luke 7:27 This is he of whom it is written, "'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.'

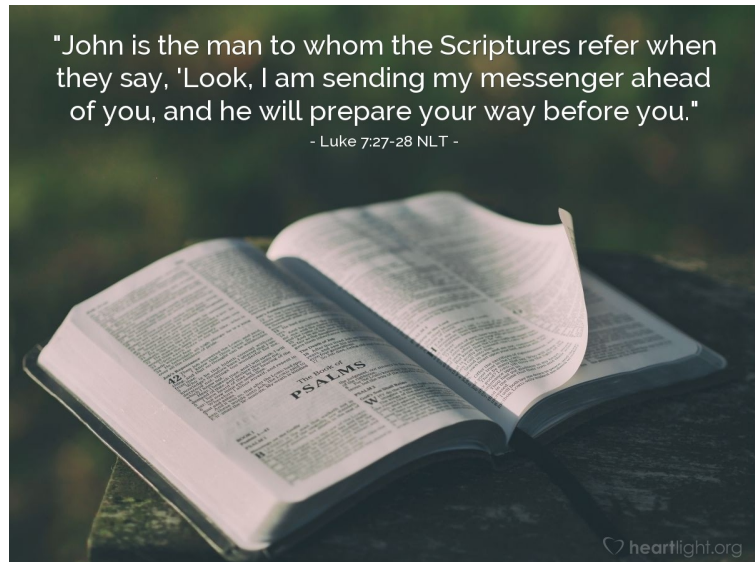
Why didn't Jesus quote this verbatim? (1) To cause the scholars to hear it, know there is something wrong. As a result, they would have to go back to their synagogues and look this up, and realize that this application clearly asserts that Jesus is God. (2) Jesus' emphasis at this point in time is John. Therefore, He does not squarely put a controversy before His audience (that He is God). The focus is on John for this portion of the Lord's discourse. This second thing is quite amazing, as Jesus often puts Himself at the center of any conversation, so that those who hear might believe in Him and be saved. Here, Jesus speaks highly of John.

Luke 7:27 (NLT) (a graphic); from [Heartlight](#); accessed July 22, 2022.

Luke 7:27 **This is he of whom it is written, "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You."**

Allow me to quote this, but to identify the many pronouns:

Luke 7:27 **This is he** [= *John the Herald*] **of whom it is written, "Behold, I** [God the Father] **send My messenger** [John] **before Your face** [= *before Jesus*], **who will prepare Your way before You** [Jesus].'  
God the Father is speaking here to God the Son.



God the Father speaks to God the Son about the messenger, John, who will go before Him.

Now let me do the same thing with the actual text of Malachi 3:1: **"Behold, I** [God the Son] **will send My messenger** [John the baptizer], **and he shall prepare the way before Me** [God the Son]. **And the LORD** [still God the Son], **Whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant** [this is still Jesus, God the Son], **Whom you delight in. Behold, He shall come,"** says the **LORD of hosts** [= Jesus]. (Niobi SB) Notice that there are two messengers in the Malachi text.

The Preincarnate Lord is speaking of John, called **My messenger [who] shall prepare the way before Me**. The One who suddenly comes to His temple is Jesus; He is the Messenger of the covenant; He is the One Whom the people delight in; and He is the One speaking, making Him *the Lord of hosts*.

Jesus, by quoting this passage, is claiming to be God. Throughout the gospels, Jesus depends upon others to clearly identify Him.

In any case, Jesus continues to speak about John:

Luke 7:28a **I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John.**

John is great for many reasons; one of them being, his humility. He came to herald the coming of the Messiah; and as Jesus came on the scene, John's ministry was to fade away ("**He must increase and I must decrease,**" John said). So many men want to make their



ministry all about themselves (or even about their congregation), when their focus should be squarely upon Jesus Christ.

John's ministry was actually quite short. Although we are not given a figure, I doubt that John was baptizing at the Jordan River for more than six months. God prepared him all of his life and many unusual and very difficult circumstances<sup>18</sup> and then God only gave John six months (or whatever) to speak of the Jesus to come.

Then Jesus says something rather remarkable.

Luke 7:28b **Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."**

What Jesus says here is quite fascinating. It is an interesting addendum to his praise of John. "The least of those in the Kingdom of God is greater than John." Will the opportunities for spiritual growth be particularly ample? Will it be because of the access to God the Holy Spirit? In the Millennium, man will possess a sin nature (all men born in this era).

The NET Bible explains it this way: *After John comes [there is] a shift of eras. The new era is so great that the lowest member of it (the one who is least in the kingdom of God) is greater than the greatest one of the previous era.*<sup>19</sup>

Luke 7:28 **I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."**

By Jesus' words, it is clear that we do not have the full story on John. He has a public ministry, but it seems to be rather short and limited. Of that era, he was the greatest; but of those who enter into the kingdom of God, even the least of them will be greater than John.

This does not mean that John is excluded from the kingdom of God; just that John, as he is today, will be less than the least person in the kingdom. Those born into the Church Age who believe in Jesus will be given a much greater array of assets than believers from the Old Testament (R. B. Thieme, Jr. referred to this as our *portfolio of invisible assets*).

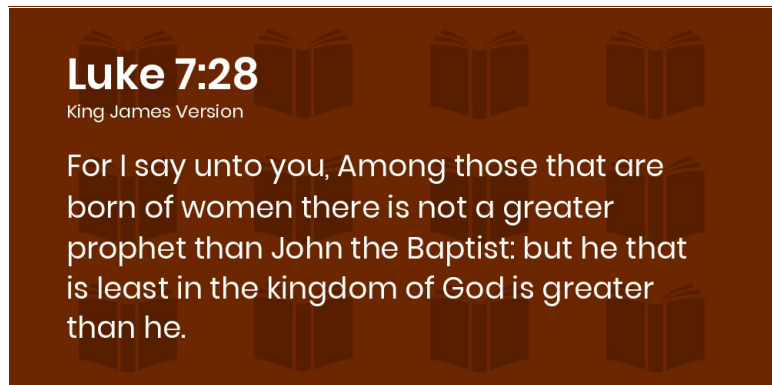
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<sup>18</sup> John's very unusual life may not have been because he was a weirdo but because this was how he lived out of necessity.

<sup>19</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?luk7.htm> (footnote); accessed November 9, 2019.

**Luke 7:28 (KJV)** (a graphic); from [The King James Version Bible](#); accessed July 21, 2022.

Luke 7:26–28 Again, I ask you, who did you go out to see? A prophet? Truly, I say to you that John is an extraordinary prophet. He is spoken of in the Scriptures, where it stands written, Behold, I will send My messenger to go before You and prepare Your way. There is no man alive who is greater than John; but even the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he.” (Kukis paraphrase)



There is also a related passage about John in Isaiah 40:3–5.

Isaiah 40:3–5 A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Luke 7:29a (When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just,...

A major concern of some of the followers of John was, is there a rift between John the Herald and Jesus (not everyone fully understood the relationship; and even many of Jesus' followers did not fully appreciate Who He was). Was there was some kind of daylight between the teachings of John and the teachings of Jesus? If there was, then that would be problematic for them. For the disciples of John, who were now with Jesus (or those who favored John's ministry, based upon what they heard of it) were pleased to hear what Jesus had to say about John. That Jesus spoke highly of John and that He was not critical of John was very important to many of the people who were listening to Jesus. After all, they had heard the strong negative things that Jesus said about the scribes and pharisees. Now that John's name was brought into the discussion, the people certainly were concerned about how Jesus would say about him.

There was not to be some sort of separation or distinction or tension between the disciples of John and the disciples of Jesus.

As an aside, which may help you to distinguish between the followers of John and Jesus. Jesus made it possible for someone to drop everything and follow Him. There would be food, there would be basic provisions (but not a roof over their heads). With John, that was nearly impossible. He had a serious following, but he was out in the desert-wilderness; he

wasn't going anywhere, but remaining with him in the desert-wilderness required a great deal of dedication. As a result of the logistics, many people came to hear John speak, were moved by what he had to say; and then they were baptized. But a much smaller percentage remained with him for any amount of time. Furthermore, we do not really know how long John's ministry lasted. It would not surprise me if John taught and baptized for 6 months or less.

Most of those who went to see John would pack up some provisions and make a trek into the uninhabited region where John was, and they would come to him and be baptized. However, because they were far from civilization, they would eventually return home—possibly that same day even (depending upon the provisions which they brought). A small number would have decided to remain with John and assist him in his ministry.

Luke 7:29a (When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just,...

The verb used here is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural, aorist active indicative of *dikaioō* (δικαίῶω) [pronounced *dik-ah-YOH-oh*]; and it means, *to render (declare, determine, acknowledge, make, show or regard as, vindicate as) righteous (just or innocent); to be free, to justify, to be righteous, to show (do) justice; to validate*. The 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural refers to the people hearing this, which includes the tax collectors. The aorist tense refers to that moment in time, when their souls aligned with the words that they had heard from John and the words that they are hearing now spoken by Jesus. The active voice means, they are the ones who *declare, determine, acknowledge, make, show or regard as, vindicate as righteous the God*. They are associating God's righteousness with Jesus; and with the words spoken here by Jesus.

#### Translations of Luke 7:29a:

This phrase is a moderately difficult phrase to translate, even though the words and form are not difficult:

Analytical Literal Translation	And all the people having heard, and the tax collectors, they justified God [or, acknowledged God's righteousness],...
English Standard Version	When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just,...
Concordant Literal Version	And hearing, the entire people, even the tribute collectors, justify God,...
An Understandable Version	And when all the people, together with the tax collectors, heard this they praised God for being so just,...
Updated Bible Version:	And all the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God,...

World English Bible

When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they declared God to be just,...

Kukis mostly literal translation

All of the people who heard and the tax collectors who acknowledged the justice of God [or, declare God righteous],...

This appears to be a description of the people there. It would seem likely that many of these people would have gone to see John.

By hearing these words of Jesus (vv. 24–28), the people there are helped to bridge the gap between John’s ministry and Jesus’. John announced the Messiah; and Jesus is the Messiah. Vv. 29–30 are parenthetical; they are not the words of Jesus.

Luke 7:29b ...having been baptized with the baptism of John,...

All of those people who were there, they had been baptized by John. They recognized the justice of God, suggesting that they understood that John’s ministry was of God. By their baptism, they vindicate God.

We do not have an enumeration of groups, as one might expect (like tax collectors and prostitutes, or whatever). Perhaps, the people who stood out were the tax collectors who had previously gone to hear John speak and to be baptized by him.

Luke 7:29 All of the people who heard and the tax collectors who acknowledged the justice of God [or, declare God righteous], were baptized with the baptism of John. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

#### Translations of Luke 7:29:

This verse makes more sense when all of it is put together:

Breakthrough Version

And all the ethnic group and the tax collectors who heard showed that God was right when they were submerged with John's submersion.

Charles Thomson

All the people indeed, even the publicans, when they heard, justified God by submitting to the baptism of John;...

Context Group V.

And all the people when they heard, and the tax-collectors, vindicated God, being immersed with the immersion of John.

Far Above all Trans.

Then when all the people had heard it, including the tax collectors, they pronounced God righteous, having been baptized with John's baptism.

Kukis nearly literal trans.

All of the people who heard and the tax collectors who acknowledged the justice of God [or, declare God righteous], were baptized with the baptism of John.

Luke 7:29 (When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just, having been baptized with the baptism of John,...)

We are actually setting up a contrast between two sets of people. The first set of people are those who had been baptized by John declared God righteous in what He has done. These are people in this crowd listening to Jesus speak of John.

As an aside, are you aware that Jesus did not baptize any of His followers?

Then there is this other group who are there.

Luke 7:30a ...but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves,...

But there were two other groups who were there—the pharisees and lawyers. Now, these were not lawyers in the sense that we understand lawyers. They were experts in the Mosaic Law. This was their field of study. However, we may reasonably assume that, their actual field of expertise was more affected by the commentaries and additional laws provided by the Jewish experts over the years. They were *experts* at keeping the Mosaic Law, as per the legalistic traditions of Judaism.

Fundamentally, the religious types and the law experts rejected God's will. They did not apply it to themselves. They did not recognize that John was from God. They did not think that a cleansing was necessary; or that repentance was necessary (repentance meaning, *a change of mind about dead works*). They believed that they already understood and followed the Law.

Similarly, they rejected the authority and teaching of Jesus Christ, even though, He was actually teaching the Mosaic Law. If they were truly experts in the Mosaic Law, rather than in Jewish traditions, they should have been able to recognize that Jesus was teaching the Law. Jesus was very much acting within the will of God. In fact, He is singularly the only man in human history to keep the Mosaic Law for the entirety of His life.

Given that Jesus both accurately taught the Law and lived it; He is the last Person Who should have received scrutiny and the disapprobation of the religious crowd. Jesus did exactly what these religious types thought everyone should be doing (in principle, anyway).

Luke 7:30b ...not having been baptized by him.)

The pharisees and law experts saw no reason to be baptized by John. They went to hear him not to learn anything or to be guided by God the Holy Spirit, but to deal with whatever needed to be dealt with, if it turns out that this John character is a problem for them.

John was not the teacher that Jesus was, but he did not teach anything that was outside of the law of God. He was not teaching heresy; he was not contradicting the Mosaic Law.

However, he was speaking accurately of the coming Messiah; and this baptism of his was a new thing.

Luke 7:30 ...but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.)

Translations of Luke 7:30:	
Kukis mostly literal translation	And the pharisees and the experts in the [Mosaic] law rejected the will of God for themselves and they had not been baptized by him.
Urim-Thummim Version	<i>But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of Elohim against themselves, being not baptized by him.</i>
Weymouth New Testament	But the Pharisees and expounders of the Law have frustrated God's purpose as to their own lives, by refusing to be baptized.
Wikipedia Bible Project	But the Pharisees and the religious teachers dismissed God's purpose for them, refusing to be baptized by John.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	But the Pharisees and those learned in the Torah rejected the counsel of Elohim for themselves, not having been immersed by him.
The Voice	But the Pharisees and religious scholars hardened their hearts and turned their backs on God's purposes for them because they had refused John's baptism [Literally, immersed, to show repentance].

Their rejection of Jesus is a rejection of God, despite their lofty titles and religious standing of those who rejected Him.

I had earlier mentioned having a reading Bible, and one of the very good choices is *the Voice*.

Now let's put these two verses together, which speaks of these disparate groups of people.

Luke 7:29–30 All of the people who heard the teaching of Jesus, including the tax collectors, acknowledged the justice of God and they had been baptized with John's baptism; however, the pharisees and the experts in the Mosaic Law rejected the will of God for themselves and they refused his baptism. (Kukis paraphrase)

I think that the Translation for Translators does an excellent job with this approach: *When they heard what Jesus said* (OR, *what John preached*), all the people, including tax collectors, *whom many people despised*, agreed that God's way was right. By being baptized by John {By *letting* John baptize them}, *they had agreed that what God required people to do in order to be saved was right*. But the Pharisees and the men who taught



the *Jewish* laws were not baptized by John {did not *let* John baptize them} because they rejected what God wanted them to do.

Now, putting both verses together, we get this:

Analytical-Literal Translation

And all the people having heard, and the tax collectors, they justified God [*or, acknowledged God's righteousness*], having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel [*or, purpose*] of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.

Far Above All Translation

Then when all the people had heard it, including the tax collectors, they pronounced God righteous, having been baptized with John's baptism. But the Pharisees and scholars in the law rejected God's counsel to them and were not baptized by him.

New European Version

When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized by him.

These verses are in contrast to one another. V. 29, by being baptized by John, those so-called common people vindicated the Person and character of God; they recognized and acknowledge God's righteousness. In contrast, the pharisees and so-called experts in the Mosaic Law reveal their own reject of God's will and guidance by rejecting John's baptism.

**No Way to Win Their Hearts — Luke 7:31-35** (a graphic); from [Heartlight.org](http://Heartlight.org); accessed July 22, 2022.



**Lessons 215–216: Luke 7:31–35**

**Some people just cannot be pleased**

Disciples of John have been speaking to Jesus and they left to bring a report to John (who may have been in jail at the time). At their leaving, Jesus praised John for his short-lived ministry. Most of the folks there knew about John. Many had heard him speak and were

baptized by him; others there heard him speak or heard about him speaking, but chose not to be baptized by him.

Specifically, there were people there—the pharisees and the lawyers—who did not like John the baptizer and they did not like Jesus. Jesus is going to address this.

Luke 7:31a "To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, ...

Jesus is going to draw a larger point, beyond His commemoration of the ministry of John the Herald. Those observing and listening to Jesus, but without any positive volition, also heard John. John and Jesus were both very different in personality and in their sermons. But, the religious types reacted in the same way to both men. They did not like John; they did not like Jesus. They were interested in undermining their ministries, but they were not interested in listening to them and considering the truth of their words.

Jesus will point this out using a parable. He asks, "Who could I compare the men of this generation to?" He is specifically speaking of the religious types, who were represented in His audience. Recall that there were two general groups of people in His audience—those who were positive to the teachings of Jesus and those who were negative (and the negative ones were there to find more reasons for being negative toward Jesus).

Luke 7:31b ...and what are they like?

Jesus asks the same question again; *who are they like?* My thinking is, Jesus wanted those in the audience to listen to what He was saying and to think about this analogy. So, by asking the question twice, everyone listening focuses in on this comparison.

Perhaps the idea was, there were men listening who, when Jesus talked about John, became bored. Perhaps even, they started talking to one another while Jesus was speaking (I think this is the case, based upon what Jesus says).

One pharisee leans into another and comments, "Speaking of John—now that guy was a real whack job!" Then one of his buddies leaned back, saying, "No kidding. Grab me a handful of honey, right?"

Those who are there are all familiar with John the Herald (*John the Baptizer*). But these two different groups—the positive and the negative ones—have two very different opinions about him.

Luke 7:31 "To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like?

There are men of this generation who have both rejected the ministry of John the Herald and of Jesus the Messiah. Jesus is going to present an analogy to better explain the mental attitudes of those people who rejected both messengers.

Luke 7:32a *They are like children...*'

Jesus presents this in a very neutral way, so as not to violate the privacy of those in the audience who needed to hear Him.

"These people are like children," Jesus says, referring to the pharisees and law experts in the back, who are exchanging a few comments to one another while He is speaking (that is an assumption which I have made). This is, by the way, what one might expect, of undisciplined children, that, while a public speaker is speaking, they are exchanging their thoughts with one another at the same time.

Luke 7:32b *...sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another,...*

Jesus paints a picture for them. He says, "They are like the kids in the marketplace." Now, they are just hanging out, apart from their parents, essentially doing whatever they want to do, which is, mostly to disapprove of what everyone else is doing.

Those kids in the market place are just sitting around—not working, not with any sort of a schedule. And they are calling out to one another. Do you see how this characterization might resonate with the people there and with the pharisees? The pharisees and law experts might be making snide comments and references to one another, because they do not like John or Jesus.

Similarly, just as children without responsibilities think that they know it all; so do the pharisees and lawyers. However, at this point, the pharisees and lawyers do not realize that Jesus is talking about them.

Luke 7:32c *..."We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; ...*

There is no pleasing or relating to these undisciplined, unsupervised children. Someone might play some music for them; but they are unimpressed; they think it's stupid. *Dancing to the music being played* simply indicates that they listened to the music and appreciated it; which these children did not.

The NET Bible: *'We played the flute for you, yet you did not dance...' The children of this generation were making the complaint (see vv. 33-34) that others were not playing the game according to the way they played the music. John and Jesus did not follow "their tune." Jesus' complaint was that this generation wanted things their way, not God's.*<sup>20</sup>

Luke 7:32d *...we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.'*

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<sup>20</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?luk7.htm> (footnote); accessed November 11, 2019.

These undisciplined kids are separate in all ways from those around them. They have no emotions. The people near them have suffered tragedy; but the kids could care less. "You're sad? So what!" they remark.

Luke 7:32 *They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, "'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.'*

There are two sets of children, one set of them calling out to the other set. Those who are calling out are the ones who played the flute and also mourned. These are God's messengers; these are John the herald and Jesus. John tried to communicate truth in one way; Jesus tried to communicate truth in another. The scribes and pharisees simply reject the truth—they are represented by the second group of children, the children who cannot be pleased, no matter what. When the first group of children play happy music, the second group are not happy; when they play sad music, the second group feels nothing. So it does not matter the package in which it is wrapped. If there is truth, the scribes and pharisees reject it. The two types of music being played represent John the Herald and Jesus. They are the different types of music, neither of which is appreciated by the second group of children.

The volition of the scribes and pharisees is negative. There is no way to reach them.

*From the Passion Translation: Christ and John the Baptist both offered people the "wedding," yet the Pharisees didn't want to dance. They both offered a funeral to the old, dead ways of religion, yet the Pharisees refused to attend. Grace offered them salvation, but they rejected it.<sup>21</sup>*

There are some folks that you just cannot please.

Luke 7:32 *They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, "'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.'*

**Application:** One minor application is, God uses all types in His plan. There are far too many pastors who seem like they were cut from the same cloth. This was not God's plan for pastors (or any Christian worker) to have their personality shaped by a seminary.

**Application:** As an aside, all pastor-teachers have different personalities. If a pastor seems like he is a cookie-cutter from the "preacher" mold, that is not a good thing. John and Jesus were dramatically different people (despite being related). The key is, *is this person teaching the truth*. You may like him personally and you may not. Your personal feelings about a minister are never the issue. You may think your pastor is too rich; you may not like the way that he dresses; or there may be some personality quirks of his that you do not like. Those things are unimportant.

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<sup>21</sup> From <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+7&version=TPT> (footnote); accessed November 11, 2019.

Luke 7:31–32 **Who, therefore, might I compare this men of this generation to? Who are they similar to? They resemble children, those in the marketplace, sitting around and calling to one another. One says, ‘We played music for you, but you did not enjoy it. We mourned, but you did not commiserate with us.’** (Kukis paraphrase)

This analogy is quite interesting—perhaps even to the pharisees and law experts. “Just where is He going with this?” they may be asking themselves. Throughout, I have made some interpretations, so we know where Jesus is going. But, those hearing Him heard only these words so far.

“You are comparing us to children in the marketplace? Music is being played, yet we don’t dance to it? What exactly are You saying to us?” We get this because we spend some time with it. Those hearing this analogy for the first time—particularly those to whom this was directed—may take some time before they understand what Jesus has just said to them.

Parables are like that. People rarely have an immediate reaction to a parable because it takes some time to sort out what the parable means. If you read vv. 31–32 above, and set aside the interpretation I have been giving so far—you are going to recognize that, as if this time, anyone hearing only these words so far does not get what is being said.

While they are trying to figure this out, Jesus explains further (and this may be more for the benefit of those who are positive as opposed to those who are negative).

Luke 7:33a **For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine,...**

Jesus has been speaking publically about John the Herald (vv. 24–35<sup>22</sup>), and praising his ministry. Meanwhile, the pharisees quietly make snide remarks to one another. So Jesus gives them an analogy, about children in the marketplace, undisciplined and unsupervised, who cannot be pleased. They have the smarmy teenage negativity oozing from them. Well, so do the pharisees and the law experts.

Jesus now explains exactly what He means; and how these men are like children.

He goes back to John, pointing out that when John came—actually, began his public ministry—he had a weird diet and he did not drink wine. Likely this is because he was out in the desert-wilderness and he lived on whatever was provided for him by nature. He did not even bake bread. He also did not partake in wine. He was a teetotaler, which means, for those of you 40 years younger than me, someone who does not drink any wine (or alcohol) at all.

In case you are wondering about this—John simply has no idea how to make alcohol. He might even have enough stuff in the desert-wilderness to make alcohol, but he is apparently unaware.

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<sup>22</sup> This includes the reactions of some to John.

Luke 7:33b ...and you say, 'He has a demon.'

The pharisees and the law experts and the scribes decided, “Well, this man is goofy, living out in the desert-wilderness, having that weird diet. Obviously, he is possessed by a demon.” Now, they alleged this against John, despite the fact that he was lucid, he was not self destructive, and he had a great message which was cohesive and understandable.

Luke 7:33 For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.'

Jesus is explaining the parable, where he compares the experts in the Law and the pharisees to children in the marketplace who could not be pleased.

Luke 7:34a The Son of Man has come eating and drinking,...

When Jesus uses the term *Son of Man*, He is referring to Himself. Jesus is very human. So, Jesus eats regular meals and he takes a glass of wine every now and again (which was not at all unusual in the ancient world). His eating and drinking habits are very different from John's. However, the same people who complained about what John ate and drank, also complained about what Jesus ate and drank—even though their complaints were antithetical.

Luke 7:34b ...and you say, 'Look at Him! A glutton and a drunkard,...

Jesus' behavior is quite the opposite of John's; and yet, the pharisees and law experts complain about his behavior as well. “Listen,” they tell anyone who will listen, “This man is just a glutton and an alcoholic.”

John and Jesus exhibited opposite behaviors; and yet, the pharisees and law experts complained about their behaviors. It did not matter what either man did; they were simply wrong from the beginning. If Jesus does X, then he is wrong for doing that. If John does not-X, then he is wrong for doing that. This is what the pharisees used as ammo to criticize both men.

These people pick out what they see as character defects and hold these up as serious problems; but that is not what they really oppose, when it comes to John and to Jesus. They have a problem with what these men are teaching. As we have already seen, the pharisees and lawyers were very unsuccessful when it came to arguing points of doctrine with the Lord.

**Illustration:** We see these kinds of complaints in politics all of the time. One group makes up stories about a politician whom they do not like; or they exaggerate characteristics of that person. What was associated with President George Bush all of the time was a lack of intelligence (which simply was not the case; but he did speak with a southern accent). So, he was made fun of incessantly for his lack of intelligence. Now, these exact same people who made a very big deal out of contrasting President Obama's



brilliance with Bush's lack of intelligence (neither of which was necessarily true)—these same people elected Joe Biden as president, whose lack of intelligence, when compared to others of his profession, is legendary. My point here is, these people made up their minds based upon the D or the R next to the person's name. Their so-called criticisms (of Bush) were not real, as they overlooked the same things in the candidate and later president (Biden) whom they chose.

**Illustration:** We see this with both political parties. One party attacked President Obama for him spending a great deal of time out on the golf course; and the other party defended him. And then both parties switched positions when it came to President Trump golfing. Essentially the same thing was done with the excessive budgets of both presidents (budgets which actually originate in Congress).

Now, back to the legalistic complaints about Jesus:

Luke 7:34c ...a Friend of tax collectors and sinners!'

"The problem is this," exclaim the pharisees and law experts, "Jesus is hanging out with the wrong crowd and they are having parties where they eat too much and drink too much."

**Illustration:** Now, I do not want to deify our (previous) president Trump (I began writing this in 2018; but now it is 2022); but let me give you another illustration of this. CNN and MSNBC planned out each broadcast day with this general approach: whatever President Trump says or does on that day, that is wrong; and then, they gather a panel of experts who agree (either 3 out of 4 agree or 4 out of 4 agree). So, one day President Trump sounds menacing towards the North Korean dictator; and these panels are gathered and they all worry about how Trump is going to start WWII, and that he cannot say this sort of thing about Kim Jong-un. Then, President Trump spoke of Kim Jong-un in glowing terms and how they might be able to come to an agreement; and suddenly, these exact same panelists are meeting and saying, "He just cannot say this about Kim Jong-un. That man is a tyrant and a murderous dictator!" So, it never matters to much of the media what President Trump says—they have predetermined that it is wrong, it is way wrong. No matter what, whatever former President Trump said, it was always presented as the exact opposite of what the President should have said (according to the media). Yet, had President Trump said the exact opposite thing, the media would have complained anyway.

### **Personality Types and Christianity:**

There is another point that can be made from what Jesus is saying, even though this is not exactly the point that Jesus is making. It is this: believers come in all shapes and sizes, with all personalities. Whatever your personality is, is not an issue (unless you classify your personality is one who is always in a state of sin, such as, being under the influence of mind-altering substances).

With regards to your personality, you might be happy and bouncy; you might appear to be in a dour mood all of the time, you might be a detail person, you might enjoy looking at the

bigger picture. God's plan is large enough to include all personality types. If there are things in your personality which are sinful, I am not speaking about that. But, whatever your personality happens to be, that is fine. You do not have to change what is not sinful about your personal traits.

I remember as a young believer interacting with some people from Campus Crusade, and the guys seemed to have a certain personality type. They were very nice, very vanilla, and, when talking to an attractive gal at Campus Crusade, they would often move in close and seem extremely sincere and caring. Don't misunderstand me, there are some really good things about Campus Crusade for Christ (I assume that it is still around); but when believers go in for personality imitation, that is problematic, and it has nothing to do with spirituality.

This occurs at some churches—particularly at small churches—where the dominant person has a certain type of personality, and people try to imitate it, thinking that made them a little more spiritual. However, changing your personality is more aligned with psychosis than with spiritual growth. I recall going to one church, and the pastor's wife had a moderately strong personality; and many of the women actually imitated her voice and speaking inflections—not in a mocking way, but in such a way as to imitate her as an example of great spirituality. They all sounded just like her.

So often today, when listening to Christian radio, you can tell a preacher is speaking, even if he has not said anything about God. There is something about his voice (and I do not mean that you are somehow being convicted of truth). This should not be the case. On the other hand, political radio hosts have a myriad of personalities. I have heard people that I like and people that I did not like—even though they may be saying roughly the same things. Pastors could learn something from this (I am talking about personality here; I am not talking about putting politics into a message).

Let's approach this topic from a different perspective: I went to Berachah Church for many years and was first taught by R. B. Thieme, Jr. He had many detractors, and I went out of my way to read critical material about him. When I first began listening to him, I sent away for a couple of booklets which were critical of his ministry. As many years have gone by and now we have the internet, there are even websites dedicated to blasting Bob. What I have found is, almost every person who speaks critically of Bob by name cannot help but talk about his personality (and, no doubt about it, Bob had a personality). Now, I read about the doctrinal differences, but, it was very hard for me to take criticisms seriously if the personality criticisms are emphasized.

Christians come in all sizes and shapes, with all manner of personalities; and with different sin natures. This is true of missionaries, pastor-teachers, evangelists, deacons, and the so-called laity. Now, you are not called upon by God to have specific feelings towards all believers or towards a majority of believers. We are to love all believers with agape love, meaning, we treat them the way that we would want them to treat us; we give them the

same respect we believe we ought to be afforded; and we do not sin against them—not even in our minds. But their personality type should never be an issue to us.

Luke 7:34 The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look at Him! A glutton and a drunkard, a Friend of tax collectors and sinners!'

The complaints leveled against the personalities and actions of John the Baptizer and Jesus the Christ simply revealed an attitude of negative volition.

Luke 7:33–34..For John the Baptizer has come, not eating bread and not drinking wine, and you [all] keep on saying, 'He has a demon.' [Yet] the Son of Man has come, [both] eating and drinking; and you [all] keep on saying, 'Listen, [this] man [is] a glutton and a drunkard; [He is] the friend of tax collectors and sinners.' (Kukis mostly literal translation)

I want you to notice something about the complaints being made about Jesus and being made about John, His herald: the complaints lodged against them are meaningless. Really, the problem is, is they do not like what John has to say and they do not like what the Lord has to say. But, they do not attack the message, they attack the messengers with piddly, surface stuff that makes no difference to anyone. But they use this petty, superficial stuff as the basis of their problem with John and with Jesus. These things which people are saying against John and Jesus are fake excuses and nothing more.

**Illustration:** Let me give you an example from current politics (this illustration may or may not register with you). At the time when I began to write this, there were a plethora of Democrats complaining the President Trump is guilty of a quid pro quo; that he pressured the head of Ukraine by using American dollars. He wasn't; we have the transcript of the call; and the leader of Ukraine verified that there was no quid pro quo. However, what President Trump asked to be investigated is Hunter Biden who got a very good paying position on a board for a Ukraine energy company which was the result of a quid pro quo. There is not hardly an elected democrat anywhere saying, "You know, both men are accused of the same thing. Let's investigate both of them." You see what I mean? The very thing which is presented as an horrendous problem with one person, is not really a problem when it involves someone that they like. For them, the perceived problem was not really a problem; it just provided an excuse to attack the person that they do not like.

**Luke 7:35 (KJV)** (a graphic);  
from [KJV Bible Verses](#);  
accessed July 22, 2022.

V. 35 is one of those verses where the translator is caught between giving it a literal translation—which is fairly straightforward—or translating it in such a way as to help explain what Jesus means.

Luke 7:35 **Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.**"

What does Jesus mean here? True wisdom—the teaching of Bible doctrine which is applied to one's life—will produce good people and good results. Good production comes from wisdom; and the legalism of the pharisees is bad production.

Here, wisdom is personified by a woman; as it is in that great chapter of the Bible, Proverbs 8.

Luke 7:35 **Wisdom is justified by her children.**" (Kukis mostly literal translation)



#### Using Simple Vocabulary Translations and Paraphrases to Understand Luke 7:35:

Here are some translations which focus more on deciphering the meaning of this verse:

Easy-to-Read Version–2001	<b>But wisdom is shown to be right by the things it does."</b>
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	<b>But wisdom is shown to be right by those who accept it."</b>
God's Word™	<b>"Yet, wisdom is proved right by all its results."</b>
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	<b>But Yahweh's wisdom is proved right by those who follow it.</b>
Free Bible Version	<b>However, God's wise ways are proved right by all who follow him!"</b>

I believe that every believer ought to have a reading Bible (or several). This should be a translation which often paraphrases or tries to explain the idea behind what is said. The Contemporary English Version does this (or those translations which I listed above). Now

and again, their interpretation may be wrong; but, in other instances, they may help you to better understand what is being taught.

The idea of Luke 7:35 is this: you look at the results of wisdom, and you can agree that it is wisdom.

### **Luke 7:29–35 Summarized:**

Now let's see this entire passage:

Jesus has been speaking to the people out in the open air. There are people with Him who are interested in the truth; and there are people there who have no interest in what Jesus has to say. They are simply looking to find something which they can pick apart and criticize.

Jesus has some more things to say, but Luke inserts some additional information:

Luke 7:29–30 (When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just, having been baptized with the baptism of John, but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.)

Some of the people there had been baptized by John—the tax collectors are named specifically.

The pharisees and lawyers who are there had not been baptized by John, thus rejecting God's will.

Now Jesus continues speaking:

Luke 7:31–32 "To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.'

Jesus begins speaking about two groups of children. One group plays the flute for them, but the second group were not interested. They did not dance. The first group played a sad song for the second group, but they did not get into it. They did not cry or tear up.

Now Jesus explains that the pharisees and lawyers are this second group of children, who refused to be entertained by the first group.

Luke 7:33–35 For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say,



'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by all her children." (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus now explains: "When John the baptizer came eating no bread and drinking no wine, you all complained, saying that He had a demon. However, now I am here and I am eating and drinking among the people, yet you claim that I am a glutton and a drunkard. You are not satisfied with anything that God tells you."

Jesus, because He is teaching wisdom, it will produce good things; and they will all see this.

## Lesson 217: Luke 7:36–38

## The One Forgiven Loves Much

**Forgiven Much; Loves Much (Luke 7:36–50)** (a graphic); from [U of T Saint George](#); accessed July 22, 2022.

This graphic gives us a heads up as to what is going to take place in this next section.

Before examining these final verses of Luke 7, let me point out that there is a very similar incident recounted in Matthew 26:6-13 Mark 14:3-9 (which incident is alluded to in John 11:2). There

are some similarities—both involve scented alabaster oils and a woman. Also, both incidents take place in the home of a man named Simon. However, in the incident before us, Simon is a pharisee; in the other, Simon is a leper. Here, the unnamed woman moisturizes the feet with this oil; in the other passages, the oil is used upon His head. Here, the woman is not named; there, it is Mary, sister of Martha. Here, the parable of the two debtors is given; there, a different parable. Here, we have an incident occurring early in the Lord's ministry; there, later in His ministry.

Jesus is going to go to this dinner party. There are pharisees and lawyers carefully watching Him, hoping to find a reason to hate Him; a reason that they can articulate and convince others.

Luke 7:36a **One of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with Him,...**





Let's consider the verb *to ask*. The imperfect tense indicates that the pharisee kept asking Jesus to come eat with him at his house. Had he simply asked and Jesus said, yes, the verb *ask* would be the aorist tense.

Based upon what follows, we may reasonably suppose that dinner takes place at the house of this particular pharisee.

Now, nothing positive or negative is indicated so far, apart from an apparent reticence of our Lord to come to his house (the imperfect tense suggests that He had been asked a number of times, but the Lord did not agree until this particular time). Now, this interests me, and I am not sure what to make of it. Jesus does not strike me as being an indecisive person, so His eventual positive response is interesting.

There are reasons in this narrative to think that the pharisee had motives other than to find out for himself, *just Who is this Jesus Person?* Jesus will cite the pharisee's somewhat rude behavior later (rude for a host). If this pharisee was giving Jesus the benefit of the doubt; or if he was simply trying to understand Jesus better, then he would have been a more gracious host to the Lord. However, as this narrative progresses, it will become clear that the pharisee really did not see Jesus as a guest of honor. He treated Jesus more like he would treat someone who has crashed his party, which suggests that he saw Jesus as an interloper of sorts (which was the common view of the religious crowd, most of whom rejected Jesus).

It is likely that this pharisee wanted to observe Jesus more closely, under the maxim, *keep your friends close and your enemies closer*. He may have wanted to catch Jesus doing something wrong or saying something wrong.

Luke 7:36b ...and He went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.

Jesus eventually accepted the invitation, and we can at best speculate as to why He did not accept the invite from the beginning.

Since I have mentioned the tense of *invite*, allow me to mention the tenses of the other verbs: *went* is an aorist participle (which precedes the action of the main verb) and *reclined* is in the aorist tense. The aorist is generally a point in time tense (it is *not* equivalent to our past tense). Although it can have several applications; it simply means that Jesus entered the house and then He reclined at the table.

The NET Bible: Grk "*and reclined at table,*" as 1<sup>st</sup> century middle eastern meals were not eaten while sitting at a table, but while reclining on one's side on the floor with the head closest to the low table and the feet farthest away.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?luk7.htm> (footnote); accessed November 11, 2019.

One of the push-pulls of a translation is, *how literal should the translation be?* If Jesus was attending a dinner party today, then He would be said to *sit down at the table to eat*. We all understand that, but that is not what this passage says. People laid on their sides when they ate in the ancient world, so the verb says *He reclined [at the table]*. One translation would render this literally, causing some people today to read and think, *what does that mean?* Others translate this, *and he sat down to eat*, which is modernizing the text, but not being literal.

What was actually happening was, the guests would all be around a table, leaning apparently on one arm, their heads close to the low table and their feet furthest away from the table (which would make sense, as the dirtiest part of a person's anatomy would be his feet, having walked through streets where all manner of waste might be found).

Luke 7:36 *One of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him, and He went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.*

A pharisee continued to ask the Lord to come to his home and have a meal there. Jesus accepted, went at the proper time and then reclined at the table (people did not use chairs to sit in for eating in that era).

Luke 7:37a *And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner,...*

When it says that this is a *woman of the city*, this should be taken as meaning nothing more than, she lived in this same city. Or, if this is a village, then she lived in the nearest city.

There is a woman of the city, here, defined as a sinner. Many have understood this word *sinner* to indicate a *prostitute*. The pharisee seems to imply as much in v. 39, cleverly saying, *"If He were really a prophet, He would know that this woman is a sinner."*

The woman is described by the feminine singular adjective *hamartôlos* (ἁμαρτωλός) [pronounced *ham-ar-to-LOSS*], which means, *sinful, devoted to sin, a sinner; not free from sin; pre-eminently sinful, especially wicked; all wicked men; specifically of men stained with certain definite vices or crimes; tax collectors, heathen*. This would be why many would understand this to indicate that this woman is a prostitute, as she would be stained by a certain vice or crime. Strong's #268.

John, in his gospel, possibly identifies this woman as Mary. John 11:2 *It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill.* (ESV; capitalized) There will be a [similar incident](#) which takes place near the end of the Lord's ministry, which involves Mary. So, it is possible that John's reference here was to John 12:1–8<sup>24</sup> rather than to Luke 7:36–50 (the passage that we are studying). That is a similar thing which took place, but clearly much later in the Lord's ministry (we will look at these [other passages](#) at the end of this chapter).

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<sup>24</sup> John's gospel is the least chronological of the gospels.

It is interesting that Luke does not identify her, and let me offer up a reason (assuming that this is Mary in [both incidents](#)). This is Mary from her *previous life*, as it were; and she plays a prominent part in Luke's gospel. Although Luke clearly believed this incident to be important to record, he may not have wanted to so identify Mary in his gospel. Do you want to be *known* by your worst sins? In this way, Luke protected her privacy, as his account would have been released while Mary and the rest of those mentioned in his gospel were still alive. By the time that John writes his gospel, most of the people named are dead.

In the alternative, this could be a different woman altogether; but, again, her privacy maintained by Luke by not specifically naming her.

Luke 7:37b ...*when she learned that He was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house,*...

This woman became aware that Jesus was at a meal in the house of a pharisee.

This is possibly related to the pharisee asking, on several occasions, for Jesus to come to his home; and, eventually, the Lord agreed. These many requests and the final acceptance may have been how the woman found out.

Did the woman crash this dinner party? No doubt she did; but did she know her way around this house? In this narrative, that implication is not clearly made.

At least one translation suggests that she was walking by the house, and saw the Lord—perhaps going in, or perhaps through an opening. The Modern Literal Version reads *And behold, a woman who was in the city, who was a sinner, when\* she recognized that he is reclining at a meal in the Pharisee's house, she fetched an alabaster flask of perfume, and standing by his feet behind him, weeping, she began to rain on his feet with her tears and was wiping them with the hairs of her head and was kissing his feet, and was anointing them with the perfume.*

I have used the ESV (capitalized) throughout, which uses the word *learned*. The MLV that I quoted above used the verb *recognized*. The latter translation seems to suggest she walks by a window, looks through it, and sees the Lord (and *recognizes* Him). There is a verb that means this: *blepô* (βλέπω) [pronounced *BLEHP-oh*], which means, *to look at; to behold, to glance at; to beware, to look (on, to), to perceive, to regard, to notice*. Strong's #991. However, this is not the word used here. The word found here is the aorist active participle of *epiginôskô* (ἐπιγινώσκω) [pronounced *ehp-ihg-in-OÇ-koh*], which means, *fully knowing; becoming fully acquainted with, acknowledging; (ac-, have, take) know (-ledge, well)*. Strong's #1921. So this is something that this woman would have *found out or come to know*. This suggests that she knew, at some point in time, that Jesus was going to be at this dinner party, and so she went, not concerned about what might happen to her. She was going to see her Lord.

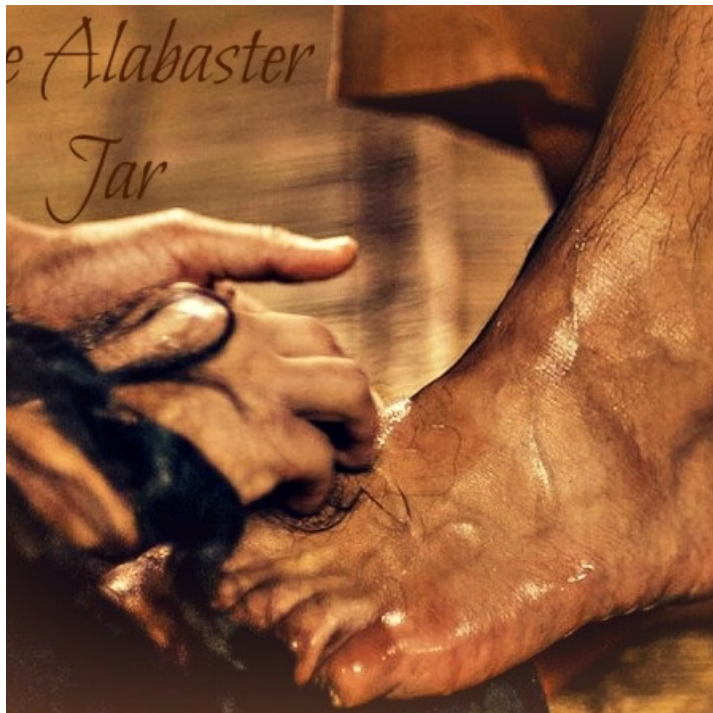
The woman came prepared.

Luke 7:37c ...brought an alabaster flask of ointment,

She apparently comes to this house and she brings with her an alabaster or stone perfume box.

The United States, particularly with the beginning of the efficient use of energy and the age of production, we have enjoyed a plethora of modern conveniences. I have often posed the question, would you prefer to be King Solomon, the richest man of his era, or a poor man in American, and any person with two cents rattling around in his brain would choose to live here in the United States today, even in poverty. Those in the ancient world had very little by way of material possessions or conveniences. Most of us have easy access

to clean water and breathable air; and we have such a wide variety of things to help us pass the time in this life.



I compare today with other time in ancient history because this woman bringing the stone box with ointment would be bringing one of her few possessions. She calculated that there was no better time to use it.

Today, the average woman in the United States, might cover the better part of a vanity with creams, moisturizers and various kinds of makeup. This was possibly the only item of beauty or health care owned by this woman. Not only would this have been relatively expensive, but this is possibly the most expensive thing that this woman owns.

**Alabaster Jar** (a graphic); from [Life Community Church](#); accessed July 22, 2022.

Luke 7:37 And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that He was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment,...

Whether the woman heard through the grapevine or walked by the house and saw through an opening that Jesus is there, we do not know. Nevertheless, she ascertained the information necessary to find Jesus.

Minor question here: was she already in the house? Did she enter in with other guests, expecting the Lord to be there? My guess is, she heard that the Lord was going to be at such and such house for a dinner party, and she was going to be there, no matter what.

Luke 7:38a ...and standing behind Him at his feet, weeping,....

This woman is near to Jesus, behind Him and to His side. She is close to His feet. People of that era reclined when they ate. The men are all laying on their sides. This is how she can be behind the Lord, and yet have easy access to His feet.

#### Lessons 218–219: Luke 7:38–43

#### The woman washing the Lord's feet

We have begun a new section of Luke, and this is what we have studied so far:

Luke 7:37–38a **And it was seen that [lit., behold] a woman who was in the city, a sinner, who knew [lit., she was fully aware] that Jesus [lit., He] was reclining [for a meal] in the house of a pharisee. She brought an alabaster perfume box, and she stood behind [Him] near to His feet.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

This, by the way, is one of the fascinating aspects of the gospels. When woman like this comes to the Lord, she knows where He is and she is able to determine which one He is inside of the house. She appears to have entered the house, figured out where Jesus was, and she went right on over to Him. There does not appear to be any verbal interaction. She does not say (insofar as we know), “I would like to wash, lotion and perfume your feet.” Furthermore, she is crying; so that would likely preclude her from carrying on a conversation with the Lord at this time.

She knows Jesus; she knows where He is in general; and when entering the house, she knows which person to go over to.

Contrast that with the pharisees who needed Judas to point out which man is Jesus, when they wanted to seize Him.

#### **Jesus and His Disciples Reclining at Table**

(a graphic); from [Lessons and Blessings](#);

accessed December 30, 2022. Although this is apparently the Last Supper, after Judas has left; this helps us to see how people reclined at a meal in that

era and how the woman could be behind Jesus washing and moistening His feet.



Luke 7:38b **and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears....**



She is there behind the Lord and weeping. She uses her tears and her hair to moisten His feet.

In the ancient world, people walked everywhere and their feet became caked dirt and whatever else might be found in the streets. Their feet were often dry and smelly.

Luke 7:38c ...and wiped them with the hair of her head....

She uses her own hair to wipe the Lord's feet. So, she has the oils from his alabaster box, which are used to moisten the Lord's feet, along with her tears, and she uses her hair to clean and moisten the Lord's feet.

**The Woman at Jesus' Feet in Luke 7:36-50** (a graphic); from [Broken Oracles](#); accessed July 22, 2022.

Luke 7:38d ...and kissed His feet...

Throughout this process, the woman kept kissing the Lord's feet.

It should be clear at this point that she recognizes the Lord as being someone far more than simply an honored guest at a party.



Throughout the gospels, different people recognize the Person of the Lord in their own ways. This woman in her complete subservience to Jesus; Peter will simply state it outright in Luke 9:20. This is *how* Jesus chose to reveal Himself. He did not walk around and proclaim Himself to be the Messiah, David's Greater Son, God's Son, etc. Only on the rare occasion, did He do that. However, it was Jesus' choice to allow others to witness to His Person. This is far more powerful for those that He encounters to recognize Him for Who He is, than for Him to proclaim Himself every few days.

Luke 7:38e ...and anointed them with the ointment.

She used the expensive ointment that she brought to anoint the Lord's feet.

Luke 7:38 ...and standing behind Him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed His feet and anointed them with the ointment.



As I get older, one of the best feelings is to use some lotion on my own feet. Given the condition of the roads and streets through the ancient town where Jesus was, having one's feet washed and then coated with ointment would have been an exquisite pleasure.

Luke 7:37–38 And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that He was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind Him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed His feet and anointed them with the ointment.

This however, is not the end of this narrative. The pharisee has an opinion here that he wants to share.

This is very much a set up for the rest of the chapter. There is quite the interchange between the host and his guest, followed by some great teaching by Jesus.

Luke 7:39a Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this,...

The pharisee who invited Jesus over for this meal is watching all of this with no little interest. He sees the woman moisturizing the Lord's feet and weeping at His feet.

The pharisee looks over the situation and he has some thoughts on this matter. Bear in mind that, for the most part, the religious Jews with authority often had little interest in learning from Jesus. Many of them were teachers—some of them having attended great ancient universities—so just how much this young man could teach them was immediately suspect in their own eyes.

Luke 7:39b ... he said to himself, "If this Man were a prophet, He would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching Him,..."

It appears, by this statement, that Jesus knows what the pharisee is thinking.

Syndein/Thieme: *There are 4 conditional If statements in the Konia Greek. This is now the rare 4th class condition. It means 'if it were true - I wish it was, but it is NOT'. It is identified by the Greek word 'ei' in the Protasis plus the optative (a desire) mood in the Protasis.*<sup>25</sup>

By using the 4<sup>th</sup> class condition—even in his thinking—this pharisee is indicating that he wishes Jesus were a prophet (or, *the Prophet*), but alas, He is not. This sounds as though the pharisee had really hoped that Jesus was the Messiah, but this little incident that he is observing indicates that Jesus is not (in the opinion of the pharisee). Although the optative mood could be associated with some disappointment (*if only this Man was the Messiah!*) But this could also mean feigned disappointment or it could be stated in such a way, that the pharisee is thinking, *I knew this from the beginning*. Had he been asked

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<sup>25</sup> From [http://syndein.com/Luke\\_7.html](http://syndein.com/Luke_7.html) (v. 39); accessed November 12, 2019.

his opinion, the pharisee might have said, "I had wished this Man was the Prophet, but, alas, He is not."

The pharisee uses the phrase ποταπή ἡ γυνή. The first word is the feminine singular interrogative adjective; nominative case of potapos (ποταπός) [pronounced *pot-ap-OSS*], which means, *whatever, of what possible sort, what (manner of), of what sort or quality (what manner of)*. Strong's #4217. ἡ γυνή means, *the woman*. "Does He not know what sort of woman she is?" is what he asks himself.

By his thoughts, this pharisee makes known the sort of person that he is. He does not have any faith in Jesus. In fact, he has come to a conclusion right at this point that Jesus is not any sort of a prophet. Here is this woman touching and attaching herself to Him, and Jesus does not even know what kind of woman that she really is (in the opinion of the pharisee). It may be that this pharisee comes to the conclusion that Jesus is no prophet based upon this incident alone.

Nevertheless, Jesus is able to look at this pharisee and perceive what he is thinking.

At this point, some have asked, *well, how does the pharisee know what kind of woman she is?* Not to stick up for the pharisee, but in a small town, often people know everyone else's business. Furthermore, there is nothing to indicate that this woman had a recent makeover, to hide the sort of person that she is. So, his knowledge of what sort of a woman she is, does not necessarily condemn the pharisee. It may have been obvious by the way that she looked. Or, she may have been well-known to the locals; but not necessarily to Jesus (Who did not live there).

Now, there is no reason to assume that she looked poorly or slutty or anything like that. There is no description of her which suggests that. Furthermore, given the circumstances, we would have expected her *not* to dress in any sort of provocative wear (for that era).

It would have occurred to me that, the pharisee would have assumed that contact with such a woman would make the Lord ceremonially unclean. One of the big deals to these pharisees is, *uncleanness*. They certainly would have avoided that at all costs.

But, what I find curious is, somehow, this woman has gotten entrance into this pharisee's home. Certainly, she could have simply walked though the front door and found Jesus (these houses were not large); but had she been there before?

Had the pharisee had an inappropriate relationship with this woman? We don't know, and there is not enough information in this chapter to tell us that she did. It is certainly possible that the pharisee knew much about this woman, yet without having carnal knowledge of her (which is the assumption that I am going to make).

Luke 7:39c *...for she is a sinner."*

I find this interesting that, the pharisee could have thought the word for *prostitute*, but he thinks instead, *she is a sinner* (or, *a degenerate*). He may have been so righteous as to not even be willing to think the word, *prostitute*. In fact, for thought language, the pharisee was quite delicate about this matter. The pharisee uses the word which we have seen already: the feminine singular, adjective of the word hamartôlos (ἁμαρτωλός) [pronounced *ham-ar-to-LOSS*], which means, *sinful, devoted to sin, a sinner; not free from sin; pre-eminently sinful, especially wicked; all wicked men; specifically of men stained with certain definite vices or crimes; tax collectors, heathen*. Strong's #268.

This thought in the pharisee's head clearly reveals his self-righteousness and his confusion. This woman is certainly a sinner; but he is too. He has a sin nature; Adam's original sin has been imputed to him, and he has committed personal sins. Even assuming that he has committed fewer sins than she still does not qualify him for some kind of reward or recognition.

Luke 7:39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this Man were a prophet, He would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."

To the pharisee, this is proof certain that Jesus does not know who or what this woman is. He allows her to wash and moisten His feet; and He does not object. In public, a pharisee would have avoided contact with such a woman, in order to remain clean.

What is fascinating is, Jesus knows what this man is thinking and He responds to it in the next verse.

Luke 7:40a And Jesus answering...

Now, bear in mind, Simon (the pharisee) has not spoken aloud, but Jesus is responding to what he was thinking. The word used here is apokrinomai (ἀποκρίνομαι) [pronounced *ahp-oh-KREE-noh-mai*], which means, *answering, a reply; speaking [after someone else]*. Strong's #611. So, it is reasonable to assume that Jesus knows what Simon the pharisee is thinking.

The pharisee will miss the irony in all of this. He has judged the Lord not a prophet because He does not send this woman away, yet, Jesus knows what the pharisee is thinking and He will respond to all of it.

It is clear that, from time to time, Jesus is able to read the thoughts of others. Now, speculating slightly, let me suggest that there are 3 possible explanations: (1) Jesus can simply look at a man's face and read him; (2) the Holy Spirit reveals this information to Jesus (as Jesus is a prophet); or (3) Jesus, applying the attributes of His deity (or being allowed access to these attributes) reads this man's thinking.

I would lean towards the first explanation. Jesus, being the man that He is, was probably very good at reading people and there are some people who are easy to read. The slight

smile on the pharisee's face likely gave him away. Certainly, the Holy Spirit could have revealed this; but I don't know that this was necessary. Thirdly, I do not believe that, generally speaking, Jesus accessed His Deity very often, if at all. I believe that when Jesus did a healing, that this was from the empowering ministry of God the Holy Spirit. The reason for taking this stance is, Jesus test-drove the spiritual life for us believers in the Church Age. It would be cheating (that is, Jesus would be violating the Doctrine of Kenosis) if He constantly accessed His Deity in order to perform divine good.

Secondly, the most difficult thing which Jesus did—dying for our sins—had to take place completely and totally within His humanity. Deity cannot be confined to one place at one time; nor can Deity be associated in any way with sins. So if Jesus, in His humanity, took upon Himself our sins; anything else that He did during His public ministry would have been much easier.

Let me offer up this illustration as to how Jesus' divine attributes could be functioning (for instance in holding the universe together, as per Colossians 1:17), but without Him consciously causing them to function. You or I, when we start walking, we have in our minds (most of the time) some sort of destination, perhaps even an idea as to the time and effort which will be involved; but, in any case, we consciously cause ourselves to walk, even choosing the direction. But, what we do not do is, adjust our heart and blood flow in order to reflect this movement and what is required in order to walk from point A to point B. But our bodies do this without our volition being involved. Our mind actually sends signals all over the place telling the body's internal organs what to do. If you walk up 2 flights of stairs, there are going to be a number of things which take place within your body that you consciously did not will to happen, even though you obviously willed yourself to climb the stairs.

Although I do not claim to know the exact way in which the Lord placed His Deity on autopilot, functioning almost apart from His volition (I should say, *sovereignty*). Somehow, based upon how I read the Scriptures, Jesus does not, for the most part, access His Deity during His life on earth. It is possible that He never accesses His Deity during His walk on this earth.

This is known as the doctrine of Kenosis, which we have covered in the past. This is found in Luke 2 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Luke 7:40b ...said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you."

Jesus is going to speak to Simon about what he is thinking. Interestingly enough, Jesus is very polite toward His host, indicating that He had something to say to him. Now, Simon could have, knowing his own thoughts, said, "How about if we speak to this privately? We will just go to the next room."

Simon, a pharisee, who has no doubt observed<sup>26</sup> Jesus acting and speaking on many occasions, knew that He could be quite harsh toward pharisees and other religious types.

It would not surprise me if Simon was thinking, “Hmm, whatever He is going to say to me, my trump card will be, ‘And You, Sir, are cavorting with a prostitute; so what kind of a Prophet are You?’ ” If this is what is on his mind, then Simon would certainly want this conversation to take place in public, given what I believe is an underlying animosity toward the Lord.

Jesus, on the other hand, is giving Simon the option of saying *no, maybe you can make Your point at another time; or, maybe You can speak to me privately on this point?* Instead, Simon believes that he is ready to interact with the Lord in front of his dinner party.

What Simon is ready to say would testify as to his lameness as a host.

Luke 7:40c **And he answered, "Say it, Teacher."**

Simon, having a trump card to play if he needs to, tells the Lord to speak. This interaction between the two men is normal. Jesus was essentially asking permission to speak directly to the host about an unspecified matter. Based upon what is happening and the looks that Simon is giving, it is probably understood that all of this relates to the situation with the woman moisturizing the Lord's feet.

Did Simon realize that Jesus was going to speak to him about the woman? I suspect that he did; but I am assuming that Simon is looking over at Jesus with a disapproving look. Have you ever looked at someone, and without saying a word, indicated to that person that he ought to do something else? A tilt of the head, the raising of one side of the mouth, and/or a movement of the eyes can be all that is needed in order for the person to say (without words), “Look at that, check that out” (where there is a negative connotation to be taken). A parent will sometimes have this sort of unspoken communication with his or her children; husbands and wives are able to sometimes communicate without speaking aloud.

So, it does not seem unreasonable that Simon the pharisee made such a motion to one or two of his colleagues in his house, indicating that they ought to look at Jesus and that woman (I am being speculative here). I believe that Simon's face and gestures told Jesus what was on his mind, even without Simon saying a word.

Luke 7:40c **And he answered, "Say it, Teacher."**

The common word for *to say* or for *to answer* is not used here. Instead, we have this verb applied to Simon: *phêmi* (φημί) [pronounced *fay-MEE*], which means, *to make known [or, show, reveal] one's thoughts, to declare; to say [what is on one's mind], speak [your mind]*. Strong's #5346.

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<sup>26</sup> Remember, Simon has asked Jesus to a meal at his home many times.

So, Simon is apparently watching the Lord with great interest and thinking about what we read here. When Jesus speaks to him directly, Simon makes his thinking known. This is somewhat of a change-it-up. We do not read, *And Simon said, "Teacher, reveal to us what is on Your mind."* The verbs are switched around, so it reads, **And Simon revealed his thinking, "Teacher, speak."** Simon is saying, "I cannot wait to have a conversation with You, Jesus. Whatever You say, I've got the trump card; so, say it." Do you see what I mean? Simon, engaging in a public conversation with Jesus in his home, because he has the ultimate trump card to play (that trump card being): "Do you see no problem interacting with that prostitute or encouraging her?"

Luke 7:40 **And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher."**

Simon appears to have moved closer to the Lord, as he checks out this woman and has his little private thought, and Jesus then speaks to him.

What Jesus will say will not only reveal what is on the Lord's mind, but He will reveal what Simon was thinking as well.

**The Parable of the Two Debtors** (a graphic); from [Becoming Christians](http://www.becomingchristians.com); accessed July 22, 2022.

Jesus is going to teach by parable here. Interestingly enough, Simon will probably understand the parable, but not everyone there will understand what Jesus is saying.

Luke 7:41a **"A certain moneylender had two debtors."**

Jesus often illustrated doctrinal points using simple parallel circumstances which virtually everyone could understand and relate to.



What Jesus will say here will throw the pharisee off balance. He's thinking about this woman—possibly a prostitute—and he thinks it quite rich that Jesus does not appear to recognize this fact (but was he aware that Jesus has read his mind?).

However, Jesus starts talking to him about two debtors and they both owe the same man some money. The pharisee gets this, although it seems like an odd approach to him. But, the pharisee goes along with it. His mind focuses on these two debtors, not really sure where Jesus is going with this story.



Luke 7:41b **One owed five hundred denarii,...**

Jesus specifies the debt. One of these persons owes 500 denarii, which is a significant debt in the ancient world. A denarius represents a day's wages, so here, the one who is in debt owes nearly 2 years wages.

*Thayer: A Roman silver coin in NT time. It took its name from it being equal to ten "asses", a number after 217 B.C. increased to sixteen (about 3.898 grams or .1375 oz.). It was the principal silver coin of the Roman empire. From the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, it would seem that a denarius was then the ordinary pay for a day's wages. (Matt. 20:2-13).<sup>27</sup>*

Therefore, 500 denarii represents nearly 2 years' work.

Luke 7:41c **...and the other fifty.**

The second debtor was in better shape than the first, only owing about 2 month's wages.

Luke 7:41 **"A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.**

Simon has temporarily set his trump card aside, and is listening carefully, having no idea where Jesus is going with the parable.

Luke 7:42a **When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both.**

In some way, it became clear that neither man was able to repay the debt that they had accumulated. The creditor chooses to forgive both debts.

Luke 7:42b **Now which of them will love him more?"**

Then Jesus asks the simple question, *which man is the most grateful?* The obvious answer is, the one who owed the most.

Luke 7:42 **When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?"**

This is a very short and to-the-point parable.

Simon will answer Jesus' question before understanding what Jesus has just said to him.

Luke 7:43a **Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt."**

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<sup>27</sup> Thayer's Greek English Lexicon of the Old Testament (©1889), edited version for e-sword, Strong's. #1220.

The verb used by Simon is the present active indicative of *hupolambánō* (ὑπολαμβάνω) [pronounced *hoop-ol-am-BAHN-noh*], which means, *to take up and continue a discourse or topic; to assume, to presume; to answer, to receive, to suppose*. Strong's #5274. By using this word, Simon is saying, *I know that there is some sort of trick here or some catch to this little story of Yours*. I don't think that Simon has yet put it all together yet in his own mind.

Many times, Jesus offers up some sort of contrast between two men, and Simon correctly presumes that the man who owes the most debt is the more thankful of the two, if their debts have been forgiven.

Simon is likely a very smart man, and he may realize that he is being set up, but he certainly does not know how. And he still has no clue as to how this relates to this woman—this possible prostitute.

Jesus now gives Simon positive feedback.<sup>28</sup>

Luke 7:43b **And He said to him, "You have judged rightly."**

Jesus tells him, "That is exactly right; you made the right call here, Simon."

No doubt, Simon is thinking, *what's the point?* This is how a parable works. In Simon's mind, he is thinking about when to drop the line, "You say You're a prophet; do you know what kind of woman this gal is?" The parable moves him away from this. If he is matching wits with Jesus, he has to focus upon what Jesus is saying, which at first seems far removed from Jesus having his feet moisturized by this woman of questionable character.

Luke 7:43 **Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And He said to him, "You have judged rightly."**

Simon, understanding that there is some kind of catch to this story—something that he has not yet quite caught himself, gives Jesus the answer he knows that Jesus expects.

## **Lessons 220–221: Luke 7:44–48**

## **Jesus Explains the Parable to Simon**

**Luke 7:40–43 (NKJV)** (a graphic); from [A Little Perspective](#); accessed July 21, 2022.

Jesus has been repeatedly asked to attend a dinner at Simon the Pharisee's home. After Jesus had laid out on His side before the low table, a woman entered and began to wash and moisturize the Lord's feet (which would have been sticking out, away from the table).

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<sup>28</sup> Can you tell that I used to be a teacher?

Simon kept looking at Jesus and looking at the woman, and he thought to himself, "If this Man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner." (Luke 7:39b; ESV; capitalized)

Luke 7:44a Then turning toward the woman He said to Simon,...

All of this time, Jesus has been looking the other way, towards the table; and the woman is behind Him, weeping and washing His feet. Now that Simon is there, Jesus looks at the woman, but He continues speaking to Simon.

What Jesus is doing is a little trick that public lecturers sometimes use. You want to engage two (or more) people particularly in your lecture, but you are only going to speak to one of them. So, while speaking to one person, you look right at a different person. Both persons are instantly engaged.

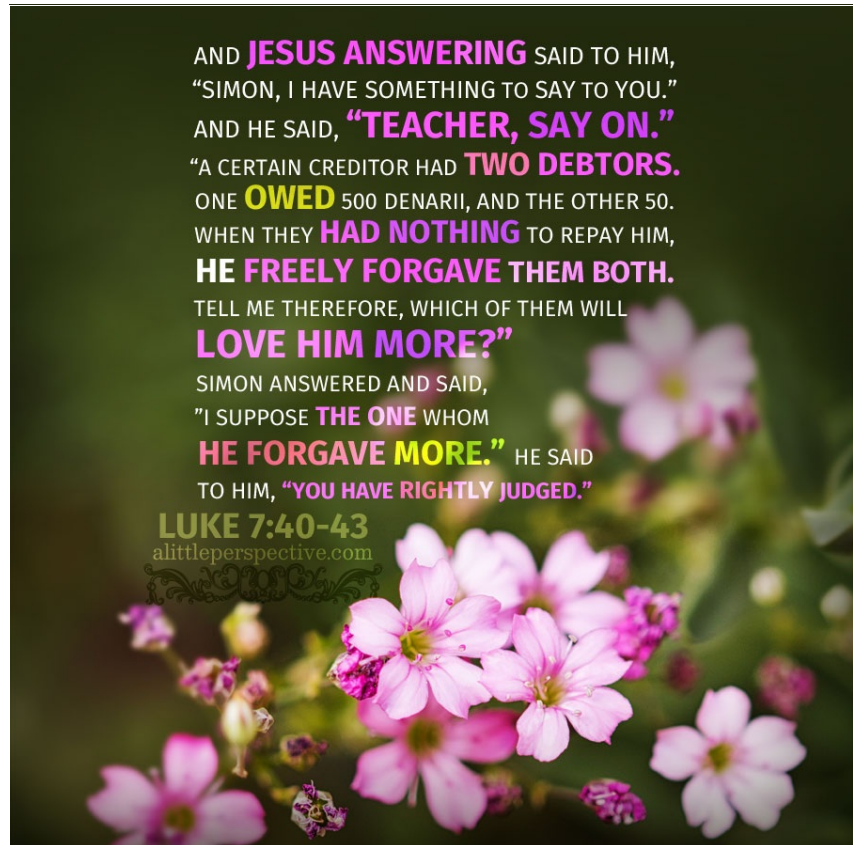
Simon has been looking at this woman and at Jesus; and Jesus knew what he was thinking. Jesus turns towards the woman, and then He speaks to Simon. Jesus is going to explain the parable to him.

Luke 7:44b ...*"Do you see this woman?"*

Nearly every translation states this as a question. As a declarative statement, Jesus points out that Simon keeps glancing at this woman.

Remember, I suggested that Jesus is very observant; and He certainly is noticing how Simon keeps looking at this woman.

The CEV translates this: *Have you noticed this woman?* That is the understatement of the year, is it not? The BV translated this in this way: *Do you see this woman?* Of course Simon has seen this woman; he may have asked her to leave his home, had she not been



tending to Jesus. This woman is where Simon has focused most of his attention. Remember what he said (to himself)? “If this man were really a prophet, He’d know what kind of woman this is.”

It is certainly possible that Simon has moved closer to Jesus, to observe this spectacle of this questionable woman washing his feet. Was he there to say something to Jesus about her, was he going to say something in Jesus’ ear, as soon as he decided upon something very clever to say? I think he had the right thing to say loaded and ready to go. He just needed to wait for Jesus to set him up.

Jesus tells Simon, “You keep looking at this woman.” Although this is an observation, Jesus is not telling him to stop looking at the woman. Jesus is focusing Simon’s attention on the woman. The verb is *blepō* (βλέπω) [pronounced *BLEHP-oh*], and it is not staring at someone or taking in the big picture, but it is a glance; it means *to notice*. The present tense would be the iterative present, where Simon keeps looking over at her. So, he looks at Jesus, but then his eyes veer towards this woman behind Him. The movement of his eyes cannot help but be noticed by the Lord.

Literally, v. 44a-b reads: Jesus [lit., He], having turned towards the woman, declared to Simon, “You keep on looking at this woman.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

So Jesus looks at the woman, yet continues speaking to Simon. He makes a declarative statement: “You keep on glancing over at this woman.” Obviously, this is the case. Jesus has given this parable about the two debtors, and then He focuses attention on the woman (which is what Simon wanted<sup>29</sup>).

Jesus has much more to say at this point:

Luke 7:44c I entered your house;...

Jesus has entered Simon’s home as a guest. Simon did not just ask Jesus once or twice; he kept on asking until Jesus agreed. Yet, when Jesus shows up, Simon does not treat the Lord as a proper guest. There are certain acts of common courtesy often extended to one’s guest, but Simon did not do these things for Jesus.

At this point, Jesus will point out what Simon did not do and what this woman has done. There are three things which is common for a host to do on behalf of a guest. These three things, this pharisee neglected to do.

Luke 7:44d ...you gave me no water for My feet,...

“I’ve come into your home as a guest, yet you gave Me no water for My feet,” Jesus tell the pharisee.

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<sup>29</sup> Remember, he has a trump card to play.

These normal courtesies are usually seen to by the host. It is not inconceivable that this pharisee has performed these services for other guests. It was common in that era to provide water for a person's feet. They have been walking through the dirty and dusty streets; and upon entering into a home, it was very common to give a guest water with which to clean his feet. Often, servants would be employed to wash the feet of guests.

Furthermore, the feet was not just dirty and dusty from walking on the streets, but there were no proper restrooms in that era. People pissed against walls; and if they defecated into a bowl at home, then the contents of that container were often just thrown out of a window and onto the street. So a person's sandals and feet were quite filthy and even smelly. Can you imagine inviting a number of guests for a dinner party, and all of them have filth—smelly filth—on their sandals? Do you see how that does not really play well in polite society? Yet, Simon ignored this basic courtesy, at least with regards to the Lord (it would have been insulting if Simon tended to the needs of the other guests, but not Jesus).

This suggests to us that, Jesus is not really the honored guest at Simon's house. Simon is not particularly happy even to see Jesus there, even though he invited Jesus on many occasions. Jesus is there so that Simon can keep an eye on Him; take the measure of this Man. Jesus is there under the principle, *keep your friends close and keep your enemies closer*. So it did not occur to Simon to treat Jesus as he would have treated a valued guest in his home. In this, he gives himself away.

Luke 7:44e ...but she has wet My feet with her tears...

Then Jesus gives a contrast between Simon and the woman. This woman, at whom Simon is now staring, has been washing the Lord's feet with her tears. It is hard to imagine how many tears this woman has shed to allow for that.

Luke 7:44f ...and wiped them with her hair.

Jesus points out that, to wipe His feet dry, she has used her own hair.

Those in the ancient world had few possessions. This woman clearly has it in her mind exactly what she is going to do for the Lord, as she has come there with a container of alabaster. What she lacks is a cloth towel of some sort. For some of us, towels are about as common as rocks; but she apparently does not have anything like that. Any manufactured thing was rare in that era.

So the woman has washed the Lord's feet with her tears, wiped them clean with her hair; and then applied an expensive, perfumed lotion. By this, the woman reveals great humility and devotion to the Lord.

Luke 7:44 Then turning toward the woman He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

Jesus points out to Simon, “You have repeatedly asked Me to come to your home for a meal, and so I am here. But, when I entered, you did have see to it that a servant washed My feet or put oil on them. But this woman—whom you keep on looking at—has seen to this common courtesy.”

Luke 7:45a *You gave me no kiss,...*

It was common, in that era, to greet a guest with a kiss. This was a sign of social affection and regard. The pharisee did not do this. This was the second thing that a host would have given to an honored guest. However, Simon did not greet Jesus with a kiss.

This is one of the many places where we concern ourselves with a very literal translation and a translation for our times. I have guests over to my home on occasion. I never kiss any of them—particularly not the guys, even if they are very close friends of mine. But I do greet them and I am happy to see them. So, some translations, instead of rendering this literally, as, *You have not given Me a kiss*; they render this, instead, *A friendly gesture you did not give Me* (BV); or, *you did not even give Me a cordial greeting at the door* (I just made that one up). Interestingly enough, most translations—even the less than literal ones—put the *kiss* into their translation. The Voice does a nice job with this, including the word *kiss*, but also suggesting that this was an ancient custom: *You didn’t give Me a customary kiss of greeting and welcome*. The Translation for Translators also does a nice job with this: *You did not follow our custom of greeting by kissing me, but since I came in, this woman has not stopped kissing my feet!* (When they use italics, it means that these words are not found in the original languages.)

However, can you see how some might take this? They might read about this kissing thing and think, *Hell, I need to start kissing my guests when they come to my door—that is what the Bible is telling me to do. In fact, these are the very words of Jesus!* Actually, I do not know anyone who has taken this verse in this way, so this allows me to illustrate a point without stepping on anyone’s toes: just because something is in the Bible and even if Jesus appears to be in favor of that behavior, this does not mean we should be practicing that behavior. We need to consider the time and place; and the dispensation in which an event takes place.

We interpret Scripture in its historical context in order to understand what is being said and done. However, that does not mean that we need to start employing these ancient gestures again. We do not organize a dinner party, with a low table and people laying on one side all around the table. Nobody is washing anyone’s feet, and only on occasion, are there kisses at such an event. Do not confuse the culture of that day with desired Christian behavior.

There is one very odd thing which is practiced today—and I have all but given up with setting people straight on this—it is the habit of writing *G-d* rather than *God* (in this age of the internet, I don’t know if they pronounce the word any differently). Anyway, I see that writing *God* without the vowel and I think to myself, *are you flipping kidding me?* It is the most nonsensical thing I have seen (I realize this is a petty thing).



One of the explanations which I was given was, *someone might write “God” on a piece of paper and then that paper fall to the ground and it gets stepped on*. Somehow, if this happens, but the word *G-d* is written instead, that is somehow better? But that is a particular group of Christians (there are several groups who do this) who take a weird practice from the past (*not* sanctioned by Scripture in any way) and bring it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century—and to what purpose? Do they not say *God* when speaking about Him? Why is it okay to speak His Name, but not write it out? There is no Biblical support for this whatsoever. The Hebrew word for God (Elohim) and the Greek word for God (Theos) are always fully spelled out in the Scriptures, including the vowels—with no exceptions. Now, at the first, the original Hebrew was written without vowels—and this extended to every single word.

So, how did this odd practice get its start? Very early on, when someone in the synagogue stood up to speak, he was given a scroll written in Hebrew, and that scroll had no vowels on it (and no spaces). But he understood what the words all were and when he spoke these words aloud, he pronounced all of them with the vowels. However, when he came to the proper name YHWH, he did not say *Y<sup>e</sup>howah* (or *Yahweh* or *Jehovah*), but he said *Adonai* instead, essentially inserting the word *Lord* instead of speaking aloud the proper name for God. There is nothing in the Bible saying that this is what believers should be doing; the Jews just started doing that. After saying *Adonai* instead of *YHWH* for many generations, people literally forgot how to pronounce God’s holy Name (the words *Y<sup>e</sup>howah* or *Yahweh* or *Jehovah* are attempts at approximating this pronunciation). We no longer know which vowels go in between those four consonants so we do not know exactly how God’s name was supposed to be pronounced (I think that *Y<sup>e</sup>howah* is the best educated guess).

So, to sum it all up, *all* words in the Hebrew were originally written without vowels. However, when it came to *speaking* the words of the Old Testament, the Jews decided to say *Adonai* instead of *JHWH* (and so, they *forgot* how to pronounce *JHWH*). Somehow, based upon this, various groups of believers now write *G-d* instead of *God*. So, if you can follow that, there is not even a parallel situation being practiced here.

So, out of a weird sort of reverence, people are trying to copy that ancient tradition with their writing. Understanding why this is being done makes almost no sense at all; but people take something from the previous Jewish culture and incorrectly insert it into today’s life. This reveals very sloppy scholarship and a trend toward legalism.

So, this is my very roundabout way of saying, you do not need to start kissing fellow Christians, even though Jesus seems to favor that sort of behavior. That would be goofy. The bigger point is, just because you read about something in the gospels or in Acts, that does not mean that you are called upon to imitate that thing.

Back to the narrative at hand:

Luke 7:45b ...but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss My feet.

So, by custom, Simon, the host, would have given Jesus, the honored guest, a kiss of some sort (read this as a *warm greeting*); but he did not do this. On the other hand, this woman has not stopped kissing the Lord's feet since she entered into the home. Simon simply did not view Jesus as a valued guest, let alone as his Savior. Simon showed no respect or honor or affection toward the Lord. But this grateful woman has not stopped kissing the Lord's feet.

Luke 7:45 **You gave Me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss My feet.**

This is the second social faux pas of the pharisee's—he did not greet Jesus with a kiss. Now, it is not that this pharisee does not know any etiquette; he simply did not practice it with Jesus.

Luke 7:46a **You did not anoint My head with oil,...**

Another common custom of that era was to anoint a person's head with olive oil. Simon did not do this (item #3 which he chose not to do for the Guest he had petitioned many times to come to his home).

Luke 7:46b **...but she has anointed My feet with ointment.**

However, this woman has been anointing the Lord's feet with oil from the beginning. She stepped into Simon's house, went over to Jesus, and she washed and massaged His feet using very expensive ointment. This perfumed ointment was probably the most expensive thing that she owned.

Luke 7:46 **You did not anoint My head with oil, but she has anointed My feet with ointment.**

Simon behaves as the worst possible host; and yet, he is critical of this woman, who has done the things which were, culturally speaking, expected of him.

Luke 7:45–46 **Listen, Simon, I've been in your home for 15 minutes now, and you have not given Me a kiss; but from the moment I entered into your home, she has not stopped kissing My feet. I came into your home with dirty feet, and you did not have a servant wash them. However, she is washing my feet with her tears and wiping them off with her hair. You have not bothered to anoint My head with olive oil; but she has anointed my feet with perfumed ointment. (Kukis paraphrase)**

Simon the pharisee invited the Lord to come to his home for a meal, but when Jesus arrives, Simon did nothing whatsoever in order to make Jesus feel comfortable or welcome. Simon's attitude and lack of attention make it appear as if Jesus is a party crasher, when He was, in fact, invited (many times). So you see, there is this great parallel here, between how the religious crowd has treated the Lord with how Simon was treating Him.

What is taking place here is very illustrative. Simon, a pharisee, should have recognized the Guest he had invited many times and treated him with honor and respect. This he did not do.

The Jewish religious types, who should know the Messiah when He appears, do not. In fact, the Jewish religious hierarchy, when they should be welcoming their Messiah with open arms, they act as if they do not know Him. Their religious traditions and their place in society is important to them. When the actual Messiah appears, He is not seen as an honored guest but treated as a party-crashing interloper.

Luke 7:47a **Therefore I tell you,...**

Now, Jesus sums up what He has been teaching. This now moves away from the parable to the conclusion as it relates to what Simon, the pharisee, is seeing. I would suggest that everyone there is now watching and carefully listening to the Lord. They know something about the woman; they know what they have seen; and they have heard the parable.

Quite obviously, because this has been placed into the Word of God, it has reached a massive audience of billions.

Luke 7:47b **...her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much.**

This woman has been pardoned for many sins, so she loves the Lord a great deal in response. This woman who is being used by Jesus to teach Simon (and all those who are listening). Simon has no gratitude to the Lord, and his social actions reveal this fact.

We have to be careful in how we interpret this. This woman is not forgiven for this service to Jesus. Her sins are not forgiven because she has cleaned the Lord's feet with her tears or massaged them with expensive oils. She does these things in recognition of Who Jesus is. *Because* she knows Who Jesus is and because she has believed in Him, that is why her sins are forgiven. It is her faith which has saved her, not her actions. Her actions simply reveal the content of her soul.

As an aside, I should point out that we do not really know who this woman is. Mary will—future from this time—use some very expensive ointment on the Lord (about which Judas will complain). Matthew, Mark and John will record this second similar incident.

When it came to the writing of the gospels, I believe that Mark's was first, then Matthew's and then Luke's (John wrote his decades later).

It is very possible that Luke had the gospels of Matthew and Mark when he wrote his gospel. However, no attempt is made by Luke to square this narrative of the woman honoring the Lord with the narrative found in Matthew and Mark. I believe that Luke's primary sources were people whom he interviewed who were actually there at these various incidents.

**Luke 7:47b (Christian Standard Bible)** (a graphic); from [She Reads Truth](https://www.she-reads-truth.com); accessed July 21, 2022.

Luke 7:47c **But he who is forgiven little, loves little.**"

A person who does not believe that he has much to be pardoned for, has a very mild response of gratitude.

What Jesus does not say is, "I am talking to you, Simon. The woman knows she needs to be forgiven for her many sins; and you, Simon, are too stupid to know that you need forgiveness as well." We are able to get that from the context and from the parable that the Lord told.



Simon, a pharisee, does not see himself as a sinner. He follows the Law, he offers up sacrifices, and he obeys the many Jewish traditions. So, in his mind, he has no need to be forgiven—and least of all from Jesus.

Luke 7:47 **Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.**"

It is a fascinating thing to me, how this woman and the pharisee Simon have both seen Jesus; they know what He has been doing (healing, restoring sight to the blind, casting out demons), and yet, they both have entirely different attitudes towards Him. The woman recognizes that Jesus is her Savior and to Him she owes all; and Simon is, at best, curious about Jesus; at worst, looking to deal with Jesus as an important enemy.

When studying the book of Exodus, both Moses and Pharaoh see the mighty signs of God; and further, the people of Israel and the people of Egypt see these same signs. Moses believes that these signs/plagues are of God; and it is hard to determine what Pharaoh thought—however, he clearly gave no deference to the God of Moses. Even though these plagues broke Pharaoh, when he regathered his strength, he was negative towards God once again.

Consider the people of Israel and the people of Egypt. They suffered the first 3 sets of plagues together; the Hebrew people trusted in their God; the Egyptian people recognized



the power of their God, but did not want to know Him. With each additional plague, the people of Egypt decided to take their chances rather than to agree to God's terms.

It boils down to this: some people want to know God and some do not.

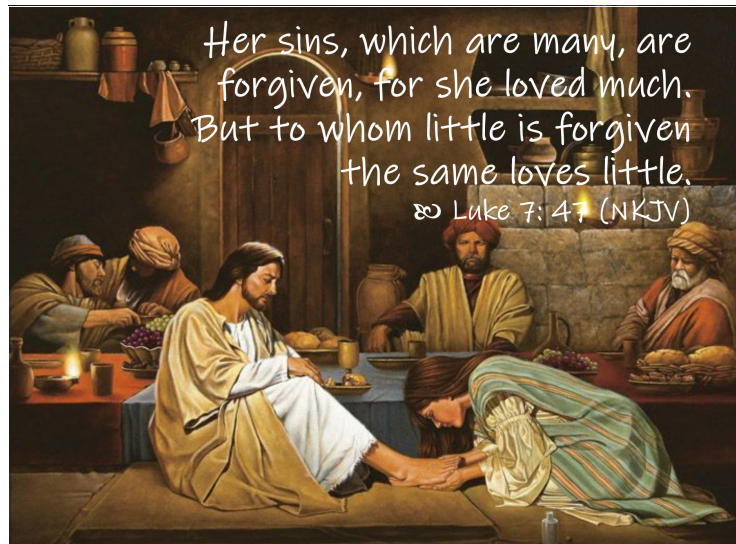
Luke 7:47 (Jesus is speaking to Simon) Regarding such a person, I tell you how it is: "Because she has been pardoned for her many sins, so she loves much; regarding one who had very little to pardon, that one loves little as well." (Kukis paraphrase)

Even to this point, I don't know that Simon realizes that Jesus is contrasting him and this woman in the parable, which she knows she needs forgiveness and he does not.

**Luke 7:47 (NKJV)** (a graphic); from [Wellspring Christian Ministries](http://Wellspring Christian Ministries); accessed July 21, 2022

Luke 7:48 And He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

Jesus can legitimately forgive this woman's sins, as He is her Savior. However, not everyone at a pharisee party is going to understand this fact.

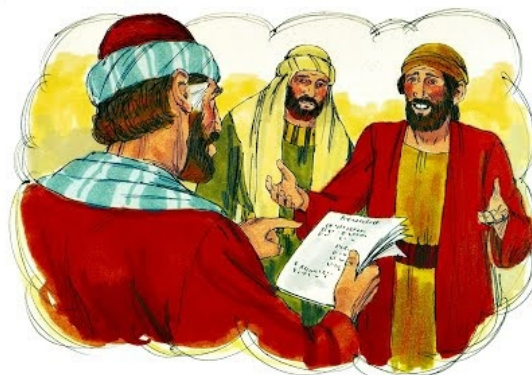


## Lessons 222–223: Luke 7:48–50

## Jesus Forgives Sins/The Parallel Incident

We have been studying Jesus as having been invited to the house of Simon the pharisee for a meal. Jesus goes to the dinner, and, at some point, this woman comes to Him and washes His feet with her tears, and she wipes His feet with her hair. Then she applies expensive oils to His feet.

Simon knows what sort of woman this is, and he thinks to himself that Jesus is no prophet, or He would have avoided contact with such a woman.



Jesus, picking up on Simon's interest in this woman, has shown to Simon (and his other guests) how he has slighted Jesus socially, whereas this woman has gone all in. Jesus

then gave the parable of the two debtors and explained briefly how that applied to this situation.

**The Two Debtors** (a graphic); from [My Treasure Box](#); accessed January 13, 2023.

All of this time, Simon is questioning Jesus for His lack of perception (in Simon's eyes). Does He not know who this woman is. But does Simon really understand the parable Jesus just gave? Isn't he the one who lacks perception?

Simon would not fully appreciate the parable until Jesus says one more thing (and this may have been for the benefit of others who were there, because who there truly understood what Jesus has said?).

In any case, Jesus then says something which Simon and his other guests will find quite provocative:

Luke 7:48 **And He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."**

When Jesus says this, everyone's ears perk up. What did He just say?

Those who are there at this dinner are quite taken back by Jesus saying, "Your sins are forgiven." The Greek allows for them to either speak *within themselves* or *among themselves*. I believe that what Jesus said here is of such significance, the guests spoke out loud to one another.

Luke 7:49a **Then those who were at table with Him began to say among themselves,...**

These people at dinner are watching all of this take place. Surely, most of the guests are pharisees and other religious types. The particular question that they will ask is indicative of what a religious crowd would say to one another.

However, no matter who is there, certainly this statement by Jesus would become the topic of conversation.

Because the pronoun here is reflexive, this probably reads *within themselves*. So, more than one person is thinking this same thought—in fact, very likely, most of them there are thinking this thought. But they are not necessarily speaking this aloud.

There is certainly the possibility that they talked with one another, but I think that is less likely. No one appears to directly challenge Jesus. They do not seem to discuss this first and then approach Jesus as a group or 2 or 3 or more. I believe that Jesus is quite new to them at this time. This is the first year of the Lord's ministry and many of these people are seeing and meeting Jesus for the first time. The people there, although they appear to know that they disapprove of Him, they don't know exactly why yet. Furthermore, they are still not sure exactly what to say or how to approach Him. What He has just done seems like it is wrong; but they do not confront Him with what they are thinking—not yet.



Remember, although Simon did not treat Jesus as a proper guest, he did invite the Lord, over and over, to sup with him. So, I believe that this was mostly a fact-finding mission. The people knew that something was wrong—they assume, of course, that it is Jesus Who is wrong. But they are not quite ready to confront Him directly.

The question which they ask—and is it to one another or are they all just thinking this same thing?

Luke 7:49b ...**"Who is This, Who even forgives sins?"**

This is certainly a reasonable question to ask. Who can simply forgive sins? Even the experts of the Law ought to be able to say, "Is it not God alone Who can forgive sins?"

Interestingly enough, they might not be expressing this thought to one another, as they just observed their host clearly upbraided by this Man for some serious social faux pas. They knew that Jesus was right about their host; but can He really forgive sins?

Jesus being there apparently began a number of inner dialogues.

Luke 7:49 **Then those who were at table with Him began to say among themselves, "Who is This, Who even forgives sins?"**

Because of the reflexive pronoun, others have translated this: **And those reclining with Him began to say within themselves, Who is this who even forgives sins?** (Green's literal translation)

Daniel Webster, A Faithful Version, the Analytical-Literal Translation, the Berean Literal Bible and others present v. 49 in the same way—that the dialogue given was an inner dialogue at the time.

It is possible that no one spoke these words aloud, but that they all thought them. If that is the case, how do we know this? How did Jesus know this? Those are two very different questions.

First question: How did Luke know this? Someone, not Jesus, told Luke about this incident and he wrote about it. So, someone other than Jesus, was there and able to pick up on what was taking place inside the guests (their inner dialogues, as it were). There are two possibilities, as I see it. Jesus was accompanied by a disciple, and he picked up on it. Although this is possible, given the time which has passed, the disciples were not known for being the sharpest tools in the shed (logically, Matthew would have been an exception to this). Given who the disciples were, I don't think that is what happened. I think that, of these religious types who were there, some of them believed in Jesus (I would suggest that most of the guests would have been religious types, given that Simon was a pharisee). That person would have know what he himself was thinking; and there may have been some conversations which took place there after this incident (how could there not be?).

Second question: How did Jesus know this? Jesus, on a number of occasions, was intentionally provocative, nearly always when dealing with religious types. He was dealing with thicker scar tissue. The woman, for instance, had no scar tissue on her soul with regards to Jesus; she knew about Him and went right to Him. She understood who she was; and she understood Who He was.

On the other hand, the religious types would have been building up scar tissue on their souls against Jesus—even during that short period of time that He is there as a guest. We know by what Simon did not do for Jesus as a guest is indicative of his negative volition. Negative volition toward Jesus builds up scar tissue on the soul, making it more difficult for a person to see the truth. Jesus breaks through that scar tissue (potentially) by saying provocative things (such as, “**Your sins are forgiven**”). This challenges them at a greater level than the scar tissue is on their souls.

I have mention scar tissue several times, so I should define this term.

This is a very early working of this doctrine. I have added a few explanatory sentences.

### **Scar tissue of the Soul (R. B. Thieme, Jr.)**

1. The mind, according to Ephesians 4:23, actually breaths. The word for “mind” emphasizes the function of the left lobe as a processor of doctrine; it is a staging area, not the final resting place of Bible doctrine. The left lobe has a processor which is called “breathing” and this implies the existence of lungs. The intake and the output of doctrine would be comparable to physiological breathing. Therefore, the definition “hardness of the heart” or “scar tissue of the mind” is the blackout of the left lobe resulting in the hardness of the right lobe.
2. Mechanics. The malfunction of the grace apparatus for perception through negative volition causes a vacuum to open up in the left lobe, as per Ephesians 4:17. The left lobe is attacked by the opening of μάταιος (μάταιος) [pronounced *MAT-ah-yoss*], which is a vacuum that is opened up when negative volition towards God is expressed. Through this vacuum comes doctrines of demons and other types of Satanic propaganda which cause the blackout of the soul. At the time of the blackout of the soul the reversionistic believer lives under the intensification of reactor factors, emotional revolt, frantic search for happiness, and all of these things open up the μάταιος (μάταιος) [pronounced *MAT-ah-yoss*] (the vacuum of the soul). The result is the blackout of the soul which invariably causes scar tissue to form on the right lobe.
3. Illustrations:
  - a. First of all the illustration which is based upon a frantic search for happiness through the trend toward lasciviousness — Ephesians 4:19; 5:3.
  - b. A second illustration is found in 1John 2:9,11 — the function of mental attitude sins. With the blackout of the soul and the hardness of the heart it is impossible to avoid the repercussions of mental attitude sins — for instance, those of Hymenaeus and Alexander, 1Timothy 1:20.
4. Scar tissue and the reversionistic believer. The reversionistic believer develops scar tissue in the right lobe of the soul called the heart. It is built up on the basis

## Scar tissue of the Soul (R. B. Thieme, Jr.)

- of the fact that there is a blackout in the left lobe.
5. Scar tissue and the unbeliever.
- a. The reversionistic unbeliever accumulates scar tissue or suffers from the hardness of the heart — 2Thessalonians 2:10-12, where it is called strong delusion.
  - b. He is also found in 2Peter 2:22 where he is described as the dog returning to his vomit.
  - c. However, scar tissue in the unbeliever or hardness of heart is removed at salvation — Isaiah 43:25; 44:22. For the unbeliever who remains in hardness of heart or strong delusion there is total disaster. One of the best illustrations in scripture is Judas Iscariot and his suicide which is described in great detail in Matthew 27:3-10. He became very emotional, felt sorry for what he had done, made restitution, and wound up committing suicide. The Pharaoh of Exodus is another illustration. The solution to scar tissue or hardness of the heart is the same in both cases. For the unbeliever it is response to the gospel by faith in Christ and for the believer it is reversion recovery through the intake of doctrine.

This was taken from R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s 1972 Ephesian Series, Lesson #59. A few explanatory comments were inserted.

Let's go back to what Jesus is about to say, which will possibly reach through the scar tissue to a few of these religious types. What Jesus says to the woman perfectly intersects with the debtor parable which He just said. "There are two men in debt; one with a great debt, the other with a small debt. When the debt-holder forgives their debt, which man is the most grateful?" Obviously, the man furthest in debt.

Here is what has to come to the mind of the religious types there. Simon the pharisee is the debtor who owes very little (in his own mind); and this woman, whom he sees as being very unclear, is the debtor who owes a great deal. Did those hearing this parable get that? Possibly. But there is one more very important detail—something which you and I, as believers in Jesus Christ might get immediately—but a detail that the religious types might not grasp quite yet. Who are the two debtors indebted to? They are indebted to is Jesus. Jesus is the One holding their debts. This would have been very difficult for a religious person to get. But then Jesus said exactly what was needed to drive this point home:

Luke 7:48 **And He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."**

Jesus has just told them, "I AM holding the debt. I forgive you"

We understand what Jesus is saying. He has paid our debt by taking on our sins on the cross; and so our debt is forgiven in Him. This would be a future event from this dinner party; but Jesus paves the way with this statement:

Luke 7:48 **And He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."**

What Jesus says here is a dramatic declaration. Even if they fully understand the debtor parable now, can they believe it?

This leads these religious types to this question:

Luke 7:49 **Then those who were at table with Him began to say among themselves, "Who is This, Who even forgives sins?"**

Jesus would pay for those sins; and therefore, He holds the debts.

We may take this for granted, but this, combined with the parable, is a combination of thoughts that could possibly pierce the scar tissue buildup on the souls of some of these religious men. **"Who is This, Who even forgives sins?"**

Jesus apparently leaves them to sort this out for themselves.

Luke 7:50a **And He said to the woman,...**

At this point, everyone is focused upon Jesus, based upon what He just said, although it does not appear as if these people are speaking aloud or formally objecting to what Jesus has just said. Given all that has been said, even though Jesus now speaks directly to this woman, while everyone's attention is upon Him.

Jesus hears and knows what is going on around Him; and He knows of these quiet conversations at table (or He knows what they are thinking). No one had to say anything out loud. They could simply be looking at one another with feigned shock or with eyes looking heavenward. Jesus is able to look at the men there and figure out what they are thinking. In fact, He spurs such controversies as these on purpose.

People build up scar tissue on their souls for a variety of reasons. One of those reasons is religion. Jesus has to say something strong enough to cut through that scar tissue, and put them in a position to think about what they are seeing and hearing.

What Jesus will say to the woman is meant to be heard by the others, although He is clearly speaking to the woman and for her sake.

Luke 7:50b **..."Your faith has saved you;...**

Jesus makes it clear that this woman is not forgiven because she performs this service for the Lord (washing and moisturizing His feet). She is forgiven because of her faith. There is no honor that we could bestow upon the Lord to earn our salvation.

This woman has not come for a healing; she has come to honor her Lord. She recognizes Who Jesus is. She has placed her faith in Jesus. Therefore, Jesus tells her, "Your faith has saved you."

Even though the gospel of John is known for its many statements that faith in Christ gives you salvation; this same message is found throughout the Bible and in the other gospels.

Luke 7:50c *...go in peace.*"

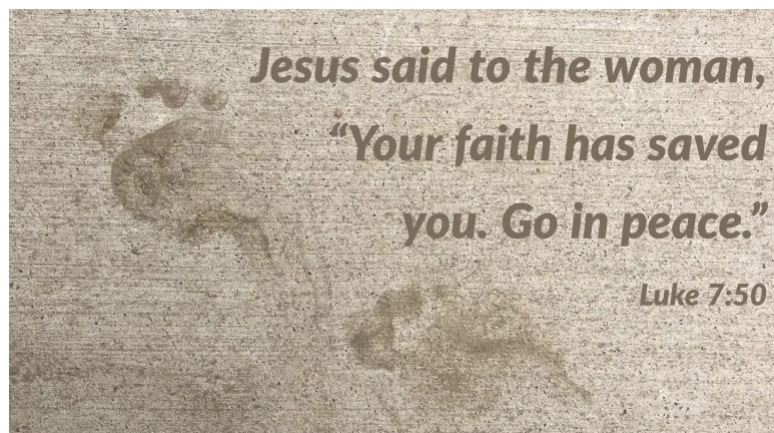
I realize that most translations read, *Go in peace*; but the word is *eis* here rather than *en*. We can understand this to mean, *to, toward; into; unto, in order to, for, for the purpose of, for the sake of, on account of*. The word *peace* is *eirênê* (εἰρήνη, ης, ῆ) [pronounced *eye-RAY-nay*], and it means *peace, harmony, order, welfare*. The peace spoke of most often in the Bible is *peace between man and God*, which is the *peace* which matters most. As unbelievers, we are at war with God; we are against God (this is our natural state). We stand condemned and our only hope is to have our sins forgiven. Through Christ, our sins are forgiven.

Luke 7:50c paraphrased: *...go toward a life marked by a peace between you and God.*"

**Luke 7:50 (NIV)** (a graphic); from [Verse Images](#); accessed July 21, 2022.

Luke 7:50 *And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."*

One minor thing we might want to clear up. When Jesus is telling this woman to go, it does not mean that Jesus is saying, "You're saved, now go away and stay away." But, saying, "Go" suggests that it was best for her to leave the house and, perhaps, to reevaluate her life. Or perhaps He is saying, "You are free to go now," as she goes back out into the world as a forgiven woman. In any case, she now has peace with God.



Luke 7:50 *Finally, Jesus said directly to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go now, on account of peace established between you and God."* (Kukis paraphrase)

This closes out Luke 7. I should point out that there are some similar passages to this last incident in the other gospels.

It is easy to confound what we have studied in Luke with what takes place much later in the Lord's public ministry.

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The ESV; capitalized is used below.

### **Similar Passages (Matthew 26:6–13 Mark 14:3–9 John 12:1–8)**

This incident in Luke that we have studied takes place in the home of Simon the pharisee, who brought Jesus into his home not as a devoted follower, but as an antagonistic pharisee. This appears to have taken place early in the Lord's ministry.

This other incident given below (the one recorded by Matthew, Mark and John) takes place at Simon the Leper's home, late in the Lord's ministry. The woman is named, the disciples figure prominently into this narrative, and it is considerably shorter.

Also, there is no parable given, because the parable found in Luke 7 is directed toward religious men. That is not the crowd with Jesus for this second incident.

Matthew, Peter (the source for Mark's gospel) and John are all Apostles of Jesus. They would have remembered the incident that follows because they were all there. Luke is the odd man out here, as he is a gentile, and he gathered these narratives from various people (which may or may not have included the disciples). Many of his narratives take place where no disciples are involved (the incident that we just studied probably involved no disciples).

Nevertheless, we have two very similar incidents.

Matt. 26:6–7 Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came up to Him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on His head as He reclined at table.

Matt. 26:8–9 And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor."

Matt. 26:10–13 But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to Me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have Me. In pouring this ointment on My body, she has done it to prepare Me for burial. Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her."

What is similar is, Jesus is reclined at table, meaning this was going to be a meal. The hosts of this meal are both named Simon.

What really stands out in Matthew's gospel is, just how much the disciples object to what they see. The pharisees and other religious types know what kind of woman it was who bathed the Lord's feet with tears. Here, the concern of the disciples is, "Isn't that lotion expensive? Is it really right to waste it like this?"

Obviously, what Jesus says to the woman here is very different from what He said in Luke 7.

Let's take a look at Peter's memory of this incident:



## Similar Passages (Matthew 26:6–13 Mark 14:3–9 John 12:1–8)

Mark 14:3 And while He was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as He was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over His head.

Mark 14:4–5 There were some who said to themselves indignantly, "Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they scolded her.

Mark 14:6–9 But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to Me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have Me. She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for burial. And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

The parallel passages of Matthew and Mark, by their locations in the two gospels, clearly take place during the final week before the crucifixion. The plotting of the pharisees to arrest and kill the Lord are taking place right before this incident is recorded. Judas' betrayal of the Lord occurs right after (in two of the gospels).

Obviously, the disciples scold this woman, their self-righteous attitudes working overtime.

John appears to record the same incident as is found in Matthew and Mark, but with some important additional information:

John 12:1–3 Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So they gave a dinner for Him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with Him at table. Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

John 12:4–6 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray Him), said, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.

John 12:7–8 Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial. For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have Me."

John tells us that this is Mary and she did more than pour the costly ointment over the Lord's head.

We find out that the most indignant disciple is Judas (who is about to betray Jesus), and he claims the big problem is, this money could be given to the poor. But he is only saying this because he would like to be the one holding that additional cash.

In John 11:2, we read: It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was [previously] ill.

### **Similar Passages (Matthew 26:6–13 Mark 14:3–9 John 12:1–8)**

We do not know whether John was looking backward to the incident in Luke or he identifies Mary here and then records the actual incident in John 12:1–8. It would not be impossible for Mary to have done this twice to the Lord. It is also possible that these incidents in John are not recorded in chronological order (John would have been least likely to record his gospel in chronological order).

Having referred to Mary in John 11:2, John may have decided, in the next chapter to talk about that incident. It is also possible that John is speaking of the incident that we studied from 2 or 3 years previous (and he may be thinking about it, as he wants to record this other incident).

Although there are clearly two different incidents being portrayed here, we do not know whether Mary is the person applying the oils in both accounts (she clearly is in the second account).

### **Lessons 224–226: Luke 7:1–50**

### **A Review of Luke 7**

A Review of Luke 7 (in 3 lessons)

The Berean Literal Bible is used for this section.

### **Preface to the Berean Literal Bible**

Now the Bereans were more noble-minded than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if these teachings were true. – Acts 17:11

The Berean Bible is a completely new translation of the Holy Bible, based on the best available manuscripts and sources. Each word is connected back to the Greek or Hebrew text, resulting in a transparent and honest text that can be studied for its root meanings.

The Berean Study Bible text is the result of a meticulous translation and styling process to maintain core meanings and produce an English text of high literary quality, effective for public reading, study, memorization, and evangelism.

Additionally, we believe that the Scriptures are meant to be studied and shared freely. Just as Paul encouraged the churches to pass on his letters, we are developing digital resources that will be free to access and free to share in websites, apps and software.

From Berean Literal Bible Information found with the e-sword application.

There are actually several Berean Bibles (I am aware of 3 off the top of my head).

### **The Four Berean Bibles:**

1. An interlinear Bible to directly follow the Greek and Hebrew texts.
2. A literal translation to take the reader to the core of the Greek and Hebrew meanings.
3. A modern English translation, effective for public reading, memorization, and evangelism.
4. An emphasized translation to bring out the full meaning and intensity of the original texts.

We are using #2 for these lessons.

I believe that #4 is not yet released and currently being worked on.

From Berean Literal Bible Information found with the e-sword application.

This is the specific version being used in this lesson.

### **Berean Literal Bible**

The second step in the translation process was the development of a word for word English word order text with the following features:

1. Parts of speech match as closely as possible in translation from Greek to English.
2. Tense, mood, and voice of verbs are maintained as closely as possible.
3. All tags from the interlinear are maintained so that the word for word translation can be connected back to each element of the original text.
4. Gender is translated to be consistent with the original sources (This is also maintained in the Interlinear, Study, and Emphasized Bibles).
5. Pronouns that represent Deity are capitalized for clearer study of difficult passages (This format is maintained from the Interlinear through to the Study and Emphasized Bibles).
6. Sentence structure is maintained so that, in general, the flow of the longer Greek sentences is not interrupted in the translation to the literal version.

From Berean Literal Bible Information found with the e-sword application.

An Outline for Luke 7 (most of these are the headings found in e-sword)

vv. 1–10	<a href="#"><u>Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant</u></a>
vv. 11–17	<a href="#"><u>Jesus Raises a Widow's Son</u></a>
vv. 18–23	<a href="#"><u>Messengers from John the Baptist</u></a>
vv. 24–35	<a href="#"><u>Jesus' Salute to John the baptizer</u></a>
vv. 36–50	<a href="#"><u>A Sinful Woman Forgiven</u></a>

Luke 7, like the last few chapters, is a series of vignettes which take place early on during the Lord's ministry (let me suggest within the first year). However, there seems to be a theme in chapter 7. So much of it is a contrast between various groups of people (and sometimes, between a single individual and a group of people). Key to all this, of course, is positive and negative volition.

### **Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant**

Jesus first responds to a centurion who asks Him to come and heal his servant (actually, the centurion sends some Jewish elders to make this request of Jesus).

Luke 7:1 **And when He had completed all His words in the hearing of the people, He entered into Capernaum.**

In the previous chapter, Jesus had just finished teaching the sermon on the plain.

Capernaum is located on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Although Jesus is God, this does not mean that He chose to access His attributes as God. This is known theologically as Kenosis, which is the willful relinquishment of divine attributes by Jesus. To have the best understanding of kenosis, it is best to work backwards from the cross. Jesus, as God, can have no contact with sin. God, therefore, cannot die for our sins. Jesus, as a man, had to live a sinless life and come to the cross without sin in order to bear our sins. Jesus, as a man, had to bear our sins on the cross; which meant that He endured the punishment due us for three hours on the cross. All of our sins and all of the sins of mankind were poured out upon Him in His humanity. At that point in time, He had no fellowship with God the Father; and He was no longer filled with God the Holy Spirit. When He screamed, **"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me,"** He was speaking to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. The sins of all mankind were poured out upon Him in that state of being.

We often conflate the suffering of the cross with the payment for our sins. The crucifixion was real but it was also illustrative of the torment which Jesus endured paying for our sins. Everything that we have heard about the pain and suffering of the Roman cross is true, and Jesus endured that pain and suffering. However, the pain and suffering from the crucifixion did not pay for our sins; it merely illustrated the payment which took place (which act of justice no one was able to see).

There was a period of three hours when God the Father poured out on Jesus the Son our sins. At the same time, He placed a blanket of darkness over Golgotha, so that this could be heard by the people there, but not seen. Jesus endured, in His humanity, the equivalence of billions of hells over those three hours on the cross.

If Jesus is able, in His humanity, to pay for our sins—a suffering which is unimaginable to us—then it logically follows that He did not require His Deity during the incarnation in order to grow from an infant to an adult, to live a sinless life, and to have a public ministry during

which He, just like the Passover Lamb, could be observed by nation Israel. Although Jesus is clearly God—by testimony of the Scriptures—this does not mean that He necessarily accessed His Deity during the 1<sup>st</sup> Advent.

So, when Jesus walks into a city like Capernaum, He does not know what is going to happen next. He does not know who will come to see Him, what situations will take place, or what He is required to do, apart from what He has read about Himself in the Scriptures.

Although, as a prophet, God the Holy Spirit will make some things known to Jesus the man, there is a great deal of information which Jesus understood from the Scriptures themselves. He knew Isaiah 53; He knew that this was about Him, and, as an informed Person, He knew about Roman crucifixion. At some point in time, He put the two things together, understanding that He would be crucified and, during that time, endure the punishment for our sins. He understood that, fundamental to the crucifixion would be taking on our punishment for our sins.

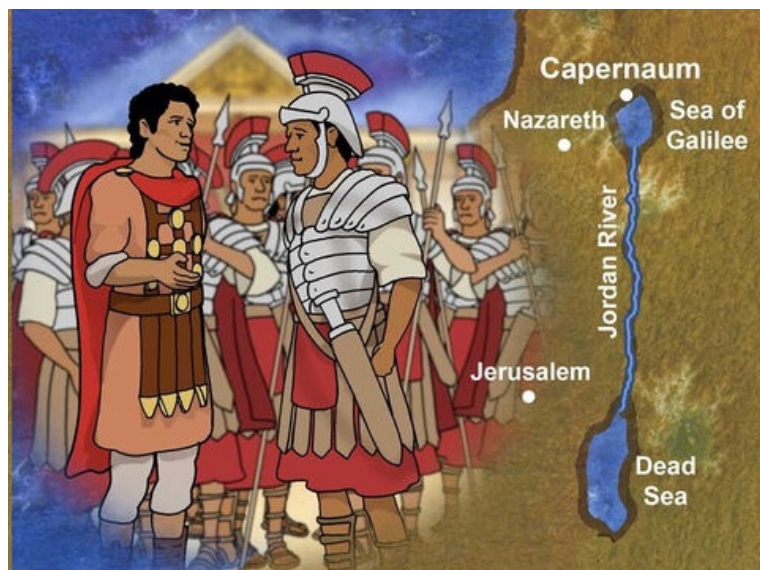
So Jesus walks into a city like Capernaum. He meets who He meets and decides, based on a number of factors, what He will do next (much the way that we live our own lives). Jesus' choice in these matters varies from person to person.

For instance, at the beginning of this chapter a centurion, a gentile, sends a delegation of Jewish elders to Jesus to make a request and Jesus responds immediately to this delegation. However, at the end of this chapter, Simon the pharisee will ask Jesus to come to his home for dinner on many occasions, and Jesus apparently puts Simon off. Jesus does not come to Simon's home after the first invite, but eventually agreed to the invitation. Jesus, during His public ministry, received thousands of requests; and He had to decide when to respond to which request (and what His response should be).

**Jesus and the Centurion's Servant** (a graphic); from [Free Bible Images](#); accessed July 29, 2022. Interestingly enough, it does not appear that these men actually met face to face.

Luke 7:2 **And a certain servant of a centurion, who was valued highly to him, being sick, was about to die.**

Luke, as a biographer, presents this information to us, using the writing style of 3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscience.





This is an event, foreseen by God the Father and incorporated into the divine decrees. God the Father knew about this event in eternity past and He made provision for it. The provision was His Son Jesus.

Luke 7:3 **And having heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, begging Him that having come, He might save his servant.**

This centurion is very much like the cop on the beat, the cop who walks his neighborhood and lives in his neighborhood. He knew the people there and had a particularly good relationship with the Jewish people who lived there.

The centurion understood that Jesus is a fulfillment to centuries of prophecies; the Messiah Who would come to His people. And this Messiah was in Capernaum. The centurion was aware of what Jesus was able to do, but he also understood that Jesus was there, coming into Capernaum, to minister to His people. So the centurion felt that it would be presumptuous for him to go to Jesus himself. Therefore, he sent a number of Jewish elders to speak with Jesus about his servant who is deathly ill.

Luke 7:4–5 **And having come to Jesus, they were begging Him earnestly, saying, “He is worthy to whom You will grant this, for he loves our nation, and he built the synagogue for us.”**

The Jewish elders make two appeals to Jesus. They first make the appeal of the centurion to come and save his servant. Then they make their own personal appeal on behalf of the centurion. “This centurion,” they tell Jesus, “is a worthy man, despite being a gentile. He loves our nation and he built the synagogue for us in Capernaum.”

The centurion may have built the synagogue from scratch or he may have repaired the existing synagogue (the word used here can mean *to build* or *to rebuild*).

Jesus, upon meeting any person or persons, then has to make a determination of what He will do about it. He decides to go with this group of Jewish elders. As a Man Who is able to read people, Jesus understood that these men were sincere in their plea.

**The Centurion and His Sick Servant** (a graphic); from [Free Bible Images](#); accessed July 29, 2022.





Luke 7:6 And Jesus was going with them. And already, He being not far distant from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, “Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should come under my roof.

All of this takes time—the discussion between Jesus and these Jewish elders and the walk toward the centurion’s home. All this time, the centurion is at the bedside of his servant—probably praying—and he comes to two realizations: he is a sinful man, not fit to have the Lord of Glory come into his home; and he understands that Jesus is able to heal his servant without coming into his home.

The centurion has friends upon whom he calls and asks them to intercept Jesus on his way to his home and to bring Him a message. His friends speak the centurion’s words to Jesus verbatim: “[He says,] Lord [recognizing the Lord’s authority], do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should come under my roof.”

The centurion knows that he is unworthy, and his friends convey this message to Jesus.

Luke 7:7 Therefore neither did I count myself worthy to come to You; but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

“Listen,” the centurion says to Jesus, through his friends, “I am not worthy even to come and stand in front of you and make such a request. However, I understand that You need only say the word in order for my servant to be healed.”

Then the centurion explains how he knows this.

Luke 7:8 For I also am a man appointed under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

The centurion is a man who has authority. He can tell one of his soldiers to do X, and that soldier will do X.

“You have the authority,” the centurion explains (through his friends), “to command that this healing be done. You are not required to actually come to my home in order to heal my servant.”

Luke 7:9 And Jesus having heard these things, marveled at him; and having turned to the crowd following Him, He said, “I say to you, not even in Israel did I find such great faith.”

The word *faith* can refer to *believing* something; but it also refers to the content of what is believed. The centurion understands that Jesus, as the Messiah, has great authority. He understands that Jesus can simply call for something to be done, and that thing will be done. Jesus does not have to be in the same room as the sick person; Jesus does not have to lay His hand on the sick person; Jesus does not have to offer up some deep and

flowery prayer in order for the healing to take place. Jesus can, as it were, snap His fingers, and the centurion's servant would be healed.

The centurion understands his sinful condition before the Lord; and he understands the Lord's authority. Jesus' Own disciples, who have been with Him for a few months, do not understand this much information. But the centurion understands it and believes it. The centurion heard Scripture about the Messiah and he put this together with what he has heard about Jesus (if he built/rebuilt the synagogue, then surely he would have attended a few times). This takes him to the conclusions that we have been discussing.

Luke 7:10 **And having returned to the house, those having been sent found the servant in good health.**

The centurion's friends, having spoken to Jesus, return to the centurion's home and find that his servant is completely healed.

### **Jesus Raises a Widow's Son**

Luke 7:11 **And it came to pass on the next day, He went into a town called Nain, and His disciples were going with Him, and a great crowd.**

There is apparently a town called Nain not too far from Capernaum that Jesus goes to. He is followed by His disciples (not just the twelve) and by a great crowd.

A large number of people had come to be healed and to listen to Jesus teach (the sermon on the plain); and many of these people have decided to follow Him.

Based upon Jesus' interaction with the centurion, there are probably both Jews and gentiles from Capernaum who are now following Jesus.

Logically, this *great crowd* comes from these two groups of people. Some perhaps have believed in Him; some perhaps have not. But they are certainly interested in what Jesus is going to do next. They may even be interested in what He is going to say next (which is even more important). In any case, these people have not committed themselves to anything as of yet. For the time being, they are simply following Him.

Luke 7:12 **And as He drew near to the gate of the town, also behold, one having died was being carried out, the only begotten son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a considerable crowd of the town was with her.**

Just as Jesus and this great number of people approach Nain, there is a funeral procession coming out of the city; and these two disparate crowds are nearly face to face with Jesus between them.

Everyone in the crowd knew that this was a funeral. Jesus understood from the beginning that this woman had lost her only son and that she was already a widow. He was able to

ascertain this not from His omniscience but simply by picking out the bereaved woman from the crowd and noticing the people around her. It was likely that the body of the deceased was also able to be seen.

Luke 7:13 **And the Lord having seen her, was moved with compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep."**

Jesus approaches the woman and speaks to her. But, instead of embracing her and saying, "That's all right, dear; just let it all out;" He said, "Stop crying."



Jesus wants the woman to be alert and in a state of mental acuity. He wants her to set her grief aside for a time and to pay attention to what He says and does. He also wants the rest of the people there to watch what He does. Previously, the mournful cry of the woman was the focus of the crowd. No matter what the circumstance or situation, our eyes should be on Jesus (by which, I mean that our minds should be thinking divine viewpoint).

**Luke 7:13 (KJV)** (a graphic); from [Christian Library](#); accessed July 22, 2022.

Luke 7:14 **And having come up, He touched the bier; and those bearing it stopped. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, Arise!"**

The funeral procession has stopped. Jesus has just told the mother to be quiet. He is standing before the bier (which is probably a slab of wood with a body upon it being carried by 4 or 6 men). All eyes are on the Lord and He touches the bier. Then He speaks to the young man laying dead upon the bier, **"Young man, I say to you, arise!"**

Luke 7:15 **And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and He gave him to his mother.**

Much to the shock of everyone there, the dead man sits up and begins speaking. I like to think that he sat up and said, "Where the hell am I?" but God the Holy Spirit has not revealed to us his exact words.

Luke 7:16 **And fear seized all, and they began glorifying God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us!" and, "God has visited His people!"**

The people following Jesus and those in the funeral procession are shocked. Many of them recognize what is taking place before their eyes. “A great Prophet has risen up among us!” This is a fulfillment of the words of Moses, where He said that God would raise up a prophet like him to the people of Israel.

Others said, “God has visited His people!” Between the final words of the Old Testament and this point in time, 430 years have elapsed. Apart from John the baptizer, no words from God (through a prophet) have been heard. Some in the crowd recognize that, through Jesus, God is among His people again.

Luke 7:17 And this report concerning Him went out in all Judea and all the surrounding region.

News of what just took place is broadcast throughout all Judæa and the surrounding regions.

As an aside, it is quite fascinating just how limited in area the public ministry of the Lord was.

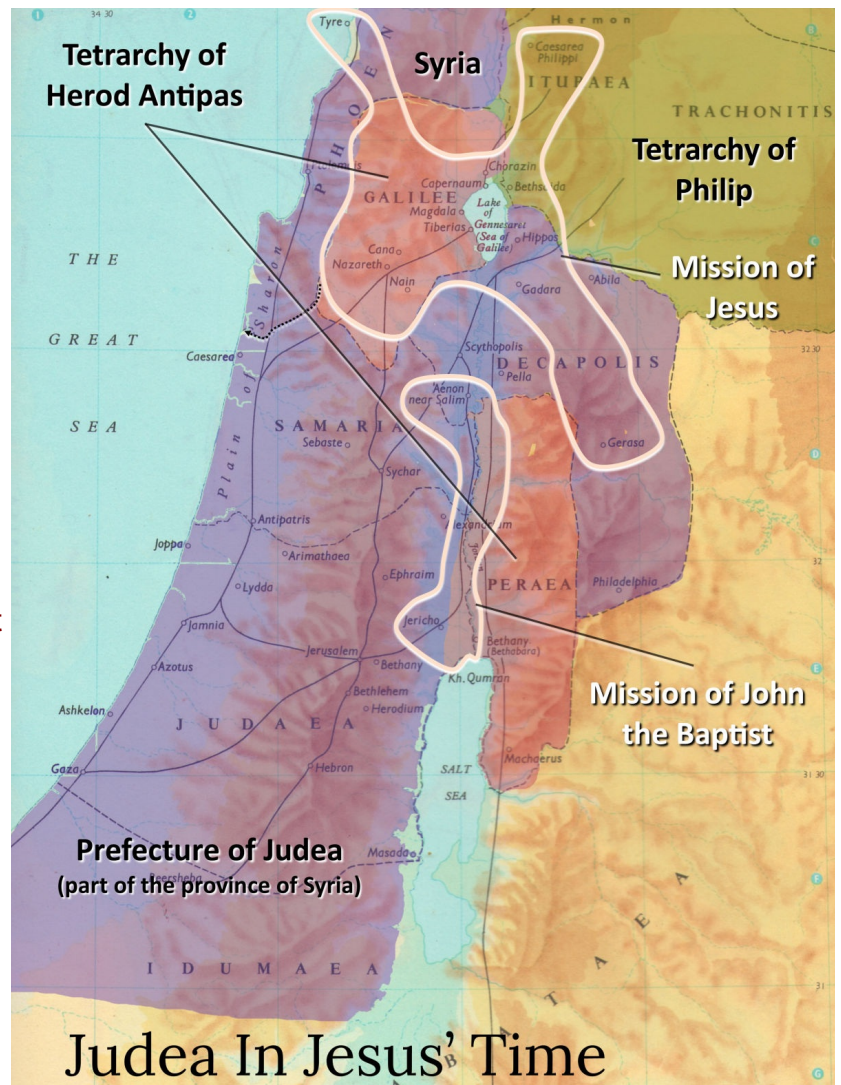
**Judea in Jesus’ Time** (a map); from [The History in the Bible Podcast](#); accessed January 13, 2023.

Although Jesus did go down to Jerusalem, that apparently only took place 3 or 4 times.

## Messengers from John the Baptist

Luke 7:18 And his disciples brought word to John concerning all these things.

John the Herald is probably in jail at this point in time; and his disciples come to him, perhaps having heard the amazing news of Jesus raising this young man from the dead or something else that Jesus has done.





Luke 7:19 *And having summoned a certain two his disciples, John sent them to the Lord saying, "Are You the coming One, or are we to look for another [of a different kind]?"*

Many Jews, at this time, believed that the Messiah was coming and that He would stand up against Rome and free the people of God. John, while in jail, probably thought himself that Jesus would spearhead such a movement, as the Messiah of God. But Jesus was not doing that. He was not walking about northern Israel gathering an army of Jews; He was healing people and teaching them. Jesus spent almost no time in Judæa.

John sends messengers to Jesus, "Did we get our signals crossed? Are you not the Messiah but someone else? Should we continue to look for the Messiah?"

This does not indicate that John is terribly confused. He isn't. The Messiah is portrayed in the Old Testament as a conquering hero. This is what many people expected of the Messiah. We discussed this in great detail in Luke 4 (within the doctrine of intercalation).

However, Jesus is amassing followers; but He is not organizing an army.

Luke 7:20 *And the men having come to Him said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are You the coming One, or are we to look for another [of the same kind]?"*

What you are reading here is a rarity in Scripture. We read what John the baptizer said to his disciples; and now we are reading about them saying that exact same thing to Jesus. It is far more common for there to be an economy of narrative (at the beginning of this chapter, the centurion is sending men with messages to Jesus; we do not read both what the centurion says and then what the messengers repeat). But what is taking place is this: in v. 19, John uses the pronoun *another of a different kind*; but His disciples say, *another of the same kind*. From a distance, John was not sure at all about Jesus. When he asks if they should be looking for another, John is saying, *another of a different kind*, indicating that Jesus is not the Messiah at all or even like a messiah. However, John's disciples see this differently when they are close up, John's disciples realized that, if there was *another*, it was *another of the same kind*. That is, they look at Jesus and what He is doing and they recognize Him as being from God. When they repeat John's question, but with the one word changed, they are implying, "Are you the Messiah? We kind of think that You are."

Even though we read twice what John said, what Jesus said to the disciples is unknown. Did Jesus give them the *come here* signal with his index finger? Did He tell them, "You guys stand over there and watch what I do"? Did He simply nod, as if to say, "Okay, I hear you"? Jesus will tell them what to do, but only after they observe Him for a time.

Luke 7:21 *At that very hour, He healed many of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits, and He granted many blind to see.*

These disciples from John watch, and they see Jesus perform all manner of miracles before them. As we have seen, Jesus has taken people with clearly visible diseases and has made them normal in an instant. They have never seen anything like this in their lives.

Luke 7:22–23 And answering, He said to them, “Having gone, relate to John what you have seen and heard: Blind receive sight, lame walk, lepers are cleansed and deaf hear, dead are raised, poor are gospelized. And blessed is whoever shall not be offended in Me.”

Jesus does not specifically answer their question. He sends them back to John to tell him exactly what they have seen.

Although Jesus appears to be quoting from the Old Testament here, it is not an exact quotation. It is similar to what we read in Isaiah 35:5–6a (*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.*) and Isaiah 61:1a (*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor;...*). In both cases, these passages continue into millennial prophecies, which Jesus, of course, does not allude to. The ESV (capitalized) is used for both quotations (I also checked the Greek Septuagint on this quote and it is very similar to the ESV).

Jesus’ conclusion is, “Happy is he who is not offended by Me.”

The conclusion appears to summarize Isaiah 8:14–15 “*And He [the Lord of the Armies] will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken.*” (ESV; capitalized)

Although Jesus has had many opportunities to clearly say, “I am the Messiah sent by God, and I am equal to God;” He has not made such a clear declaration since Nazareth, when He announced to the people in the synagogue, “*Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your ears.*”

Instead, Jesus says, “You have seen these things with your own eyes; go back to John and tell him what you saw. You can come to your own conclusions and John can form his own opinion as well.”

Now, Jesus was not being snide, nor was He upset that John misread the situation. Probably, as these men start to return, they can hear what Jesus has to say about John the baptizer (John was *not* a Baptist).

### **Jesus’ Salute to John the baptizer**

Luke 7:24 And the messengers of John having departed, He began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What have you gone out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

These disciples from John were possibly recognized by the crowd; and some were close enough to Jesus to hear the exchange which took place.



As John's disciples depart, Jesus speaks kindly of John, His herald. Some in the crowd, no doubt, went to see John. There was clearly a connection between those who followed John and those who followed Jesus.

"What did you expect to see out in the wilderness?" Jesus asked them. "A reed shaken by the wind?" Along the Jordan river, there would have been many reeds growing, and the wind would blow on them. But Jesus is speaking metaphorically, as He so often did. "Did you expect to see a man shaken by every wind of doctrine?"

Luke 7:25 But what have you gone out to see? A man arrayed in fine clothing? Behold, those in splendid clothing and living in luxury are in palaces.

As discussed in the early chapters of the book of Luke, there is probably quite the backstory on John, which is certainly implied but not given to us. His parents were older; they probably died when he was quite young. Did circumstances force him to go out to the wilderness to live, to figure out how to clothe and feed himself on his own? Is this why he wore rude clothing and ate honey from a honeycomb?

"If you want to see expensive clothing in the latest styles," Jesus says, "go visit a palace and meet the people there. That is not what you are going to find with John."

Luke 7:26 But what have you gone out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and one more excellent than a prophet.

"Did you go out to the desert to see a prophet from God? John is even greater than the prophets." This is exceptionally high praise from Jesus.

Perhaps John's disciples hear these words as they are walking off, returning to John.

Luke 7:27 This is he concerning whom it has been written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before your face, who will prepare Your way before You.' (Malachi 3:1)

How many people find themselves spoken of in Old Testament prophecy? We cannot even find the United States in prophecy; but God, through Malachi, spoke of John.

Luke 7:28 I say to you, no one among those born of women is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

Jesus is speaking of John strictly as a man, saying that he is the greatest. John had great humility. He developed a following out in the middle of nowhere. No doubt, he could have exploited this for his own good and glory, but he did not. He was a herald for the Messiah to come. He did not glorify himself; he glorified the Messiah.

But those in the kingdom of God will not have a sin nature (when we are raptured, our sin nature stays behind, apparently as a part of the old body). Therefore, even the least of them will be greater than John.

Luke 7:29 And all the people having heard, even the tax collectors, declared God righteous, having been baptized with the baptism of John.

The people there glorify God, as many of them had been baptized by John.

No doubt, they appreciate the continuity between the Lord's ministry and John's. They also appreciate the righteousness of God, which is half of His holiness/integrity (the other half is His justice).

Luke 7:30 But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of God as to themselves, not having been baptized by him.

The pharisees and experts in the Mosaic Law rejected God's counsel, which was the teaching of John. They went out to see John, to see what was going on, but they refused John's baptism.

These two verses describe the two sets of people who came out to see Jesus: those who were positive toward Him and His teaching; and those who were negative. Jesus then addresses those in His audience who are negative.

Luke 7:31 "To what therefore will I liken the men of this generation? And to what are they like?

Jesus now specifically addresses the people who have rejected Him (which ones also rejected John).

Luke 7:32 They are like to little children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one other, saying: 'We piped to you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.'

The idea is, there are two groups of children in the marketplace. One group consists of spoiled children for whom you can do nothing to make them smile or happy.

That application is, John the baptizer and Jesus were very different in personality. John did not eat bread or drink wine (he had a very weird diet based upon what he could find in the desert).

Luke 7:33 For John the Baptist has come neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon!'

John was accused of having a demon.

Luke 7:34 The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Behold, a man, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and of sinners!'

Jesus ate whatever was placed in front of Him; and He drank actual wine. He was accused of being a glutton and a drunkard (although He would have had no characteristics in common with gluttons and drunkards).

Remember that John baptized people out in the middle of nowhere. But Jesus came and was willing to interact with anyone who had positive volition. They were very different people with very different ministries. However, both men spoke the truth, and those who heard them responded positively or negatively. Those who responded negatively to both men were like the spoiled children in the marketplace. No matter what you did, they could not be pleased.

Luke 7:35 **And wisdom was justified by all her children.”**

Jesus and John both taught truth and wisdom. A significant number in their audiences responded with positive volition. Their subsequent thoughts, words and actions vindicated the words of Jesus and John.

These two sets of responses now play out on a different stage:

### **A Sinful Woman Forgiven**

We could have titled this section, *at the dinner party of a pharisee*.

Luke 7:36 **And one of the Pharisees was asking Him that He should eat with him, and having entered into the house of the Pharisee, He reclined.**

The verb tense indicates to us that this pharisee asked Jesus on many occasions to come and have a meal with him.

Eventually, Jesus agrees to come to this dinner.

Luke 7:37–38 **And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner. And she having known that He had reclined in the Pharisee’s house, having taken an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and having stood behind Him at His feet weeping, she began to wet His feet with the tears, and she was wiping them with the hairs of her head, and was kissing His feet, and was anointing them with the fragrant oil.**

It appears that this woman has come to the Lord with the most expensive thing that she owns—an alabaster flask of fragrant oil. She does not appear to have a cloth or towel with her (which is likely uncommon in that era).

There is a similar narrative found in the other three gospels, but there are so many differences which suggest that this general situation happened at least twice (for all we know, this could have been the same woman in both instances).

Luke 7:39 And the Pharisee, the one having invited Him, having seen, spoke within himself, saying, "If this were a prophet, He would have known who and what the woman is who touches Him; for she is a sinner."

One of the important things to the pharisees was ceremonial cleanliness. As we will find out, the pharisee did nothing to wash the Lord's feet; but he (the pharisee) seems concerned that this woman is touching the Lord.

"Surely, if this Man is a prophet, He knows that contact with such a woman would make Him unclean," is likely what this pharisee was thinking.

Jesus is able to look at Simon and, by reading the micro-expressions of his face, know exactly what he is thinking.

Many of us, having looked on Simon, might have said, "Simon, do you have something to say to me?" But Jesus took a much different tact. He had something to say to Simon.

Luke 7:40 And answering, Jesus said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he says, "Teacher, say it."

Jesus is looking at Simon, figures out what is on his mind, and then asks to speak to him. This would have given Simon the opportunity to speak with the Lord privately, if that is what he wanted. However, Simon thinks that he has a trump card to play, no matter what Jesus has to say. That trump card is, "And You, Sir, are being touched by an unclean woman. Are You aware of that, prophet?" Simon would want to deliver this message publically, so a private conversation was out of the question.

Because the pharisee has this great trump card to play, he has to listen to Jesus speaking, so that he can figure where to play it.

Luke 7:41 "There were two debtors to a certain creditor. The one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.

Jesus immediately launches into a parable. What is good about a parable is, the people who hear it must engage their minds in order to understand what Jesus is saying. If their minds are not engaged, then they miss everything.

Parables are often circumstances that everyone who hears them can relate to what is being said. They have been in the situation before; or know enough about the situation described as to have an opinion on the matter. An often, if an opinion is called for, there will be an obvious response. The parable, on the surface, is above controversy, even though it may represent a controversial subject.

Luke 7:42 They having nothing to pay, he forgave both. Therefore which of them will love him more?"

Now, bear in mind, Simon is holding onto this trump card to play; but he has to engage with the Lord in order to play it. So he is listening to this parable, and trying to put it together with what is happening at this moment.

Luke 7:43 Simon answering, said, "I take it that he to whom he forgave the most." And He said to him, "You have judged rightly."

Obviously, the person forgiven the most is the most grateful. Simon makes that observation and Jesus tells him, "You are exactly right, my friend."

Luke 7:44 And having turned to the woman, He was saying to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered into your house; you did not give water for My feet, but she wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

Of course Simon sees this woman; for the past 5 or 10 minutes, he has been glancing over at her (this is what the Greek tells us in v. 44).

Simon does not see the connection yet with the parable, so Jesus will explain it.

"It is common courtesy for a host to provide water for the feet of his guests, so that they might clean them prior to entering the house. "You did not do this," Jesus points out, "But this woman has used her own tears to wet my feet and her own hair to dry them."

Luke 7:45 You did not give to Me a kiss, but from which time I came in, she herself has not ceased kissing My feet.

Another ancient custom was to kiss a guest as he enters one's home. Simon had not done that, and that is because Simon was not particularly fond of Jesus (despite the fact that he had asked Jesus on several occasions to come to his home).

Luke 7:46 You did not anoint My head with oil, but she herself anointed My feet with fragrant oil.

It was also common to provide oil for a guest's head and hair; but Simon did not do this. The woman, however, had massaged the Lord's feet with an expensive, aromatic oil.

Luke 7:47 Therefore I say to you this: Her many sins have been forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, he loves little."

"As a result, her many sins have been forgiven; and because of this, she is very grateful. If you do not think that you need to be forgiven or if you think your debt is small, then you are certainly less grateful when it comes to forgiveness."

The big point that Simon wanted to make was the nature of this woman. Jesus has said, "Her debt is great because of her many sins; and she is very grateful." Obviously, Simon

has little or no gratitude, possibly not even thinking that he needs forgiveness. Has Simon put this all together yet?

And key to this parable is, *Who is the Forgiver?* Jesus reveals that with the next thing that He says.

Luke 7:48 **And He said to her, “Your sins have been forgiven.”**

What Jesus had just said to the woman shocks all of the religious types who are there: “Your sins have been forgiven.”

Luke 7:49 **And those reclining began to say within themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”**

The people there are quite taken aback. Who is this Man who tells this woman that her sins are forgiven? How is He able to do that? From where does He get the authority to say this?

Luke 7:50 **And He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”**

Jesus clarifies why she is saved—it is based upon her faith in Him (and not based upon her services to Him).



**Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke 7:36-50** (a graphic); from [Digital Ministries](#); accessed July 22, 2022.

**Lessons 227–228: Luke 8:1a-c**

**Introduction to Luke 8/Kingdom of Heaven**

Before we begin Luke 8, we should look back at what has been covered so far in the Lord’s earthly ministry. There is a reason that we are looking back, which will become more apparent in Luke 9–10. The public ministry of Jesus the Messiah did not begin after He had been tested/tempted by Satan. After this, Jesus began to teach in the region of Galilee, going from synagogue to synagogue. I believe that this might be a six-month or a year-long ministry (absolutely no time frame is given to this ministry). Although these two verses in Luke are said to have parallels in Matthew and Mark, they really do not. Jesus



is by Himself, teaching in the various synagogues in the towns and villages around the Sea of Galilee. There is no mention of healings or miracles or disciples or crowds. He is simply going from synagogue to synagogue, teaching the Word of God. This means that He might read a chapter or two from the existing Scriptures (the Old Testament), and then He would explain what He had just read. Based upon this, His reputation as a teacher grew.

Then Jesus returns to His hometown Nazareth to teach. Luke records the first time Jesus is rejected in Nazareth; Matthew and Mark record a second time—these are not parallel incidents.

Jesus is known personally in His hometown and He has this reputation built up from everywhere else that He has been teaching. The synagogue is likely packed that day, based upon His reputation. So, He stands up before the synagogue, reads a verse and a half about the coming Messiah, and then He sits down. Everyone is looking at Jesus, having no idea why He stood up, read a verse and a half, and then sat down. He announces to them, “Today, this passage has been fulfilled in your ears.” These words throw the place into chaos and Jesus escapes with His life.

Continuing in Luke 4, Jesus leaves Nazareth and returns to the Galilee region, where He begins to cast out demons, heal large numbers of people and teach. However, at this time, He begins to teach the good news of the coming Kingdom.

In Luke 5, Jesus calls His first disciples. He heals a leper, a paralyzed man; and He begins to get questions which suggests that some skepticism of Him and His disciples has formed.

In Luke 6, Jesus is criticized with His disciples for acting unlawfully on the Sabbath (they were in a wheat field eating unharvested wheat). Luke 6 also has the great sermon on the plain (which is very similar to the sermon on the mount).

Since we just studied Luke 7, the incidents of that chapter are probably fresh on your mind. Jesus heals the servant of the centurion, He brings back to life the son of the widow, He speaks to the messengers from John the herald; and He speaks highly of John the herald. At the end of this chapter, Jesus attends a dinner party given by Simon the pharisee and He forgives a woman there of having lived a sordid life (the exact nature of her sins is not specified).

My point in recounting these few chapters is, it feels as if we have just begun the public ministry of Jesus, yet, when we come to Luke 9, Jesus will twice speak of His impending crucifixion and He will set His face toward Jerusalem (apparently for His final journey to Jerusalem).

Therefore, as we begin Luke 8, we need to keep in the back of our minds that we are going to suddenly find ourselves near the end of the Lord’s earthly ministry in Luke 9. How did this happen? What does it mean? How do we square this with being only a third of the way through Luke at the point of chapter 8? You are being warned now so that, when we

appear to be at the end of the Lord's ministry in Luke 9, you will be expecting it (and perhaps you might be expecting some sort of explanation as well).

Luke 8, like most of the chapters of Luke, is filled with a number of diverse incidents. The incidents recounted in this chapter and Jesus' teaching probably take place over a very short period of time (perhaps the things which take place in this chapter occur within the period of a month or less). Nevertheless, we do not have a lot of commonalities between these various incidents (which is not unusual; how many times in your life does a particular month in your life have a theme?).

Some who try to summarize this chapter point to the power exhibited by the Lord as the overarching theme. Certainly, His power is unmistakable—but His power not represented in each section of this chapter. One could just as easily argue that the Lord's teaching was the dominant factor of this chapter. But then, could we not always say, *this chapter is about the Lord's teaching?*

There are outstanding sections in this chapter which need to be carefully studied. In a few instances, what is not said specifically but included in this chapter will require a careful examination.

At the beginning of this chapter a few of the women who follow Jesus are named. It is a surprisingly short list, and likely not exhaustive. This short list may represent all those women who were faithfully with Him throughout His public ministry.

If not for Luke, we might not be aware of all the women who followed Jesus, who were often more faithful to Him than His Own disciples were. In several places in the gospel of Luke, we find out about the words and activities of women which are nowhere else presented (which suggests that Luke interviewed at least two of these women in order to write his gospel).

The next fifteen verses of Luke 8 are devoted to the Lord's teaching (as we progress in Luke, there will be more and more teaching; and much less narrative). He teaches two parables; one of which He also explains.

This chapter contains the parable of the sower and the parable of the lit candle. The first parable is quite remarkable; and is explained in this chapter as well. The second parable is actually one of two or three points that the Lord would be making.

In the first discourse, the Lord gives the parable of the sower, which is fascinating both in its content, but also in what Jesus says about His teaching. Sometimes He intentionally taught in such a way that, the people who heard Him did not understand what He was saying—at least not immediately. Would you have expected the greatest Teacher in human history to teach in that way?

Jesus then gives the parable of the lit candle which I find to be more difficult than the parable of the sower, but the disciples do not appear to ask for any clarification of this parable.

After the second parable, there are four incidents recounted by Luke which appear to have taken place all during the same week or so.

First, the Lord's family comes to Him while He is teaching and He uses them in His teaching. Jesus teaches about the true, royal family of God. What Jesus teaches about His human family is important, but it has also been used by cults to separate people from their human family and from their former friends. The Lord's teaching requires careful study here so that we do not incorrectly interpret it.

Then Jesus seems to suddenly tell His disciples that they are going across the Galilean Sea. While they are in the boat, Jesus sleeps, and there is a great storm which happens. The disciples are so frightened as to wake the Lord up. Whereas some might think that this is a good thing, that the disciples ran to Jesus in this crisis; but Jesus tells them, they are of a little faith.

They then land on shore, they come upon a man who appears to be crazy. He is naked and living among the tombs. People in that region have tried restraining him, but he is too strong and has broken out of whatever bands they have placed him in. We find that he is demon-possessed; in fact, he is possessed by many demons. Jesus casts these demons out, allows them to go into some nearby hogs, and these hogs suddenly run to a river and drown. The people of the nearby city come to witness the aftermath of these events. The hogs drowning represents a serious economic loss to them. The people are not happy about this and they ask Jesus to leave.

There is a very important question to come out of this narrative of the demon-possessed man: Jesus appears to order the demons to leave the man, but they do not leave at first. Now, if Jesus is God with divine sovereignty, then when He casts a demon or demons out of a person, doesn't that mean that there is no time for a discussion? Can demons resist God and then say, "Let's discuss this first"? And yet, that is what appears to happen. How can this be explained? Is there an explanation here which lies within the realm of orthodox theology?

There is another thing which comes out of this narrative of the man possessed by many demons. The people of the region, who are negative towards the Lord, ask Him to leave, and He honors this request. But, the man who Jesus cured—the one man who is positive toward the Lord—he will request that Jesus take him with Him; and Jesus refuses that request—so, why? If this man is positive toward the teaching of Jesus, why should he remain in this area where there is so much negative volition?

The final narrative of Luke 8 is actually two narratives, intertwined, because the second narrative appears to affect the first narrative. Jairus, the ruler of a synagogue, comes to Jesus to request for Him to heal his daughter. Jesus agrees to come but, there is a large

crowd around Him, and someone apparently comes close to Him and touches the hem of His garment. Jesus suddenly stops and asks who this is. The disciples think that this question is silly, because there is a mob of people all around the Lord, shouting out requests and whatnot. However, it turns out that there is a woman who has been sickly for a long time, and she believes that by coming close enough to Jesus to touch Him will cure her. She came there hoping just to touch His garment.

While this second incident is playing out, someone from Jairus's home comes to tell the Lord that the daughter has died. Therefore, there is no reason for Jesus to come to their home. Nevertheless, Jesus goes to their home. He takes only the parents and Peter, James and John into the room where the little girl's body is, and He resuscitates her.

This introduction should indicate that Luke 8 will cover a wide variety of topics.

Luke 8:1a **Soon afterward...** (ESV; capitalized)

Luke 8:1a is actually five words, translated variously as, *And it happened in the time afterwards also* (Modern Literal Version 2020); *soon afterward (s)* (English Standard Version, New King James Version, World English Bible, New American Standard Bible, Context Group Version); *And it happened afterward (s)* (Green's literal translation); *And it came to pass (soon) afterward* (Updated Bible Version 2.17, Webster, New European Version); and there might be another 10–20 additional translations (such as, *And it happened soon after that, And it came to pass, afterward, Soon after this, And it happened soon after this that*).

Essentially, something is coming to pass, and it occurs after the events of the previous chapter (s). In Luke 7, Jesus is healing in Galilee, raising the son of a widow in Nain, and John the herald has sent to some messengers to ask exactly Who Jesus is and what are His plans. So chapter 8 happens after chapter 7.

Luke 8:1b **...He went on through cities and villages,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is still in the Galilee region, going about from city to city and village to village. He has a number of people who are following Him; and His ability to heal is drawing people from all over the region.

Luke 8:1c **...proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is proclaiming the Kingdom of God; He is announcing that the Kingdom of God has come to them. This is not the first time that He proclaims the Kingdom of God (this word will be found six times in Luke 8–9).

Jesus is the King of Kings; and He stands before the people making them the offer of the kingdom.

The Jewish people understand this, because part of what they have heard read in the synagogues makes reference to the grand kingdom that God would bring to the Jewish people.

What exactly did the people know about this kingdom? Many times, I can find a doctrine which someone has already developed and go with that. However, I did not find what I believed a few points which gave a good understanding of what the Kingdom was and how Jesus presented it and Himself.

Although the general idea that Jesus offered up the kingdom and the people Israel rejected it is correct, there are a few details which need to be sorted out. There are various points in Jesus' ministry where such things ought to be connected to the kingdom but which are not.

In this doctrine, I have used the World English Bible—Messianic Edition (capitalized).

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1. Back in Luke 4, you may recall that Jesus, in the synagogue of Nazareth, He read a very short passage in Isaiah, and then, mid-verse, stopped reading and sat down. This led me to introduce the doctrine of intercalation, where the Church Age is sandwiched between the first advent and the second advent. To us, in the Church Age, this is obviously what took place. However, what was left out is, the offering of the kingdom. Jesus must offer the kingdom to the Jewish people and Himself as their king. Officially, this will take place during the week prior to the crucifixion, where Jesus will ride into Jerusalem on a colt, and some of the people will welcome Him with great enthusiasm. However, at the end of this week, Jesus will be seized and crucified.
2. The people of Israel had two basic choices: to accept and believe in their Lord Jesus and to hail Him as their Messiah and King; or they could reject Him.
3. This had to be a near universal acceptance or rejection. Analogous to this would be when Moses came before the people of Israel when they were still enslaved to the Pharaoh of Egypt. Moses could not lead this people out of Egypt unless they *all* chose to follow Him. The Exodus would not have worked had, at the Pharaoh's command for the Hebrew people to leave, for half of them to say, "No, I think that we will stay right here in Egypt. We were born here; we are taken care of here. We're fine. You all, just go on ahead." Had this happened, the impact of the Exodus would certainly have been a lot less. And, this would have left the people of Israel split between two non-contiguous countries. That simply would not have worked. Every man, woman and child had to follow Moses.
4. Jesus clearly is presenting Himself to His people. And though He does not often proclaim Himself is their King, Messiah and Savior, this is Who He is.
  - 1) You may recall that when Jesus in Nazareth said, "Today, these Scriptures have been fulfilled in your ears," the people did not rejoice and stand behind Him. Most of them wanted to kill Him for speaking such blasphemy, as He made Himself out to be their Messiah and Lord.
  - 2) Jesus considers reaction to Him in Nazareth and He recalibrates His

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presentation. I realize to many readers, this is a very odd thing to say, but Jesus, after Nazareth, was no longer that direct before a crowd. This does not mean that this announcement was a mistake; nor does it mean that Jesus was afraid of the people.

- 3) Since Nazareth, Jesus has concentrated on teaching and healing. Even when John's disciples came to Him and asked, "Are You the One we are waiting for, or should we seek out another?" Jesus did not tell them, "I am your Lord, your Messiah and your King!" Instead Jesus said, "Watch Me, and then go back and tell John what you have seen."
  - 4) As an aside, let me offer these two incidents as proof that Jesus did not arrive on this earth having a roadmap of where to go and what to do next. He proclaimed that which was obvious to Him to the people in Nazareth and this just about started a riot.
  - 5) Jesus, in His humanity, decided to take a more subtle approach.
  - 6) When a king arrives on the scene, a herald goes before Him and announces who he is. The king does not arrive and say, "Oh, by the way, I am the king-guy that herald was talking about." He simply begins making proclamations or kingly statements. Jesus teaching the Mosaic Law is basically Him doing just that.
  - 7) I insert these points for two reasons: (1) they are true and (2) over the centuries, the humanity of Jesus seems to have gotten lost in the shuffle of Christian doctrine. That is, Jesus clearly walks around in a human body, so, for many Christians, that is the extent of His humanity. There is far more to Jesus' humanity than just possessing a human body.
5. Now, throughout the Lord's ministry, He will speak of the kingdom of God, and He will say a lot about it. But what He does not do is clearly proclaim Himself as that King, even though He is.
6. What Jesus appears to be waiting for is a universal Jewish response similar to Peter's. When Jesus says, "**But Who do you say that I am?**" Peter quickly answered, "**You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.**" Taking this in the context of Jesus presenting Himself to the people along with the kingdom, do you see just how important Peter's statement was? What does Jesus say next?
- 1) Matthew 16:17 **Yeshua [= Jesus] answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.** All spiritual information is revealed to us from a divine source. I would assume that God the Father provided the Holy Spirit for Peter, so that he could put together the information which he had received to come to this point of view.
  - 2) Matthew 16:18 **I also tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My assembly, and the gates of Sheol will not prevail against it.**
    - (1) There has been a great deal of misunderstanding of this verse, not only by Catholics, but by most Christians.
    - (2) Most people understand that the words *Peter* and *rock* are similar words. *Peter* means *small rock, chip of a rock*; and *Rock* refers to



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- a much larger rock (one is the masculine form; the other is the feminine form; and they have different meanings). So, whatever Jesus is going to build, it is not upon Peter but *upon this rock*.
- (3) Although, many times, *Rock* refers to Jesus Himself (He is the Cornerstone, the stone which the builders rejected).
  - (4) Here, I believe that the Rock is the testimony which Peter has given. Upon that testimony, upon those words, upon that mental attitude, Jesus says, “**I will build My...**”
  - (5) What is Jesus going to build? The word is *ekklêsía* (ἐκκλησία) [pronounced *ek-klay-SEE-ah*], which means, *church, assembly, gathering, company*; transliterated, *ekklêsia*. However, there is nothing in the context of what Jesus is saying that is related to the Church Age. Therefore, let’s look at a more expanded set of definitions, as provided by Thayer’s Lexicon: 1) *a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly*; 1a) *an assembly of the people convened at the public place of the council for the purpose of deliberating*; 1b) *the assembly of the Israelites*; 1c) *any gathering or throng of men assembled by chance, tumultuously*; 1d) *in a Christian sense*; 1d1) *an assembly of Christians gathered for worship in a religious meeting*; 1d2) *a company of Christian, or of those who, hoping for eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, observe their own religious rites, hold their own religious meetings, and manage their own affairs, according to regulations prescribed for the body for order’s sake*; 1d3) *those who anywhere, in a city, village, constitute such a company and are united into one body*; 1d4) *the whole body of Christians scattered throughout the earth*; 1d5) *the assembly of faithful Christians already dead and received into heaven*. Strong’s #1577.
  - (6) Just as Moses needed an assembly to follow him out of Egypt, Jesus also requires an assembly of believers—those having the testimony of Peter—who are willing to follow Jesus.
  - (7) The way that this is stated allows this goal to be open-ended. Maybe Jesus is assembling those to follow Him into the Kingdom of God; and maybe this could be the church universal of the Church Age. Given the context, assuming that this could only refer to the church universal would be a mistake, as there is nothing in context to suggest that this is the only way to understand what Jesus is saying. In fact, what Jesus says next suggests that we are speaking about the kingdom of heaven and *not* about the church.
- 3) Matthew 16:19 **I will give to you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven; and whatever you release on earth will have been released in heaven.** Peter and the other Apostles are going to have great authority in such an assembly of

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believers. “You will have the power,” Jesus explains, “to determine who is bound and who is free—on earth and in heaven.” Now, quite obviously, this will not be some arbitrary choice. Jesus is not saying that Peter can designate *only redheads can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. The key will be the gospel message and the response of individuals to the gospel message.

- 4) Matthew 16:20 **Then He commanded the disciples that they should tell no one that he was Yeshua the Messiah.** As I already pointed out, after testifying publically in Nazareth Who He was, Jesus has approached this truth with more subtlety.
7. This kingdom which will be established will be Jesus, at the head of Israel, which will rule over the entire world; at a time when there will be perfect environment.
8. This kingdom will come about after the rapture and after the Tribulation.

Here are a few approaches done by doctrinal teachers on the Kingdom of Heaven

### Links to Teachings about the Kingdom of Heaven

The Gospel of the Kingdom by Don Samdahl

from <https://doctrine.org/the-gospel-of-the-kingdom>

The Kingdom of God by Don Samdahl

From <https://doctrine.org/the-kingdom-of-god>

The Kingdom Offered

From L. G. Merritt :

<http://www.westbankbiblechurch.com/LGMerrittBooks/The%20Kingdom%20Offered0815.pdf>

## Lesson 229: Luke 8:1–3

## The Lord's Female Disciples

Luke 8:1a-c **Soon afterward He [Jesus] went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God.** (ESV; capitalized)

In the first 3 verses, we will have Jesus' typical full-time disciples who are with Him mentioned, along with the women (who are also His disciples). We would expect a verse like this early on, as Jesus developed a very regular following.

Luke 8:1d **And the twelve were with Him,...** (ESV; capitalized)

By this time, Jesus has called the 12 disciples (Luke 6:13–16), and they are traveling with Him.

So far, I have found Luke's gospel to be well-organized, chronologically speaking. For instance, here, where we find this designation *the twelve*. Sometime before this, the twelve have already been named. Let me contrast this with John (the Apostle) who identifies Mary as the woman anointing the Lord in John 11:2, but not speaking of that incident until John 12:3.<sup>30</sup>

For some of those who were with Him, Jesus provided a traveling seminary. They learned the Law, they learned of Jesus' Unique Person, they learned about the Kingdom of God. As we would expect, people who needed physical healing often flocked to the Lord, on which occasions, the Lord healed and cast out demons. He also evangelized and taught the people of the cities and villages where they all went.

Luke 8:1 **Soon afterward He went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus has been going through the cities and villages of Galilee; he is teaching the coming Kingdom of God; and His twelve primary disciples are with Him all of this time. However, by this time, these were not the only ones regularly traveling with the Lord.

Luke 8:2a **...and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities:...** (ESV; capitalized)

Luke, more than any other gospel writer, takes note of the women who followed Jesus. He knows that the women with Jesus had been healed of evil spirits and had been cured from various illnesses.

Luke does not confuse these two maladies. He is not saying, having an illness is equivalent to having a demon. He treats them as different problems. However, possession by demons could manifest itself in a variety of ways, which may include physical infirmities.

Luke 8:2b **Mary, called Magdalene,...** (ESV; capitalized)

This is the first specific mention of Mary Magdalene in the Luke narrative. Previous mentions of the woman named *Mary* is the mother of the humanity of Jesus (in Luke 1–2).

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<sup>30</sup> John wrote his gospel when he was an old man in Patmos. He had likely read the other gospels and decided that he really had more to add to the story. However, it is likely that some of what John wrote was out of sequence.

Easton on Magdala: *[Magdala means a] tower, [and it refers to] a town in Galilee, mentioned only in Matt. 15:39. In the parallel passage in Mark 8:10 this place is called Dalmanutha. It was the birthplace of Mary called the Magdalen, or Mary Magdalene. It was on the west shore of the Lake of Tiberias, and is now probably the small obscure village called el-Mejdel, about 3 miles north-west of Tiberias. In the Talmud this city is called "the city of colour," and a particular district of it was called "the tower of dyers." The indigo plant was much cultivated here.*<sup>31</sup>

This is how she is distinguished from the several other Marys who followed Jesus.

Luke 8:2c ...from whom seven demons had gone out,... (ESV; capitalized)

At some point, Mary had seven demons exorcized from her; and it is reasonable to assume that Jesus did this. The specificity of the number suggests that there are seven separate entities—spirit entities—which lived in Mary and exercised some control over her.

Mary appears to be a single woman and tradition has it that she was a prostitute. The narrative about her (or some woman) being a prostitute is questionable. I do not say that to suggest that she was not; but we do not know exactly who she is and what her past is.

This is how Mary Magdalene is described Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*.

### **Mary Magdalene (by Charles T. P. Grierson)**

Mary Magdalene, probably so called as belonging to Magdala (possibly el-Mejdel, 3 miles north-west of Tiberias), a place not mentioned in NT, as Magadan is the correct reading of Matthew 15:39. She is first mentioned in Luke 8:2 as one of the women who, having been 'healed of evil spirits and infirmities, ... ministered unto them (i.e. Jesus and the Apostles) of their substance.' Seven demons had been cast out of her (cf. Mark 16:9)—a fact showing her affliction to have been of more than ordinary malignity (cf. Matthew 12:45, Mark 5:9).

An unfortunate tradition identifies her with the unnamed sinful woman who anointed our Lord (Luke 7:37); and she has been thus regarded as the typical reformed 'fallen woman.' But St. Luke, though he placed them consecutively in his narrative, did not identify them; and as possession did not necessarily presuppose moral failing in the victim's character, we need not do so.

With the other women she accompanied Jesus on His last journey to Jerusalem; with them she beheld the crucifixion, at first 'from afar,' but afterwards standing by the Cross itself (Matthew 27:55, John 19:25); she followed the body to the burial (Mark 15:47), and then returned to prepare spices, resting on the Sabbath. On the first day of the week, while it was yet dark, she visited the sepulchre (John 20:1 ff.). Finding the grave empty,

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<sup>31</sup> M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*; 1897; from e-Sword, topic: Magdala.

## Mary Magdalene (by Charles T. P. Grierson)

she assumed that the body had been removed, and that she was thus deprived of the opportunity of paying her last tribute of love. She ran at once to Peter and John and said, 'They have taken away the Lord, and we know not where they have laid him.' They all three returned to the tomb, she remaining after they had left. Weeping she looked into the sepulchre, and saw two angels guarding the spot where Jesus had lain. To their question, 'Why weepest thou?' she repeated the words she had said to Peter and John. Apparently feeling that someone was standing behind her, she turned, and saw Jesus, and mistook Him for the gardener. The utterance of her name from His lips awoke her to the truth. She cried, 'Rabboni,' ('my Master')—and would have clasped His feet. But Jesus forbade her, saying, 'Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father.' She must no longer know Him 'after the flesh' (2Corinthians 5:16), but possess Him in spiritual communion. This, the first appearance of our Lord after His resurrection (Mark 16:9), conferred a special honour on one whose life of loving ministry had proved the reality and depth of her devotion.

She has been identified with Mary the sister of Lazarus, but without any grounds.<sup>1</sup>

Kukis note: Insofar as we can tell, Mary, Martha and Lazarus were sisters and brother who did not appear to follow the Lord as Mary Magdalene did, indicating that these are different women.

<sup>1</sup> James Hastings, D.D., *Dictionary of the Bible*; © 1909. By Charles Scriber's Sons; (from e-sword); topic: Mary; author: Charles T. P. Grierson.

Luke 8:2 ...and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out,... (ESV; capitalized)

Although there is a fair amount of material about demon possession in the New Testament, most of it is confined to the gospels and Acts. Interestingly enough, Paul nowhere writes about the proper way to remove a demon; or the proper way to deal with a demon-possessed person (although demonism is covered by Paul).

As believers in the Church Age, the bulk of our guidance comes from the epistles, which are mostly written by Paul.

Luke 8:3a ...and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager,... (ESV; capitalized)

Joanna is a married woman who follows the Lord. She is married to Chuza who works for Herod (he is not called a slave, so we may assume that this is a paid position).

Joanna is only mentioned here and in Luke 24:10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, who told these things to the apostles. (Webster).

Her mention here and when Jesus was risen suggests that she was a very faithful student of the Lord's. She has attached herself to the Lord very early on (we are probably still in the first year or so of the Lord's ministry); and she has remained faithful to Him even after His crucifixion. She is among the women telling the disciples that the Lord has risen.

Luke 8:3b *...and Susanna...* (ESV; capitalized)

Susanna is mentioned only here. Her name is interesting to me; it means *lily* and the Jewish equivalent appears to be *Shoshannah*.

From this point forward, Jesus traveled, for the most part, with a very specific core group of people. We might say, these are His regulars. He is going about, from city to village proclaiming the Kingdom of God. With Him are the *twelve* (the 12 disciples whom He already chose) and some specific women as well. This does not mean that these were the only people who traveled with Jesus, but from this point forward, these are His mainstays.

Jesus has spoken specifically to Matthew and said to him, "Follow Me." (Matt. 9:9 Luke 5:27). Jesus has, in the past, said the same to others of the twelve (Matt. 4:19) and to some unnamed people (Matt. 8:22 Mark 10:21 Luke 9:59–61). It is reasonable, therefore, to assume that there were other disciples who followed the Lord, whether for a few weeks or perhaps even a few years. Based upon our passage, there were nearly always these 15 or so but who knows how many may have been with the Lord from time to time? 100? 200? This passage suggests a faithful base of 15, which was likely much larger. In another passage, Jesus will send out seventy people, indicating that He would have had more than the number to choose from.

Luke here is providing the names of those who were with Jesus throughout His earthly ministry, beginning early on with Him and continuing to the cross and beyond. Luke very possibly was able to interview several from this group.

Luke 8:3c *...and many others, who provided for them out of their means.* (ESV; capitalized)

Luke's list of names is clearly not exhaustive. There are *many others*. However, there is more to this portion of v. 3 than *many others*; they are qualified: *many others who were serving Him out from their substance*. (You may notice the slight difference in this alternative reading.)

Along the way, in many of the cities and villages that Jesus and this 15 (+ whomever) went, they needed basic logistical assistance. They needed to sleep, they may have needed to wash their clothing (and themselves); they certainly needed food. I believe we are to understand this to mean that, along the way, certain people would offer to bring Jesus and His disciples into their homes (or provide some sort of shelter, as most people are not well-equipped to take on a sudden influx of 15 guests (or perhaps, 100 guests). My point here is, Jesus and His disciples (including the women) were provided for very organically. They



might come into a village, and perhaps even 2 or 3 benefactors might offer them food and other services (sandal and clothing repair, a place to sleep, etc.).

**The Holy Women Luke 8:1-3**  
(James Tissot c 1896) (a graphic); from [Word Press](#); accessed March 2, 2023.

Luke 8:3 ...and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means. (ESV; capitalized)



We would assume that some women, because of their responsibilities at home, could travel short distances with the Lord, but then have to return home (the same would have been true of some men). We may reasonably assume that there were other women who traveled with the Lord for longer periods of time as well (whether a few months or even a few years). Bear in mind that this is a unique event in human history.

## Lesson 230: Luke 8:4–8

## Scattering Seed in Various Soils

**Luke 8:4–15 The Parable of the Soils** (a graphic); from [Medium.com](#); accessed March 2, 2023.

Luke 8:4a **And when a great crowd was gathering...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus' public ministry has been in full swing at this point, and large numbers of people would seek Him out to find Him. Their motivations might be varied. Not every person who tries to track down Jesus is on positive signals toward the teaching of the Word of God. Not every person who sought Jesus out believed Him to be the Messiah, the Savior of Israel.



The parable which the Lord chose would be appropriate both to the varied motivations found throughout the crowds of people; and what they would actually do with the truth that they heard. Jesus suggests four general outcomes after hearing the word of truth. However, Jesus is not going to talk about hearing the truth and what a person ought to do

with it; He will, instead, talk about planting seeds and various places a person might plant seeds.

Luke 8:4b ...and people from town after town came to Him,... (ESV; capitalized)

Word of mouth recounting of events relating to Jesus was so extraordinary that, many people wanted to see Him. This does not mean that an overwhelming percentage of those coming to see Him would believe in Him.

Luke 8:4c ...He said in a parable,... (ESV; capitalized)

The word *parable* has been mentioned twice before in the Luke narrative.

A parable is a story which does not necessarily depict a specific historical event, but it relates a common experience either shared by or known to the people who had come to hear Him. Often, a parable demands that the hearer come to a conclusion or make some sort of judgment based upon the parable. A parable was often a shared experience upon which everyone could agree. However, the idea is, the parable parallels some spiritual truth. The person who understands the parable and comes to the correct conclusion about the parable (which nearly everyone does), is also prepared for the parallel spiritual truth (which truth may not be as readily acceptable as the parable is).

Sometimes a parable is simply explanatory. There is a spiritual principle which is hard to grasp, and the parable introduces a parallel situation which is easier to understand. Once the person understands the parallel story, they have a better grasp of the parallel doctrine.

When explaining how Jesus could be God, and yet not directly access His Deity, I gave the parallel example of the human body, where many of the things taking place in the body are on auto-pilot. You would have a hard time changing them (the digestion of food; the distribution of nutrients to the body). Whatever functions which Jesus must do as God can be placed on auto-pilot, so that they are being done, but without Jesus making a conscious decision to do these things (for instance, holding the universe together, as per Colossians 1:17).

Sometimes a parable is given in order to present an uncomfortable truth—one which the hearers are not quite ready for. They often understand the parable and can make a correct judgment when called for—but they do not really understand how the parable is being used until later (sometimes days, months or years later). We might call this a *think-about-this-for-awhile* parable. A person might understand and correctly come to a conclusion about the parable; but what it represents is often more difficult for the hearer to take to an accurate conclusion. The ultimate truth has to simmer awhile in the person's brain.

When talking about a dog returning to its vomit, many people have seen this and are grossed out by it. But they know it happens, more often than not. What is hard for them is when you tell that person, "You are the dog returning to your vomit!" At that point, they may respond, "What the heck do you mean?"

The amount of time necessary for a crowd to grasp a parable varied. There are some parables given by Jesus that, even today, are debated as to their meaning.

Luke 8:4 **And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to Him, He said in a parable,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Luke 8:4 sets the scene. Jesus is surrounded by a great many people who have sought Him out and these people come to Him with varied motivations and backgrounds. Not everyone in His periphery are there to see the Savior of Israel.

Luke 8:5a **..."A sower went out to sow his seed.** (ESV; capitalized)

A farmer goes out to sow his seed. He is going to throw his seed out onto 4 different types of ground. Different things happen to the seeds as a result of the ground being different.

This is mostly an agrarian society; and virtually every person there understands about planting seeds. They all know about the various soils around Jerusalem. What they are hearing makes perfect sense to them (although they may not know why Jesus is talking about planting seeds).

These 4 kinds of ground represent the 4 kinds of responses truth gets in the souls of those who hear it.

Luke 8:5b **...And as he sowed, some fell along the path ...** (ESV; capitalized)

Throughout this parable, the seed remains the same; what is different is the type of soil the seeds falls into.

Some of the seeds were accidentally dropped down along the road, where the soil is hard and compacted because there is a lot of foot traffic.

Luke 8:5c **...and was trampled underfoot,...** (ESV; capitalized)

No seed can grab a foothold in such compacted earth. Furthermore, all of the people walking to and fro crush the seeds or they carries the seeds off in their to and fro walking.

If we understand the seed to represent the Word of God, it is just not receiving the thought and consideration that it ought to. It is right there, but no one is actually noticing it or really hearing it.

Luke 8:5d **...and the birds of the air devoured it.** (ESV; capitalized)

Birds of the sky, seeing the seed along to road, would swoop down and eat it. The seed did not begin to germinate, it had no soil that it could grow in. Birds who spotted the seed would scoop it up and take it away.

Similarly, some of those who come to see Jesus do not give any real consideration to the Word of God. They hear it, but it does not take root. As a result, truth simply disappears from their thinking. Jesus is saying, that Satan will take away this particular thought.

Luke 8:5 ..."**A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it.** (ESV; capitalized)

There are some places which are entirely unsuitable for planting. No one would intentionally plant seeds along a walkway. There are some who come to Jesus for a variety of reasons which do not include having an interest in the truth. The truth being spoken by Jesus does not even enter into their thinking. Therefore, what Jesus says in this open air forum means little to them. They are unsuitable souls where truth need not be planted (Jesus will also say, "**Don't cast your pearls before swine**").

Luke 8:6a **And some fell on the rock,**... (ESV; capitalized)

This is the second type of soul which hears the Word of God. In the parable, this is represented by some of the seeds falling upon the rocks or upon rocky places.

The NET Bible: *The rock in Palestine would be a limestone base lying right under the soil.*<sup>32</sup>

The nice thing about these illustrations is, everyone would understand them; everyone would have been familiar with the seed and the outcome of planting it in a variety of places. The people hearing Jesus understood perfectly the parable; but they did not know what the parable was about.

As an aside, there is no such thing as a mountain without a lot of rock. There are no actual mountains in the Houston area because there is no stone (apart from concrete excess which builders may have left behind, buried randomly in some yard).

Luke 8:6b **...and as it grew up, it withered away,**... (ESV; capitalized)

Since there is just a stony ground with perhaps a thin layer of soil, there is no place for the roots to go. The plant might spring up right away—say, after a rain—but it would wither because there is no way for water to nourish the roots.

Luke 8:6c **...because it had no moisture.** (ESV; capitalized)

A plant needs moisture, and they mostly take in this moisture via their root system. A thin layer of soil on rock cannot hold moisture for any length of time so, any seed planted here might spring up, but it would soon die. There is just no place for the roots to go. There is no consistent source of moisture.

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<sup>32</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?luk8.htm> (footnote); accessed November 16, 2019.

The Word of God must be believed; it must become a part of the soul. Taking root in one's soul means that it is considered, thought about and then believed. Here, a person may hear it, consider it; but no more than that. Therefore, there is no place for the Word of God to take root.

For the believer, all accurate spiritual information must be believed in order for it to become a part of one's soul. When it is believed and categorized with other bits of spiritual information, then the believer is able to compare spiritual information with other spiritual information.

Luke 8:6 **And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture.** (ESV; capitalized)

Although seed may germinate in a thin layer of soil, it will soon dry out and die. There is not enough soil to hold the moisture to supply the plant.

Jesus, when He taught, explained truths that some people listened to, but quickly rejected, before that truth could take any hold in their souls. The key is, they must believe the teaching, or it does not take root in their souls.

Luke 8:7a **And some fell among thorns,...** (ESV; capitalized)

The third place where the seed falls is into a place of thorns. So, all around the seed are worthless plants.

Luke 8:7b **...and the thorns grew up with it and choked it.** (ESV; capitalized)

The seeds may produce some plants at first, but the thorns are so thick that they choke out the good plants.

The Word of God falls into the soul of a person, and they hear it and they might even consider it; but that soul entertains a whole lot of ideas; and/or, they have a whole lot of stuff going on. With all of these other thoughts; with all of these other activities, the spiritual information is choked out.

Let me offer up an analogous situation. It's Sunday, and it's time for church, *but, your son has a birthday party to attend, the big game is on tv, there is a happening event downtown, your family has come into town and they are staying with you.* One of the things which goes by the wayside for Sunday is church. There is just way too much other stuff going on. Or, you might even go to church, but your mind is focused on all these other things which you are going to do on Sunday. So, you may listen a little here and a little there; and some truth might enter into your soul; but that information is choked out by the end of the day by everything else that is going on in your life.

Luke 8:7 **And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it.** (ESV; capitalized)



Another example of this is the person who has a great many religious philosophies floating around in their head. They are thinking about meditation, about the Mosaic Law, and about Buddhism. Well, they might take in a little truth that they hear, but, at some point, all of those other ideas are going to choke out the truth.

**Some seeds fell among the thorns (Luke 8:7)** (a graphic); from [Redeeming God](#); accessed February 23, 2023.

Luke 8:8a **And some fell into good soil...** (ESV; capitalized)

The final seed falls upon good fertile soil.

This is Bible doctrine which falls upon a soul that is interested, considers what they hear, and they believe the spiritual information.



Luke 8:8b **...and grew and yielded a hundredfold."** (ESV; capitalized)

This production is remarkable, some of it producing fruit a hundredfold. Whatever is being grown, there is a lot of it that springs up and grows to maturity.

In this case, divine truth is produced (whether it be the gospel or Bible doctrine or divine establishment thinking), and it is spread throughout, and more and more people hear it and more and more people believe it.

Luke 8:8c **As He said these things, He called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."** (ESV; capitalized)

Then Jesus says to those who are there, "If you have ears to hear what I am saying, then hear it."

Jesus is telling them, "Do you understand what I am saying? Listen to My words carefully! Believe the truth that I am teaching you."

Luke 8:8 **And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold." As He said these things, He called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."** (ESV; capitalized)

If you understand this parable, then consider it and believe it.



Jesus has just spoken the parable about seeds falling on four kinds of soil, and His disciples did not get it. Of course they understood why the seed did well on fertile ground but not along the side of the road; but they did not know what Jesus was trying to teach them.

Luke 8:9a **And when His disciples asked Him...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus apparently encouraged His disciples to think about His teaching and to ask questions. It is not clear whether they ask this of Him publically right then and there, or if they ask Him privately, later on, not wanting to appear ignorant by asking a question like that (which question is, essentially, *just what exactly are You saying?*)

Luke 8:9b **...what this parable meant...** (ESV; capitalized)

The actual parable itself—its surface meaning—is quite easy to understand. The sower throws seed on four different environments, three inhospitable, and one on welcoming and fertile soil. The plants spring up in the good soil (as we would all expect). But His disciples are actually asking Him, “What is the spiritual meaning of this parable?” Or, “What exactly is the message You are trying to explain to us?”

There is a very similar parable in Matt. 13:3–9, and the disciples come up to Him and ask Him a different question. Obviously, the disciples might ask Him more than one question; and, also, this parable could have been delivered to a different crowd, and the second time Jesus presents this parable, the disciples ask Him, **"Why do You speak to them in parables?"** (Matt. 13:10, ESV; capitalized). It is possible that the disciples had several questions, only one of which is recorded by Luke. It is possible that Jesus gave this parable on two occasions (or more), and the first time, they disciples asked, “Why do You teach with parables?” And the second question they ask, on a different occasion is, “What does this parable mean?” Given the similarity and the differences, it may be worth looking at both passages side-by-side (we will do that when we come to the very end of this section).

Luke 8:9 **And when His disciples asked Him what this parable meant...** (ESV; capitalized)

His disciples are saying, “We understand the seed and the four kinds of soil; and why production only occurs in the fourth case. But what exactly should this mean to us?”

Luke 8:10a **...He said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God,..."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus has just taught an average level parable. There were a crowd of people there to see Him, but we really do not know much about this crowd, apart from the twelve being there with Him and the women are there (as well as, I would assume, many other disciples). So, there are at least fifteen regulars there—probably many more—as well as a group of those possibly hearing Jesus for the first time (or 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> time).

This is still early days in the public ministry of Jesus—we are probably still in the first year of His public ministry—and, no doubt, the disciples were somewhat shy. They do not want to admit to their ignorance, they do not want to speak up in a crowd and sound ignorant. My guess is, there were some religious scholars there in the audience, and the disciples did not want to look like dumb-butts in front of them.

My guess is, at first, Peter leaned in to John and asked, “Now, that parable about the seed—did you get that?”

And John looks around, and then admits, “No, I did not understand all of it.” (his answer meaning, *I did not understand it at all!*)

So one of the disciples finally just did it and asked the Lord directly, “What exactly did You mean about the seed being scattering hither and yon?” My feeling is, they asked for this explanation privately, after the large group had gone and Jesus was done teaching that crowd.

Jesus does not answer that question, at first, but He tells them something else. What could be the case is, the disciples have asked two separate questions, one of which is recorded here, the other in Matthew 13. In the alternative, Jesus may have given this parable twice, and one time the disciples ask the question from Matthew; and the other time, they ask the question found here in Luke. We will look at these passages side-by-side later on in this study.

Jesus answers His disciples (there are at least fifteen of them, and possibly many more than that). “Listen,” He leans into them, “**It is for you [all] to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.**” *What I am teaching, you need to know*, in other words.

*Mystery* is the secret doctrine of a cult, fraternity or religious group. These are things which were not known outside of that group. “This is inside information, but it is information that you all need to know,” Jesus tells them. Paul will use this same word to describe doctrines peculiar to the Church Age (things that were not even predicted in the Old Testament).

Jesus apparently allowed His disciples to ask Him anything about what He was teaching, which is exactly what we would expect.

Luke 8:10b **...but for others they are in parables...** (ESV; capitalized)

“But to the others in the crowd,” Jesus continues, “I am only teaching them in parables.” Now, some people in that crowd may have understood what Jesus was teaching; but I would not be shocked if no one understood what He was saying.

Jesus will then explain *why* He is teaching those in the general crowd using parables:

Luke 8:10c **...so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'** (ESV; capitalized)

“Listen, they may think that they see what is going on, but they really don’t,” Jesus says, “And they hear My words, but they are not taking my teaching and putting it all together.”

This is fascinating, because we have the greatest Teacher in the world tell His disciples, “I am teaching these people in such a way that they will not understand My teaching.” Now, figure that one out.

Luke 8:10 ...He said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'" (ESV; capitalized)

Now, this is kind of weird, isn't it? Jesus is flat out telling His disciples that He is teaching in this manner so that the others, who have come to hear Him speak, do not understand what He is teaching. So, here is the greatest teacher in human history, and He is telling His closest students, “I really did not want them to understand what I am teaching.”

I know you are reading this, and you are thinking, “Wait, what?” You were first interested in the parable, and you wanted it explained (or maybe you knew what Jesus was saying and you just wanted this to be confirmed in your own mind), but now you hear that Jesus did not want these people to understand Him. All of a sudden, you are willing to set that parable aside, and ask, *What, why?* It does not make any sense, does it? And, furthermore, you may have read this passage several times in the past, and you did not realize what Jesus actually said right here. Although Jesus is a great teacher, there will be times when what He says will be quite perplexing. He clearly wants His disciples to know these things, but



what about these other people who have traveled from their own cities to come and hear Him? “Well,” Jesus says, “I want you, My disciples, to understand; but not necessarily the masses who showed up.” That statement ought to seem somewhat odd, to say the least.

What Jesus says here seems to indicate that He will explain these parables to His disciples, but not to the wider audience. Why is that?

### **Why Doesn't Jesus Teach His Entire Audience?**

1. I find this quite fascinating that Jesus will teach the disciples what this parable means, but for most of those who heard the parable, they do not know what He was saying. Now, you would think, the purpose of a teacher is to make certain that those in the audience understand what is being said, which means, sometimes, you have to stop and explain further. But, Jesus does not do this. He will explain what the parable means, but it appears that only His disciples will get this explanation. The wider audience who have come from all over to hear Him are not being taught the meaning of the parable which He spoke to them.
2. It might be worthwhile to point out that Jesus' disciples were not just the twelve (v. 1), but that there were many others there with Him regularly—the women (v. 2). I have suggested that they may have been more. When Jesus chose the twelve, did He look out into His audience and pick the twelve who simply stayed with Him? I would guess that, when Jesus chose the twelve, that He chose them out from a much larger group.
3. Jesus appears to choose not to teach those who have come to Him from their own cities to hear Him (v. 1). Or, at least, not this particular principle.
4. Let me suggest several reasons. First, many of those who came to Jesus came to see perhaps a miracle or a sign of some sort. Some have come to be healed by Him and some just want to see Him out of curiosity. Also, some are decidedly against Jesus, already, and they are looking to end His ministry and to stop Him from teaching. We have examples of all four types of people throughout the gospels. This possibly describes all or most of the crowd who had come to see Him.
5. Have you ever heard a teacher sound very profound, but you did not really know what he was saying? Yet, many in the audience liked what the speaker said, or how he said it, even though they could not explain it themselves. For many of the people there, that is what is going on. Notice that no one from the general crowd speaks up, saying, "But, Mr. Jesus, what exactly are you telling us?" People on positive signals will ask that. They would be thinking, "I am certain that You taught something profound, but I am not getting it." But only the disciples ask the question (again, the disciples is likely more than just the twelve). As an aside, I have heard radio preachers who have a ten-second clip of them talking, and it is exactly as I have described here—it sounds profound, but is of no spiritual benefit and imparts no actual spiritual knowledge.
6. How Jesus taught in many ways parallels the teaching of the Old Testament. That is, there is the way that the Hebrew people understood those teachings, but it appears that, there is more to this teaching than what they understood. We can, hundreds and even thousands of years later, begin to more fully appreciate all that is found in the Old Testament.



## Why Doesn't Jesus Teach His Entire Audience?

- 1) Let me offer an example of an OT teaching which becomes much more clear centuries later: Abraham offered up his son Isaac, the son whom he loves, as a sacrifice to God. When this was originally studied for many centuries, it was understood that Abraham was willing to do anything that God asked. Abraham was completely and fully obedient to God. That was how nearly every person reading and studying this passage understood it.
- 2) In the light of the crucifixion, we understand that the offering of Isaac as a sacrifice to God to parallel Jesus offering Himself for our sins. Isaac being offered by his father is the type; Jesus being offered for our sins is the antitype (that is, the fulfillment of the type).
- 3) So, Jesus, in this same tradition, provides teaching that may not have been understood by the people in His audience but we, hundreds of years later, might better appreciate what He was teaching.
7. This method of teaching stymied the pharisees and scribes and sadducees, who wanted to arrest Jesus and to stop Him from teaching. How can they complain about parables like this? They don't really understand what He is teaching, so how can they complain about it? They cannot claim that His teaching violates their understanding of the Law because they don't understand what Jesus is saying. They cannot complain that He talks about seed being thrown onto different types of soil.
8. Those who want to know the teaching of God, that would be given to them. They may not understand it right while Jesus is teaching, but, days or weeks or even months later, many of them would get it.
9. Also, interestingly enough, some spiritual principles are better retained if taught in a story, parable or proverb. It simply stays with the mind better, which is why we have many mnemonic tricks to help us remember things.
  - 1) Something which I learned from R. B. Thieme, Jr. was, occasionally you can dress up a concept with a term or with a story or an illustration; so that the hearer (me) remembers that concept, because I remember the illustration that Bob taught.
  - 2) I attempt to do that same thing from time to time. I try to provide something which you can see (in your mind's eye), so that you understand the principle that I am attempting to get across).
  - 3) One of the great illustrations that I came up with is God and His ability to perform miracles. We could, if God so chose to, witness 20 miracles each and every day; but God does not do that. I made a comparison to the policeman who has a utility belt with a half-dozen or more things attached to that utility belt. In almost every encounter that you or I will have with a policeman, he will *not* reach for something in his belt. If your encounter with a policemen has him reaching for something in his belt, then there is a problem. One of the resources in God's utility belt is His ability to perform a miracle; but He does not choose to reach to His utility belt in order to perform a miracle. In fact, that is something that God rarely does.

## Why Doesn't Jesus Teach His Entire Audience?

This is because a miracle is not necessarily something that will convince anyone of anything. It is my hope that you heard (read) this illustration, that you understand it, and it makes an impression on your mind. Ideally speaking, this is something that every commentator or pastor-teacher is able to do—to take a concept and to provide an illustration or a teaching technique which helps to implant a doctrinal concept into the mind of his audience.

- 4) 2000 years later, we read about Jesus' illustration here about planting seeds into various kinds of soils, and we understand the meaning of the parable; and it stays with us (mentally speaking).
- 5) And yet, Jesus did not mean for most of His audience to understand this illustration.
10. Finally, one more reason why Jesus taught with parables that His audience did not understand: the ones who would really spread the gospel message are the Lord's disciples and not the Lord Himself. This is one of those unique features of Christianity when compared to other religions. Religious leaders work long and hard at developing their teachings; and then they work equally hard at disseminating these teachings. Although Jesus obviously taught throughout His public ministry, it was Paul and others who really laid out the doctrines of Christianity for the Church Age. To put this another way, this was something that Jesus did not have to do. This is why He concentrated on teaching His disciples, but He did not always teach the masses in a way that they would fully understand His messages.
11. To take this explanation one step further: the people that Jesus taught were, for the most part, negative. The Jewish people, as a whole, did not accept Jesus as their Savior. So many in His audience would not believe in Him; so their understanding Him completely was not a necessity. Jesus, because His words were recorded, spoke to a much larger audience (us). We are able to, along with the disciples, hear and understand His explanations.

God does not owe the truth to any person who is not really interested in it.

### Lesson 232: Luke 8:10

### Jesus' Disciples Ask About the Parable of the Soils

Jesus has just spoken a parable about seed falling on different types of ground. His disciples ask him what the parable means and Jesus answers with this:

Luke 8:10 ...He said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'" (ESV; capitalized)

The Free Bible Version gives a nice translation: Jesus replied, "You've been given insights into the mysteries of God's kingdom, but the rest are given illustrations, so that, 'Even



though they see, they don't really see; and even though they hear, they don't really understand.'

Let's review a few Old Testament passages which seem to have this same message (the ESV; capitalized is used below):

Deuteronomy 29:2–4 And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: "You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders. **But to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.** (ESV; capitalized)

The older members of the Exodus generation, despite seeing many miracles, rejected the teaching of Moses and the promises of God. They rebelled again and again against Moses' leadership. They did not have a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear because, after salvation adjustment to the justice of God, they were continually negative toward any further teaching. As additional spiritual information was revealed to them, they could not take it in, because they did not have the appropriate spiritual background to compare it with.

When it comes to the perception of spiritual information, it is always a grace process, Old or New Testament. God provides everything necessary, but the individual believer must choose to listen and to believe. If the believer is on negative signals after salvation, God cannot give him a heart of understanding, because he does not want to understand it. He does not want truth.

Isaiah was called by the Lord in Isaiah 6:

Isaiah 6:8 And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I [Isaiah] said, "Here I am! Send me." (ESV; capitalized)

Isaiah asks for God to send him. In this way, he is acting as a type of Christ (people in the Old Testament who are types do not realize that they are types).

Isaiah 6:9–10 And He said, "Go, and say to this people: **"Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.** Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."

 (ESV; capitalized)

The Israelites would hear Isaiah, but almost all of them would reject His message. What he was teaching did not line up with the false teaching that they held to at this time.

Again, spiritual growth is purely a grace process, but the individual must choose to listen and to believe.

Isaiah 6:11a Then I said, "How long, O Lord?" (ESV; capitalized)

Isaiah wanted to know how long the negative volition of the people might continue.

Isaiah 6:11b–12 **And He said: "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste, and the LORD removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land."** (ESV; capitalized)

God warns Isaiah that this may continue until He subjects the people of Israel to the 5<sup>th</sup> cycle of discipline (or the 5<sup>th</sup> stage of national discipline, which is the removal of the people from the land).

This negative volition was a perennial problem of the people of Israel; and it was in full bloom when Jesus had His public ministry.

In Isaiah 44, Israel is firmly entrenched in idolatry:

Isaiah 44:12 **The ironsmith takes a cutting tool and works it over the coals. He fashions it with hammers and works it with his strong arm. He becomes hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water and is faint.** (ESV; capitalized)

The ironsmith works long and hard on a project, to the point of almost fainting.

Isaiah 44:13 **The carpenter stretches a line; he marks it out with a pencil. He shapes it with planes and marks it with a compass. He shapes it into the figure of a man, with the beauty of a man, to dwell in a house.** (ESV; capitalized)

The carpenter builds an object similar to the body of a man to actually live in his house. He is designing and building an idol.

Isaiah 44:14 **He cuts down cedars, or he chooses a cypress tree or an oak and lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest. He plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it.** (ESV; capitalized)

The idolater makes plans long in advance to do these things.

Isaiah 44:15 **Then it becomes fuel for a man. He takes a part of it and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread. Also he makes a god and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls down before it.** (ESV; capitalized)

The Israelite uses the wood for fuel; but he also uses it to make a god to worship. He makes an idol (he makes god in his own image) and then he worships that image. It is up to the man what part of the tree becomes a god and part of it is burned for warmth.

This is really not much different than the practice of humanism today, which uses man's thinking and ideas to solve the most basic questions and situations in life.

Isaiah 44:16 Half of it he burns in the fire. Over the half he eats meat; he roasts it and is satisfied. Also he warms himself and says, "Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!" (ESV; capitalized)

The wood serves man in several ways. He uses it to cook his meat; and he uses it in order to warm himself.

Isaiah 44:17 And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god!" (ESV; capitalized)

Unfortunately, the Israelite also uses the wood to make an idol from; and he worships this idol. In fact, he prostrates himself before this idol, which he has just made, and asks the idol to deliver him.

Isaiah 44:18 They know not, nor do they discern, for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand. (ESV; capitalized)

Because this person has rejected the God of Israel, he cannot take in divine information. He is unable to assimilate truth. God has shut down this grace process of perception, because the man is negative toward the truth. As a result, he uses a portion of a tree for fire, a portion to cook with, and a portion to fashion into a god. The man is unable to see the incongruity in such a position.

**Application:** When men are blinded by negative volition, they have all kinds of thoughts which are contradictory. Liberal progressives today believe that they are the true saviors and guardians of the rights of women. At the same time, these contemporary liberals believe that a man can identify as a woman and then compete in women's sports and use the same locker room that women use. To someone on the outside and looking in, this makes no sense. They are contradictory positions; yet the liberal progressive does not see it. He believes that he can hold both positions unironically.

Isaiah 44:19 No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, "Half of it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals; I roasted meat and have eaten. And shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?" (ESV; capitalized)

The person who makes the idol does not ever consider that he is falling before meaningless block of wood. He could have just as easily used that wood to warm himself with a fire or to cook over for his next meal.

Enough of Israel changed their minds about their spiritual direction during the ministry of Isaiah, that there was some recovery which took place. This was not true under Jeremiah. The people never changed their minds about their God during the time of Jeremiah.

The people have fallen even further into reversionism in Jeremiah 5:

Jeremiah 5:21 "Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not. (ESV; capitalized)

Jeremiah puts the onus directly upon the people. They are foolish and lacking in sense. They have eyes, but they cannot see what is happening. They could not interpret contemporary history, even though Jeremiah was laying out all of the details for them. They have ears, but they are unable to hear the truth.

Jeremiah 5:22 Do you not fear Me? declares the LORD. Do you not tremble before Me? I placed the sand as the boundary for the sea, a perpetual barrier that it cannot pass; though the waves toss, they cannot prevail; though they roar, they cannot pass over it. (ESV; capitalized)

If they feared the Lord, they would listen to Jeremiah. They would recognize the state of affairs that they are in and they would look to God, through the words of Jeremiah, to understand how they might be delivered.

Just as there is a specific shoreline for land and a specific sea; no matter what the sea does, it cannot go through the boundary of the shoreline. This is how intractable history and judgment are. The people of Israel have gone right up to that boundary and they will not go through it. They are violating this boundary in the time of Jeremiah, and they will find themselves judged by God as a result.

Jeremiah 5:23 But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; they have turned aside and gone away. (ESV; capitalized)

The people in the days of Jeremiah were stubborn; they rebelled against the Lord. They have turned aside and gone away from the Lord. When they move away from the Lord, they move away from their own deliverance.

Jeremiah 5:24 They do not say in their hearts, 'Let us fear the LORD our God, who gives the rain in its season, the autumn rain and the spring rain, and keeps for us the weeks appointed for the harvest.' (ESV; capitalized)

They do not think about the Lord or the provision of the Lord. They do not put these things together.

Jeremiah 5:25 Your iniquities have turned these away, and your sins have kept good from you. (ESV; capitalized)

Their sins and iniquities guide them away from God; and they have kept the divine good from coming to them.

Jeremiah 5:26 For wicked men are found among my people; they lurk like fowlers lying in wait. They set a trap; they catch men. (ESV; capitalized)

There are wicked men among the Israelites and they lure others away from God toward their own vain and worthless concepts and beliefs.

Jeremiah 5:27–28 Like a cage full of birds, their houses are full of deceit; therefore they have become great and rich; they have grown fat and sleek. They know no bounds in deeds of evil; they judge not with justice the cause of the fatherless, to make it prosper, and they do not defend the rights of the needy. (ESV; capitalized)

Some of these people have become quite wealthy, and for this reason, see no reason to follow the Lord.

If you know anything about Hollywood, actors do not believe that the same rules of morality apply to them. They know no bounds when it comes to evil deeds. They may concern themselves with political opinions, but not with the needs of those who have much less than they have. The same is true of many politicians.

Jeremiah 5:29 Shall I not punish them for these things? declares the LORD, and shall I not avenge Myself on a nation such as this?" (ESV; capitalized)

God asks, "Should I not avenge Myself on a nation like this?" (ESV; capitalized)

So you see in all of these circumstances, there is a phrase very similar to what Jesus said to the disciples:

This is what Jesus said to His disciples (I will now use the Berean Study Bible):

Luke 8:10 He replied, "The knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, 'though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.'" (BSB)

So Jesus is stating a principle found many times in the Old Testament. People can hear the truth, but not really hear it. God can show them signs and give them meaning, but they reject it. If they reject the truth, then they have eyes that don't see and ears that do not hear.

Deuteronomy 29:4 Yet to this day the LORD has not given you a mind to understand, eyes to see, or ears to hear. (ESV; capitalized)

God made the truth available to the Israelites in the desert, but they continually rejected it until God took them all out by the sin unto death.

Isaiah 6:9 And He replied, "Go and tell this people: 'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.'" (ESV; capitalized)

Isaiah 6:10 *Make the hearts of this people calloused; deafen their ears and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.* (ESV; capitalized)

The soul of man builds up scar tissue when they reject Him. So, even if they hear the truth, they will not understand or believe it.

Isaiah 29:14 *Therefore I will again confound these people with wonder upon wonder. The wisdom of the wise will perish, and the intelligence of the intelligent will be hidden.* (ESV; capitalized)

God reveals truth, but they reject it.

Isaiah 44:18 *They cannot comprehend or understand, for He has shut their eyes so they cannot see, and closed their minds so they cannot understand.* (ESV; capitalized)

Isaiah brought truth to the people of God and their initial response was to reject his message.

Jeremiah 5:21 *Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes but do not see, who have ears but do not hear.* (ESV; capitalized)

Although the people of Israel were eventually turned around for Isaiah's warnings, they did not turn around (repent) for Jeremiah's.

Jesus, in this way, had come to His people with a message of truth, a message which they could choose to believe or reject—in fact, Jesus Himself was the message; He was the truth. People could hear and see and believe in Him; or they could see Him without being able to see Him. They could hear His words without being able to understand them. At the heart of this matter was their volition and most of Israel rejected Jesus, their Messiah.

**Application:** Jesus has not changed, but the United States, in the year that I write this (2023) has certainly changed. The truth is there for us to see, but if we, as a nation, have rejected Jesus, seeing, we will not see and hearing, we will not hear. What we face, as a client nation to God, is discipline from God. Never before has a nation been blessed as much as our nation has been blessed; but to whom much is given, much is expected. We were a nation whose people believed in the God of the Bible and trusted in His Son Jesus. But so many people today have rejected Jesus and have rejected His Word. Similarly, so many believers today lack the desire to know His Word, so that they have no impact in this world.

In case you are not familiar with the term *client nation*, this is a nation through which God acts, and a nation which God blesses.

**The Characteristics of a Client Nation (originally by R. B. Thieme, Jr.)**



1. The client nation has a civil government and general policy based on the laws of divine establishment. This includes the function of free enterprise within the nation.
2. In a client nation, there must be unfettered evangelism. We who evangelize must similarly recognize the freedom of others. Freedom means privacy. Our job is to clearly present the gospel but we cannot force people to accept Christ. We provide people with information; but they must use their volition in order to make the decision for themselves. It is wrong on the part of Christians to pressure people.
3. A client nation will allow for the establishment of autonomous local churches. To the extent that local churches form into denominations, the local church is being turned into a franchise. However, each local church must be independent. Denominations can become the enemy of a client nation, as often their boundaries are not within the borders of the client nation. Autonomous local churches cannot be connected with other churches to form denominations or spheres of influence.
4. More importantly, the church should never become aligned with the political power of the state. Believing in Jesus Christ must always be a matter of free will and never subject to the coercion of the state. One of the things that damaged client nation England more than anything else was the fact that Henry VIII established his own church and made it part of the state. Political power and the church must never become intermingled, because there will come a time when political expediency will override accurate Bible doctrine.
5. Vigorous and dynamic Bible teaching for believers must be a part of a client nation. This teaching should emphasize the protocol system in the plan of God.
6. Missionary activity is initiated from client nations (generally from local churches). However, missionaries must appeal to the people of other nations under the indigenous principle of not interfering with foreign governments but providing both gospel and Bible teaching for people in the nation. No missionary should ever interfere with the government or become involved in the politics of the nation where he goes. This must be the case, even under the worst oppression imaginable. Believers are there to provide the truth; not to improve the nation politically.
7. Finally, a client nation provides a haven of toleration for the dispersed Jews. Jews should be free to move into a client nation as they find necessary without facing discrimination or retribution.

We studied the client nation in much more detail back in Genesis 18 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)); and the full doctrine can be found here: the **Doctrine of the Client Nation** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

## Lesson 233: Luke 8:5–8, 11–14

## Jesus now explains the parable

This is the parable that Jesus would explain to His disciples:

"A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns, and

the thorns grew up with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold." As He said these things, He called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (Luke 8:5–8; ESV; capitalized)

Luke 8:11a **Now the parable is this:...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus spoke this parable to a crowd of people. However, clearly many people did not understand what He taught. In fact, His disciples came up to Him and asked for an explanation. The very tenor of the previous verse suggests that this explanation was given to the Lord's inner circle; that this was done privately (this inner circle was more than just the twelve and a few women).

So Jesus says, "This is what the parable means..."

Luke 8:11b **...The seed is the word of God.** (ESV; capitalized)

The entire parable was about how a farmer was sowing seed, and he threw the seed out along the road, where the soil was compacted. Carts or cattle or whatever either crushed that seed, or birds came and ate it. Some seed was tossed out upon rocky soil, and there was no place for the seed to take root. It might germinate due to a little rain or a mist in the morning, and it then begin to spring up, but there were no roots because there was no place for the roots to go. A portion of plant might spring up, but it would be very temporary and it would die out. The farmer threw some of his seed among the briars and brambles, so that the seed took root and it began to grow, but it was growing among all of these briars which choked it out. It had no space of its own wherein to grow. Finally, the farmer threw some seed onto some good soil, and the seed grew and produced a large amount of produce—an amazing amount.

Jesus begins by telling His disciples the key to this parable: this seed being scattered is the Word of God.

The Word of God can be the gospel of Jesus Christ (**believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved**); or it can be the word of truth (that is, Bible doctrine). The explanation for each place that the seed is sown may focus on one or the other.

Luke 8:11 **Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.** (ESV; capitalized)

First, Jesus defines exactly the key element of the parable.

Luke 8:12a **The ones along the path are those who have heard;...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus explains the first circumstance, of the seed which is scattered along the way (on the road). This represents the first group of people who hear the Word of God being taught.

At this point, it is apparent that Jesus is talking about His audience, about the people who are coming and listening to Him. He is teaching the Word of God and the people who have come and listen are represented by four kinds of soil.

A portion of the Lord's audience who hear Him teach the word are like roads and pathways where the seed is thrown—there is no place for the seed to go and there is no moisture.

Luke 8:12b ...then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts,... (ESV; capitalized)

The devil goes out and he takes the word away from their hearts. No explanation is given here as to how this is done or by what means Satan is able to do this, but in some way, when someone hears the Word of God and their heart is hard, they either do not hear it, do not perceive what it says, so that, at some point, it is gone. The content of what they hear may remain with them for a few minutes or even hours, but, at some point, it is no longer with them.

A good modern-day example of this is, there are Facebook pages where there are debates between atheists and Christians. Now, how often have these atheists been exposed to the gospel? Maybe several times a week (depending upon how often they come to this page—some spend hours on this page). Nevertheless, they will post memes and arguments which do not deal with the actual gospel of Jesus Christ. Most of them present hell as a place where bad people go. They often present Christians as people who are trying really, really hard to be good so that they are not cast into hell.

So many of them have to have heard, *believe in Jesus and you are saved*; and yet they continue to reference heaven and hell as places for good and bad people, respectively, in the Christian religion.

Luke 8:12c ...so that they may not believe and be saved. (ESV; capitalized)

Just as there is no soil along the road where the seed can take hold and grow, there is no place in the hardened heart for the Word of God to take root and grow. And this information given just goes away.

In the Word of God, there is the gospel information that one might believe in Jesus and be saved; but that information (the word) is taken away from the person, so that they may not believe it.

The exact mechanics are not explained here, but they are explained elsewhere in the Bible. Is this a natural process where spiritual information is simply rejected by the heart and leaves the consciousness; or is there an actual process by which it can be removed by a third party (Satan)? This sounds as if there is a way that Satan might remove this information from the soul of a man.

I do not want to speculate too far on this, but when the unbeliever hears the gospel, God the Holy Spirit makes that information real to the hearer over some period of time—how long is that time? A few minutes or hours?

Whereas, I do not like to take personal experience to solve a theological problem, but when I heard the gospel and it caught my ear, it did not make any sense because the person who gave me the gospel made little sense. However a few days or weeks later, I was really unhappy with my life and I began to look at the book of John (this was probably in the Bible which my parents bought for me when I was a kid). Was the gospel information given me—all jumbled up as it was—still with me? How did I happen to be looking at the book of John? This all took place over 50 years ago, so I only vaguely recall those two events and somehow connect them. In any case, when I read, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved,” I called God out on this verse and said, “Okay, I claim this; I stand on this.” (I do not recall the exact words that I thought or said.) I was 21 years old when this took place; and I am 72 years old today. There was a period of time during which, I knew I had to make some kind of decision; and reading the first few chapters of the book of John told me that Jesus was the key to this decision.

I think what we might conclude is, the Holy Spirit makes the gospel information that we hear real (this is not evaluated by our own carnal nature, as **the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit**). So, when hearing the gospel, there is apparently a window during which we can ponder what we have just heard and believe or not believe. There is a point of time where the Holy Spirit stops functioning as a human spirit, and that time window closes. Is Satan made aware of when this takes place? Does he petition (or does a demon petition) to remove the Holy Spirit from the person who has just heard the gospel? I would give a tentative yes to each of those questions.

Luke 8:12 **The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.** (ESV; capitalized)

In the first case, the seed is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The unbeliever hears it and the Holy Spirit allows this information to be heard and understood. However, there is a limited window of opportunity. Exactly how Satan figures into this picture is unclear. Is he allowed to influence the hearer of the gospel? Does he petition God to remove this knowledge?

So the unbeliever hears the gospel message, but his heart is hardened (from a build up of scar tissue) and he rejects it. The spiritual information remains in the thinking of this person for a limited amount of time. Maybe a few minutes; maybe even a few days. However, it does disappear after a time.

In other words, there is an expiration date on spiritual truth for those who do not believe it.

**Luke 8:11–12 (NLT)** (a graphic); from [heart Light](#); accessed February 23, 2023.

Luke 8:13a **And the ones on the rock...** (ESV; capitalized)

Case #2 is where the seed falls upon rocky soil. So, there is no place for the roots to go. Even if the plant can take some sort of root, the compacted soil and rock cannot take enough root for the plant to grow properly.



**The seeds that fell on the footpath represent those who hear the message, only to have the devil come and take it away from their hearts and prevent them from believing and being saved.**

- Luke 8:11-12 NLT -

Luke 8:13b **...are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy.** (ESV; capitalized)

This is analogous to the person who hears the Word of God and they receive it with great joy. So, this is a person who has heard the gospel and they believe and they are saved.

Luke 8:13c **But these have no root;...** (ESV; capitalized)

However, such a person does not allow anything more to take root in their soul. So, for a period of time—a few days, a few weeks or even months—this person has believed and they are enthusiastic and they might go to church or join some Christian organization of some sort; but there is no more spiritual information being taken in and believed. So the plant may spring up, but without a root system to sustain it, it quickly dies.

Luke 8:13d **...they believe for a while,...** (ESV; capitalized)

So, for such a person, there is a time frame during which they believe. A person who has believed the gospel of Jesus Christ is saved, and saved forever, and has a permanent place in heaven. However, salvation does not insure that we will become a great Christian or even a mediocre Christian.

Luke 8:13e **...and in time of testing fall away.** (ESV; capitalized)

Such a believer has no roots for his faith. He may hear spiritual information, but he chooses to ignore it or set it aside or reject it.

When you plant a plant, you are to dig out a very large area around where it will go, and you will break the soil up. If you have a plant in a 4" pot, you do not dig a 4" hole in the



ground, just large enough for the plant, and put it in. You might dig 1–2' around and down, break up that soil, and then plant the plant. This is so the roots are able to break through the soil. If the roots are not healthy, the plant is not healthy. If the roots have a place to go, they will spread out and take in nourishment. This will give the plant strength.

So, the person who at first received the Word of God with gladness, peels off and goes his own way. They did not put down any roots. Now, the person may continue to remember the gospel and remember that they are saved—but that is the full extent of their Christian life.

Luke 8:13 **And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away.** (ESV; capitalized)

This is the person who hears the gospel and believes it; but it takes no root. That is, they can be saved, but they do not learn additional material in order to anchor the original information down into their soul. Therefore, they can enter into a time of testing and lose it all (they are still saved, but they may not even know that).

Recently, we made mention of the Exodus generation. They were all saved, they all followed Moses out of Egypt; but, they never adjusted after that. They did not understand logistical grace; they did not understand God's plan for Israel; they did not adhere to the Law of God. Bible doctrine took no root in their souls. The seed fell upon rocky soil, and there was no place for it to take root.

Luke 8:14a **And as for what fell among the thorns,...** (ESV; capitalized)

The third case is where the seed is thrown into a mess of thorns (or briars and brambles). The seed will take root, it will grow, but it will grow up along with these additional, non-productive plants.

Luke 8:14b **...they are those who hear,...** (ESV; capitalized)

So, this group hears the word. Now, apparently they hear the gospel and believe, because they grow.

Luke 8:14c **...but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life,...** (ESV; capitalized)

But this person, who has heard the gospel and believes, and possibly even experiences some limited spiritual growth, is also faced with worries and problems; or they enjoy some prosperity and they have a lot of money or things (or this prosperity might mean a good wife and family); or they face these lusts in their lives—lusts for money, for sex, for alcohol, for drugs, for power—and these things are too much for the young believer. The believer may experience some spiritual growth, but these other things come into his life and choke off his positive volition.



Bible class night comes up, and he is too tired; or, he meets a very attractive woman and he pursues her that night, taking her out on a date instead. Or, personal problems become difficult to deal with, and he is too depressed to go to church (and I am giving whatever church the benefit of the doubt, that actual spiritual growth is occurring at his church<sup>33</sup>). Perhaps, it is the weekend and he takes his family on a vacation, so that they all skip church. The things of life simply spring up and take the place of his interest in spiritual things.

Luke 8:14d ...and their fruit does not mature. (ESV; capitalized)

As a result, the plant does not bear any fruit. So, we are talking about someone who is saved—they heard the gospel and they believed—and, perhaps, they have even experienced some spiritual growth. However, the things of life choke out this person's spiritual life so that he does not grow spiritually. No spiritual growth means no production (you cannot produce good fruit until you have become a mature plant).

Luke 8:14 And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. (ESV; capitalized)

There is the person who believes the gospel. They hear it and they believe it. But, they either have a lot of stuff going on or a lot of other things in their mind. At some point, everything in their life chokes out the truth, whether it be the gospel message, Bible doctrine or divine establishment thinking. They could be saved, but they no longer realize this. Or they may even continue their lives having some knowledge of their salvation, but the things of life completely choke out the teaching of Bible doctrine. As a result, their spiritual growth is minimal.

Next lesson is when the seed falls on good soil.

## Lessons 234–235: Luke 8:4–15

## Comparing the gospel records

We have been studying this parable which Jesus gave and His disciples did not understand.

"A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold." As He said these things, He called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (Luke 8:5–8; ESV; capitalized)

We have covered the first three types of soil. Now we will study the fourth type of soil.

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<sup>33</sup> Maybe it is and maybe it isn't.

Luke 8:15a *As for that in the good soil,...* (ESV; capitalized)

The final example given by Jesus is the seed which finds its way into good soil.

Luke 8:15b *...they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart,...* (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus speaks of their hearts as being virtuous and good. The first word that describes the heart is kalos (καλός) [pronounced *kal-OSS*], which means, *good (literally or morally), that is, valuable or virtuous*. Strong's #2570. So first, the heart must be righteous. That is, the person must have imputed righteousness. This takes place when the person believes in Jesus Christ. God imputes righteousness to that person's soul. This is what is known as a judicial imputation. There is no natural home or target for God's righteousness in our souls. Therefore, what is imputed (God's righteousness) can only take place on the basis of our volition (which is expressed when we believe in the Lord). Furthermore, a judicial imputation may not violate God's essence. In other words, God cannot impute righteousness to us simply because He loves us and he wants to do that.

The reason that God is able to impute His righteousness to us is because His Son accepted the judicial imputation of our sins when He was on the cross. There was no natural home or target in the Lord for our sins. He did not have a sin nature; He had never committed any personal sins; and Adam's original sin was not imputed to Him *at birth* because there was no place for it to go (we are born with the natural target or home for Adam's original sin: we have a genetically formed sin nature, inherited from our fathers).

Now, for our sins to be imputed to Jesus, the Lord had to accept them. Jesus had to make the decision to take on our sins and the punishment for them (the volition of the recipient is always necessary for a judicial imputation). This does not violate the essence of God, because these sins were imputed to the Lord's humanity. Our sins could not be imputed to His Deity, because that would violate His essence as God. The Lord's Deity could not accept our sins.

Luke 8:15b *...this refers to those who have righteous hearts which are in fellowship (and are, therefore, good).* (Kukis paraphrase)

The second word used to describe our hearts is agathos (ἀγαθός) [pronounced *ag-ath-OSS*], which refers to *(intrinsic) good, benefit; upright, honourable*. Strong's #18. In other words, the heart must be receptive to spiritual information (not all believers automatically desire spiritual information). This is a person who has positive volition toward the Word of God.

Furthermore, we cannot take in the Word of God when out of fellowship. It can only come to us while in fellowship. Agathos is a word used to describe the believer in fellowship.

No matter what your personal weaknesses, you can rebound (name your sins to God), as a believer, and be filled with the Spirit; and then you can exercise positive volition toward the Word of God. As you take in more and more Bible doctrine, you grow and you begin to push away these other things of life. This does not mean that you reject your family or quit your job; it simply means that, you put yourself in a place to hear the Word of God being taught and you believe it. As you grow spiritually, God begins to change your heart (that is, your thinking) with the infusion of Bible doctrine.

Luke 8:15a-b [Finally] the seed [which was planted] in the good soil: these are [those], with virtuous and good hearts hear the word and hold onto [it],... (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Summing up, to be good soil, you must first have God's imputed righteousness; you must be in fellowship; and then you must be positive toward the teaching of the Word of God.

This is analogous to the plant which is in good soil and it sends its roots down into that rich, well-watered soil. The end result is, it grows and it bears fruit.

Luke 8:15c ...and bear fruit with patience. (ESV; capitalized)

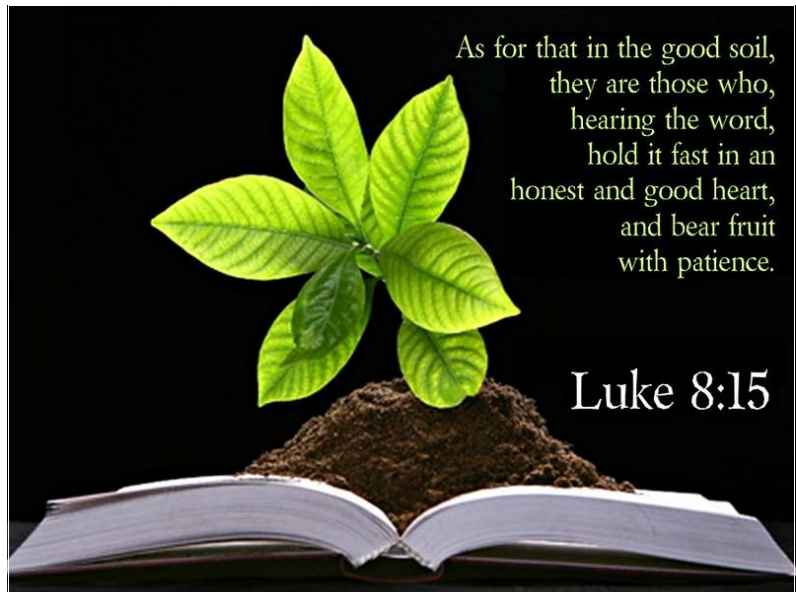
The key word here is the feminine singular noun *hupomonê* (ὑπομονή) [pronounced *hoop-ohm-ohn-AY*], which means, *steadfastness, constancy, patience, endurance, perseverance; remaining under pressure, having a relaxed mental attitude under pressure; not swerving from a deliberate purpose*. Strong's #5281. This fruit bearing does not happen overnight; maybe not in a year; maybe not in five or ten years. But you stay with it, with patience and endurance, keeping relaxed mental attitude under pressure.

Such a plant produces a hundredfold. Here, Jesus speaks of such a person as producing fruit with endurance or constancy. They produce fruit with consistency, regardless of the problems which they face. Regardless of life being good or difficult, they still produce fruit (which is spiritual production). What sort of fruit that is, we don't know—it is different for all believers. Perhaps they speak to many friends, giving them the gospel and their friends believe. Perhaps they end up teaching the Word of God and people grow from that. Perhaps they give money, and by this, many are blessed. Perhaps they become prayer warriors and their prayers provide a way for others to move forward. Every believer is different and important in the plan of God. Many mature believers may fight the spiritual war on two or more fronts, but nobody does it all.

**Luke 8:15 (ESV)** (a graphic); from [Pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com); accessed February 23, 2023.

Just as a football team has many players, all of whom have different positions and different responsibilities. Not every person is a quarterback; not every person is a center. Such a football team, even if it had the 12 best quarterbacks in the league, without blockers, without a center, without the lineman, that team is going nowhere. The same is true of the Christian life. We do not all have the same gifts; we do not all do that same things. We do not do “X” and then frown upon people who are not also doing “X.” They might do “Y” or “Z.”

Furthermore, “X” may be something which is very public and very visible; whereas, “Y” and “Z” are not. Every believer needs to grow and then work out the function of his gift before God. Furthermore, we (should) function as a team.



Luke 8:15 As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience. (ESV; capitalized)

Spiritual growth and production take a long time. We simply need to be patient and stick with it.

Luke 8:11–15 Let Me explain this parable to you. There are 4 places where the seed might fall. The seed which falls along the road side: they hear the Word of God, but Satan comes and takes the word away from their consciousness, so that they will not believe it and be saved. The seed planted in rocky soil: these are those who receive the Word of God with great joy, but they have no roots, so their enthusiasm does not carry them, and they become spinoff believers. The seed thrown in with the thorns: there is a time when they believe; but later on, they face worries, difficulties, lusts or even prosperity, and these things serve to choke them off from the doctrine, so that they do not bear any fruit. But, there is also the soil that is good: this refers to those who have righteous hearts which are in fellowship (and are, therefore, good). As a result, these believers hear the word and they hold onto it; and, as a result, they bear enduring fruit. (Kukis paraphrase)

It should always be considered that Jesus may have taught the same information and the same parallels at different times. However, one of the constants of this particular set of stories is, the disciples ask Jesus to explain the parable to them. Although this could still be a set of different incidents, that fact alone suggests that these 3 narratives are all about the same incident.

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This is one of those doctrines that you should read only if textual differences and similarities interest you. Otherwise, it may be quite the boring slog. On the other hand, you may enjoy comparing the texts side-by-side, simply out of curiosity.

At this point, let's look at all 3 accounts of what might be a recording of the same parable and its meaning. The ESV; capitalized will be used below. I have changed some of its formatting.

### A Farmer Sows Seed—Recorded by the 3 Synoptic Gospel Writers

Matthew	Mark	Luke
The parable:		
Matthew 13:1–2 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach.	Mark 4:1 Again He began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that He got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land.	Luke 8:4a And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to Him,..
Matthew and Peter would have been on that boat with Jesus, so they would remember this (Mark appears to have written his gospel based mostly on the memories of Peter). Luke interviewed many people for his gospel, and whoever remembered this incident was more impressed by what was said and how many came to hear the Lord.		
Matthew 13:3a And He told them many things in parables, saying:...	Mark 4:2 And He was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them:...	Luke 8:4b ...He said in a parable,...
We are in the section of Luke where we have many of the Lord's teachings, but they are presented without a chronological anchor.		
Matthew 13:3b–4 ..."A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them.	Mark 4:3–4 ..."Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it.	Luke 8:5 ..."A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it.
The word <i>seed</i> (s) occurs only in Luke. I know you see the words <i>seed</i> and <i>seeds</i> in Mark and Matthew, but those words are not actually there in the Greek.		
Only Luke speaks of the seed being possibly trampled underfoot.		

## A Farmer Sows Seed—Recorded by the 3 Synoptic Gospel Writers

Matthew

Mark

Luke

The primary difference between these passages is the final word, which is plural in Matthew, and singular in Mark and Luke. The verb *to fall* is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, aorist active indicative in all 3 gospels.

The difference between that final word is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person neuter plural personal pronoun; accusative case *auta* (αὐτά) [pronounced *ow-TAH*] as over against 3<sup>rd</sup> person neuter singular pronoun; accusative case *auto* (αὐτό) [pronounced *ow-TOH*]; and this comes down to a single letter, which certainly could have been miscopied in Matthew.

Matthew 13:5–6 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away.

Mark 4:5–6 Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away.

Luke 8:6 And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture.

Here and elsewhere, there is a lot of additional text found in Matthew and Mark; this does not mean that the quotation in Luke is wrong; it is simply edited by the person telling Luke what he heard.

In the English, consistency is often retained, so the English of Matthew often has plural verbs to go along with the word *seeds* (actually, to go along with the word *them* from v. 4). However, *to spring up* and *to wither away* are both 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular verbs in the Greek of all 3 gospels. Now, to be clear, I am not doing a word by word examination here; just looked at a few key verbs and seeing how they compare. The word *seed* (*s*) does not occur in any of the gospels here.

Matthew 13:7 Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them.

Mark 4:7 Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain.

Luke 8:7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it.

The primary difference is the pronoun (*them* in Matthew; and *it* in Mark and Luke). The word *seed* (*s*) is not found in any of the gospels. A single mistake in Matthew could have resulted in several words being changed in order to match up with the plural.

Another option is, Jesus could have given this parable twice; and the second time around, the disciples began to ask Jesus questions about it (in the gospels, we have the parable, the question *why parables*, and the question *what did this parable mean?*).



## A Farmer Sows Seed—Recorded by the 3 Synoptic Gospel Writers

Matthew	Mark	Luke
Matthew 13:8 Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.	Mark 4:8 And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."	Luke 8:8a And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold."
The word <i>seeds</i> is not found in any of the gospels. There is a different pronoun found in Luke than Mark and Matthew (at the very beginning), but the verb <i>to fall</i> is the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, aorist active indicative in all 3 gospels.		
Matthew 13:9 He who has ears, let him hear."	Mark 4:9 And He said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."	Luke 8:8b As He said these things, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."
The disciples then ask Him, "What do you teach using parables?"		
Matthew 13:10 Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?"	Mark 4:10 And when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parables.	Luke 8:9 And when His disciples asked Him what this parable meant,...
When it comes to narrative, we are not very worried about the words matching up, because two people can describe the same thing using different words. However, when it comes to a quotation of Jesus speaking, the text should line up closely.		
Mark's passage confirms my feeling that the disciples approached Jesus after the crowds had gone, and they asked Him about this parable.		
Note that the disciples ask one question in Matthew and a different question in Luke. This could suggest that this may have been different events (same parable given twice). However, I think that two questions were asked of Jesus.		
We would expect Luke's recollection of the explanation for this parable to be the shortest of the three, as he was not there but recording this information from someone else. So it went through two minds before it got to the gospel record.		

## A Farmer Sows Seed—Recorded by the 3 Synoptic Gospel Writers

Matthew	Mark	Luke
Matthew 13:11–13 And He answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.	Mark 4:11–12 And He said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, so that "they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven."	Luke 8:10 ...He said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'
Matthew will clearly remember this incident in more detail than Peter does. The lack of text here with Luke suggests that he got a much more abbreviated account of this sermon.		
When R. B. Thieme III taught the <i>Life of Christ</i> series, he often combined the parallel gospel accounts into a single narrative. This section in the midst of the parable and its meaning cries out to be combined into a single narrative.		
	Mark 4:13 And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"	
Matthew 13:14 Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: "You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive."		

## A Farmer Sows Seed—Recorded by the 3 Synoptic Gospel Writers

Matthew	Mark	Luke
Matthew 13:15 For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'		
Matthew 13:16–17 But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.		
Jesus is fulfilling the greatest prophecies written in the Old Testament.		
Now Jesus explains what this parable means.		
Matthew 13:18–19 "Hear then the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path.	Mark 4:14–15 The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.	Luke 8:11–12 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.
Matthew 13:20 As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy,...	Mark 4:16 And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy.	Luke 8:13a And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy.

## A Farmer Sows Seed—Recorded by the 3 Synoptic Gospel Writers

Matthew

Mark

Luke

Initially, the person who hears this is on positive signals. They appear to want to know more.

Matthew 13:21 ...yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.

Mark 4:17 And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.

Luke 8:13b But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away.

When the seed is sown among thorns, there is also some positive response to the Word of God at first:

Matthew 13:22 As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

Mark 4:18–19 And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

Luke 8:14 And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.

For the fourth soil, the believer is positive; he remains positive; and there is a great result.

Matthew 13:23 As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

Mark 4:20 But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."

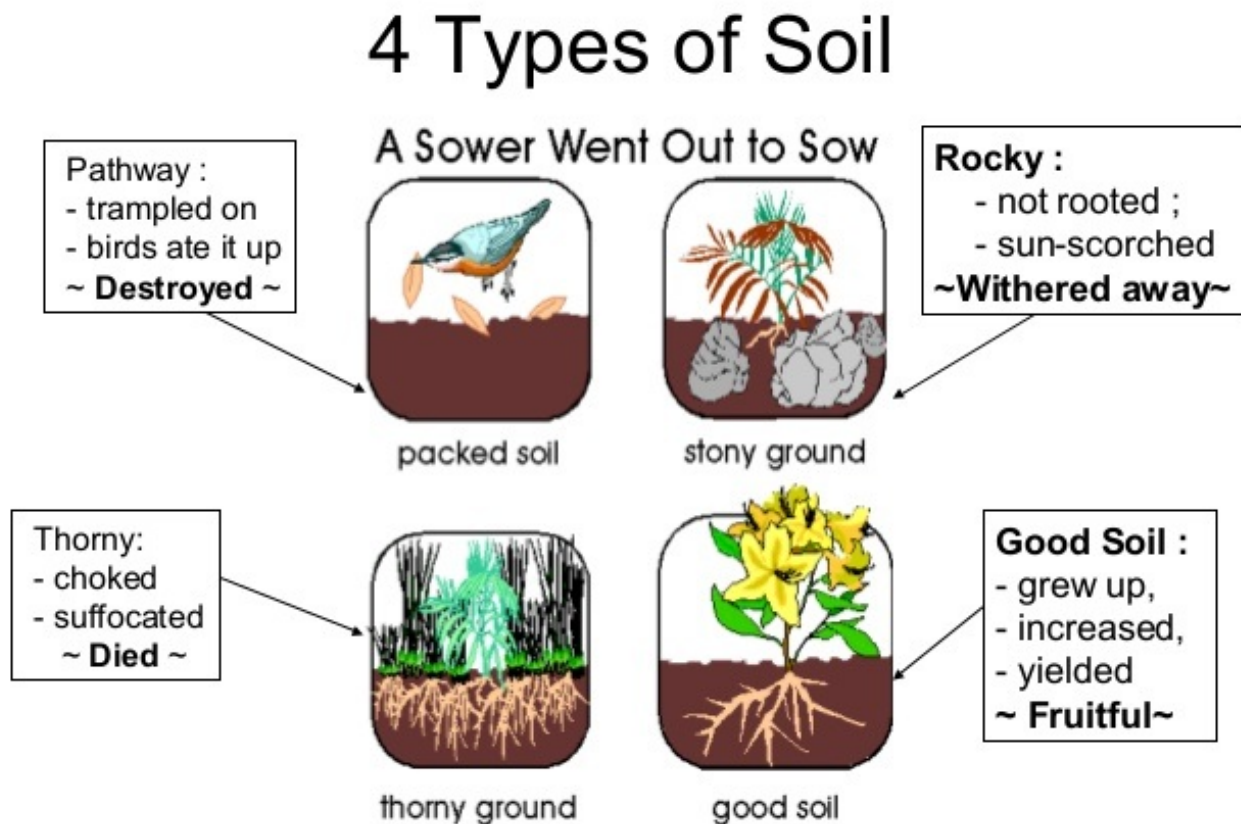
Luke 8:15 As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.

Interestingly enough, there are more differences in the ESV English translation than there appears to be in the Greek text. However, I did not point out each and every difference; nor did I go through the Greek texts word-by-word.

That 3 gospel writers would include this parable suggests to me that it is of great importance.

It is my opinion that John, at some point in time, read the other 3 gospels, and then wrote his own gospel many decades later (probably while on the Island of Patmos). I believe that John, after reading the other gospels, thought about what he remembered, to the point where he had to tell what he saw from his point of view. This would account for why his gospel is so different from the others (but not different in a way to suggest contradictions).

**The 4 Types of Soil** (a graphic); from [Tell the Lord Thank You](#); accessed March 2, 2023.



We continue with Jesus' teaching.

The context still appears to be the Word of God as the general topic. Jesus has just explained the scattering of the Word of God here or there, and the results of doing this.





Everyone who enters into this person's home can see the light; it is apparent; and it lights everyone's way in the dark.

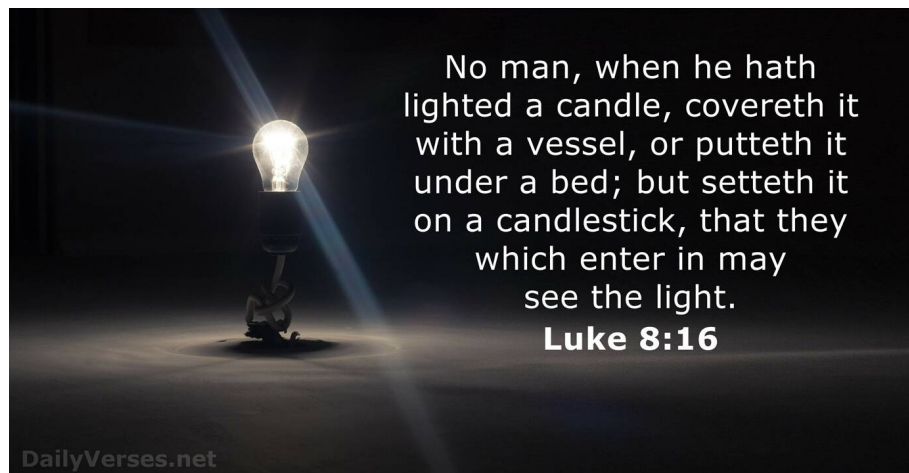
Similarly, when you learn Bible doctrine, the purpose is not for you to know it and just keep it to yourself. You use this doctrine to provide wisdom (light) for others. Now, this does not mean that you are the verse-quoting master, and everything that happens, you find a verse for it. But the Bible doctrine in your soul informs you on what to do, how to act, how to think; and, when the time is appropriate, what to share.

Also, it is a good idea to understand doctrine so well that you can speak it and think it from your soul, and not simply from memorization. It is best that you understand and apply principles, rather than, when "X" happens, you quote this or that verse.

**Luke 8:16 (KJV)** (a graphic); from [Daily Verses Net](http://DailyVerses.Net); accessed February 23, 2023.

Luke 8:16 "No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. (ESV; capitalized)

A light is designed to cast aside the darkness. We do not light a lamp and then place it into a closet.



Luke 8:17a **For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest...** (ESV; capitalized)

Everything will be revealed. God's light will illuminate everything. At this point in life, we can understand a great deal. In fact, if you choose to, you can be a greater theologian than Paul. Why? Because you have the entire canon of Scripture. You have great historic perspective as well. There is very little of divine viewpoint that God will not allow you to master.

Luke 8:17b **...nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light.** (ESV; capitalized)

The common way that this verse appears to be understood is, if you have some secret sin, everyone is going to know about it. Now, perhaps that is the meaning, but that does not really fit with the context, which is all about the Word of God. It is the entire Word of God which reveals the heart (that is, the thinking and motivation) of man.

Luke 8:17 For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. (ESV; capitalized)

We have several similar verses found throughout the Scriptures:

Luke 12:2–3 Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops. (ESV)

Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil. (ESV)

Matthew 10:26–27 "So have no fear of them [those who are persecuting you], for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. (ESV)

1Corinthians 4:5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God. (ESV)

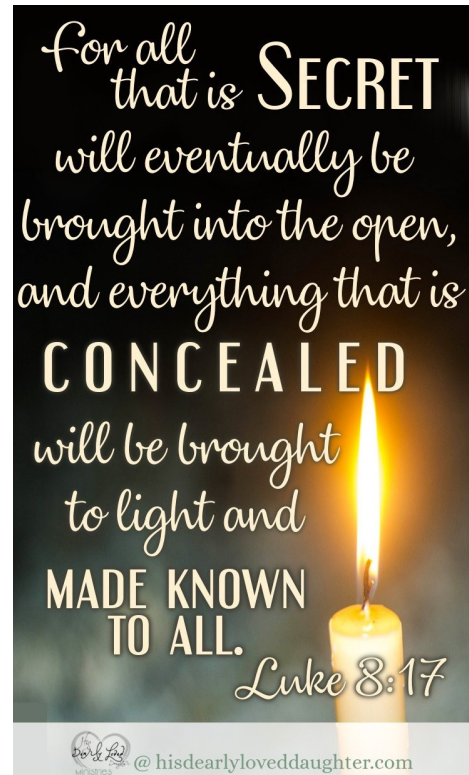
Key in life is motivation, and we cannot look inside a person and determine what his motivations are. But people are moved to do all sorts of things—sin, good and evil—and this all comes from the secret motivations of the heart. At some point, God will reveal these things. For believers, this is revealed at the end, and all of our human good will be burned as a great bonfire (this is cleansing for us, as our human good—just like the goods we have purchased in life—will not follow us into eternity). For unbelievers, their human good and works will be the basis of their indictment by God.

**Luke 8:17 (NLT)** (a graphic); from [cosamespe.org](https://cosamespe.org); accessed February 23, 2023.

Luke 8:18a Take care then how you hear,... (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus then orders His disciples to listen to Him carefully; to be circumspect about what they hear and how they interpret what they hear.

Luke 8:18b ...for to the one who has, more will be given,... (ESV; capitalized)



Again, the context is Bible doctrine. So, the person with Bible doctrine will be given, apparently, more light. Also, probably, greater rewards.

If you have divine knowledge, God will add to that.

**Luke 8:18b (NIV)** (a graphic); from [Jesus Calls](#); accessed February 23, 2023.

Luke 8:18c ...and from the one who has not,... (ESV; capitalized)

There will be two categories covered next. There is the person who does not have, meaning, they do not have light; they do not have Bible doctrine illuminating their souls. A person without divine knowledge will become less and less aware of life, reality and the plan of God.

Without this light, we do not naturally progress in the Christian life. True progress for the believer is spiritual growth; and spiritual growth occurs by taking in Bible doctrine.



Luke 8:18d ...even what he thinks that he has will be taken away." (ESV; capitalized)

There is also the person who thinks he has light (illumination, Bible doctrine), but the implication here is, he does not. And, the person who lacks doctrine will retrogress in this life. He will go backwards.

Jesus promises that it will be taken from him. For the unbeliever, his life will be taken from him; and for the believer, his reward will be taken from him.

Luke 8:18 Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away." (ESV; capitalized)

*The NET Bible: The phrase what he thinks he has is important, because it is not what a person thinks he has that is important but whether he actually has something or not. Jesus describes the person who does not heed his word as having nothing. The person who has nothing loses even that which*

*he thought was something but was not. In other words, he has absolutely nothing at all. Jesus' teaching must be taken seriously.*<sup>34</sup>

## Lessons 237–238: Luke 8:19–21

## The Mother and Brothers of Jesus

From Luke 8:19 and forward to the end of Luke 8, there is a clear parallel with Mark 3:31 to Mark 5:43. Most, but not all of this same section matches up with Matthew 8:18–9:26 (there are two incidents which match up with Matthew 12 & 13). These sections which match up appear to occur 1–1½ years into the public ministry of the Lord. There are nine or ten incidents which match up perfectly in Mark and Luke and mostly with Matthew. These can all be seen in a chart by Ken Palmer, modified by me, in the Luke Introduction ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) (this document is not completed yet, but it contains a few important charts). I will mention that here, and possibly go back to it at the end of Luke 8. Let me reproduce a portion of that chart here:

Harmony of the Gospel Chart from Life of Christ (Palmer/Kukis)			
Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke
Family seeks Jesus	12:46-50	3:31-35	8:19-21
Parables by the Sea	13:1-35	4:1-34	8:4-18
Parables explained and told in private	13:36-53		
Orders to cross the Sea of Galilee	8:18	4:35	8:22
Jesus calms a stormy sea	8:23-27	4:36-41	8:23-25
Legion cast out of violent man	8:28-34	5:1-20	8:26-39
Jesus sails to Capernaum	9:1	5:21	8:40
Jairus asks Jesus to heal his daughter	9:18-19	5:22-23	8:41-42
Ill woman is healed by touching Jesus	9:20-22	5:24-34	8:42-48
Daughter's death is reported to Jairus		5:35-36	8:49-50
Jesus raises Jairus' daughter to life	9:23-26	5:37-43	8:51-56

With the exception of those passages in Matthew 12 & 13, there is such an exact synch-up to suggest that we have ten incidents from the book of Luke which all take place in this order early on in the Lord's public ministry (perhaps the end of the first year or beginning of the second year). Let's call this synch-up #1 (for want of a better designation).

<sup>34</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?luk8.htm> (footnote); accessed November 18, 2019.

This is important because we will have the same thing take place in Luke 9:18–50 with this very important note: suddenly, Luke parallels Matthew 16–17 and Mark 8–9. We move ahead to the next chapter in Luke, but seven chapters forward in Matthew and three chapters forward in Mark (Mark is the most condensed gospel). This is the point at which Jesus begins to lead His disciples toward Jerusalem for the final Passover (when Jesus would become our Passover). Let's call this synch-up #2.

Then these books do not synch up again in multiple passages until Matthew 19:13, Mark 10:13 and Luke 18:15. These gospels will all synch up from that point forward (this is where Jesus is walking to Jerusalem and then into Jerusalem, and Jesus and His followers are in Jerusalem for the Passover. Let's call this synch-up #3.

So, between synch-ups #2 and #3, we only jump a chapter forward in Matthew, a half a chapter in Mark, but there are 8½ chapters in Luke between these two sections (from Luke 10:–18:14).

Our focus is primarily in Luke, although we occasionally work Matthew and Mark into this study. A synch-up is where we have 8–10 (or more) incidents which match up in Matthew, Mark and Luke in the same order roughly in the same place in time. Focusing primarily on Luke, we have a synch up of the gospels in Luke 8:19–56 which seems to take place perhaps at the beginning of the second year.

In the second synch up, which is Luke 9:18–50, we have jumped forward in time in Luke to the end of the Lord's ministry. At this point, He is moving steadily toward Jerusalem and telling His disciples how He will be illegally taken and crucified. What is odd about this second synch-up is, in the book of Luke, we go from the early portion of the Lord's ministry to the end in about a half chapter. The passages in Matthew and Mark that Luke synchs up with have moved forward seven chapters and three chapters, respectively. So, Luke appears to be missing a middle section of the Lord's ministry, which can be found in those intervening chapters of Matthew and Mark.

Quite obviously, this confusion could be avoided if we simply ignored Matthew and Mark while studying Luke.

In the third synch-up, Matthew and Mark simply pick up where they were and move forward. So Jesus begins to focus on moving toward Jerusalem (synch-up #2), He moves toward Jerusalem; and then He enters into Jerusalem (synch-up #3, at which point, the synoptic gospels match up fairly closely). Here is the oddity—Luke begins this third synch-up in the middle of chapter 18. So, even though Matthew and Mark go directly from #2 to #3 (which is what we would expect), Luke has 8½ chapters between these two synch-ups. Let's see this in a chart:

Synch-up Chart for Matthew, Mark and Luke				
Synch-up	Public ministry	Matthew	Mark	Luke



#1	Early on (end of 1 <sup>st</sup> year, beginning of 2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Mt 8:18–9:26	Mark 3:31–5:37	Luke 8:19–56
There is the issue that some portions of Matthew 12 & 13 are also being parallel at this point, but we will not focus on that problem in our study of Luke.				
There are a sufficient number of chapters in Matthew and Mark for the middle portion of the Lord's ministry, which takes place between #1 and #2.. However, there is no place for this part of the Lord's ministry in the book of Luke between #1 and #2.				
#2	Near the end	Mt 16:13–18:11	Mark 8:27–9:42	Luke 9:18–50
Matthew and Mark proceed from #2 to #3 with very little in between. Luke has 8½ chapters in between these sections.				
#3	Near the end	Mt 19:13–21:11	Mk 10:13–11:10	Lk 18:15–19:38
Two theories would be (1) those 8½ chapters in Luke, despite their weird placement, represent the middle of the Lord's ministry. Or (2) those 8½ chapters took place between #2 and #3.				

To sum up, we find the middle of the Lord's ministry where we would expect to find it, between the beginning and the end of His ministry in Matthew and Mark. We do not really have a middle section in Luke; but we do have those oddly-placed 8½ chapters.

As we begin to synchronize Luke 8:19–56 with Matthew and Mark, this causes us to look forward to other places where these gospels synch up. Eventually, that leads us to those 8½ chapters in Luke. Is this the middle of the Lord's ministry? Or did these things all take place as the Lord walked toward Jerusalem through Jericho? That is a question to keep in the back of your mind as we continue in Luke 8.

Now, let's get to the actual narrative:

Luke 8:19a **Then His mother and His brothers came to Him,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus has been teaching in Galilee; and we might assume that all that has gone on, immediately preceded this incident (but we do not know for certain).

His mother and his brothers hear all that is going on and they decide to go and to hear Him. We do not know if they did this all of the time or if this is something that they decided to do on a whim. They were hearing stories about Him and they wanted to go see for themselves.

Although His mother, Mary, is not mentioned as being among His disciples, she will be with Him when He goes to the cross. I don't know that there are any passages which speak to exactly when His mother or brothers believed in Him. His half-brothers did not believe in Him until after He was resurrected (John 7:5 compared with the book of James).



## The wrong way to interpret Scripture:

There is another issue to discuss here, mentioned by the NET Bible.

The NET Bible: *The issue of whether Jesus had brothers (siblings) has had a long history in the church. Epiphanius, in the 4th century, argued that Mary was a perpetual virgin and had no offspring other than Jesus. Others argued that these brothers were really cousins. Nothing in the text suggests any of this.*<sup>35</sup>

Here is where we need to be careful about interpreting this passage and others. The words used here could be taken metaphorically (they are so used elsewhere). That is, one might understand the word *brother* to refer to some relative other than an actual brother (and it is also used elsewhere in that way), but this is where we need to be careful. Do we begin with a doctrine clearly taught elsewhere in the Word of God, and interpret this passage in the light of that doctrine; or do we simply have a doctrine—not clearly taught elsewhere in the Bible—and yet, impose that doctrine on this passage? Historically, when this controversy was occurring (I do not think it is a real controversy today), they began with the doctrine that Mary remained a perpetual virgin. This is the belief that Mary never actually consummated her marriage to Joseph. This concept actually became a fundamental doctrine for Catholics. However, that is not taught anywhere in the Bible; so that should not be the starting point for any discussion of this (or any other) passage.

I use this illustration because there are very few people who read this and have an emotional reaction to it. There are very few people in this world who are emotionally invested in the idea that Mary was a perpetual virgin.

However, there are people who take other passages of the Bible and they begin with the doctrine—not clearly stated anywhere else—and then proceed from there. Two very recent examples of this are: (1) the idea that tongues is speaking in gibberish, the idea that most believers do not fully engage in the Christian life *until after they get the ghost* (and then speak in tongues). These people begin with this doctrine (not actually taught anywhere in the Bible) and proceed from there to interpret passages where tongues are mentioned in this light. (2) A second belief that many start with is, the idea that homosexuality is a normal and legitimate sexual practice, sanctioned by God, and therefore, all passages about homosexuality must be interpreted in this light. In fact, such people even take passages where there is no homosexuality and put that deviant practice into the text<sup>36</sup>. Both of these are very emotional issues today, but they both begin in the same way. They start with a false doctrine—a doctrine that is not clearly taught anywhere

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<sup>35</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?luk8.htm> (footnote); accessed November 16, 2019.

<sup>36</sup> I am thinking of one person I know who argued passionately that David and Jonathan with homosexual lovers.

in Scripture—and then they interpret related passages in the Bible beginning with a doctrine, assumed to be true, but not really taught anywhere else.

One thing that I particularly found humorous, when doing research on the second topic was, how some homosexual advocates have suddenly become experts in the Greek and the Hebrew languages, virtually overnight. Such advocates for homosexuality would use their new found expertise to (wrongly) interpret passages to say almost the opposite of what the text actually states.

It comes down to this: you let the Word of God present the true doctrines. The fundamental doctrines of Scripture are going to be found throughout Scripture (such as, faith alone in Christ alone yields salvation). Then these doctrines become the foundation, upon which all other doctrines are built (this process is known as systematic theology). You first begin with truths which are repeated throughout the Scriptures—such as, the Seed of the Woman, the Messiah, Jesus the Christ—and you proceed from there to develop other doctrines—redemption, reconciliation, propitiation—and, eventually, you develop a full understanding of the Scriptures.

But what you cannot do is take a doctrine, not clearly taught elsewhere, and then apply that doctrine to any related passage and interpret that passage so that it coincides with the doctrine you want to believe in. However, you cannot take something that you have assumed to be true, and then bend all other Scriptures to synch up with your assumptions.

The Jehovah Witnesses famously do that with the false doctrine that Jesus is not divine. Then they twist and bend Scriptures to fit this bias, even making up rules about the Greek language to support their case (they claim that Jesus is a *god*, based upon *God* not having a definite article—this is in John 1:1–3—and yet they do not follow this rule anywhere else in their JW translation). You see, the JWs actually have their own Bible translation, which, not uncoincidentally, supports all of their doctrines.

Let's get back to the narrative. Mary, Jesus' mother, and the Lord's half-brothers have come to see Him, but they run into a problem:

Luke 8:19b ...but they could not reach Him because of the crowd. (ESV; capitalized)

They try to get to Jesus, but they cannot because of the large, impenetrable crowd that surrounded Him.

Luke 8:19 Then His mother and His brothers came to Him, but they could not reach Him because of the crowd. (ESV; capitalized)

What seems logical to me is, Jesus' family knows about His public ministry—about the healings and miracles and teachings—and they decide that they want to see this for themselves.

Mary knows Who Jesus is, but she apparently is having a difficult time convincing His half-brothers of this (this is an assumption which I am making here).

Luke 8:20a **And He was told,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Someone either finds out about this or Mary (or one of her sons) is able to get a message to Jesus. So, in some way, a message from His human family gets to Jesus.

Luke 8:20b **..."Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is told that His Mother and brothers are there to see Him.

The word that describes *where* they are standing is *exō* (ἐξω) [pronounced *EHX-oh*], which means, *outside, without, out of doors; outward*. Strong's #1854. Jesus may be in a house; or He may be in the courtyard of a home. Because of the warm weather in that region, a home was often build around a courtyard, where some living would take place. The size of the courtyard would vary.

Why Mary and the Lord's half-brothers are there is interesting in itself, and is a matter of speculation, as this and its parallel passages yield no clues. One of the weirdest speculations I read was, they showed up because Jesus has been working too hard and they think He needs to take a family vacation.<sup>37</sup>

Let me suggest that Mary and the Lord's half-brothers would certainly have an interest in His ministry, even if some or all of them had not yet believed in Him yet. Furthermore—and this is somewhat speculative—they may have expected special treatment or a special mention as the Lord's family. I suggest these things based upon the following: not only does the Lord's human family not receive any preferential treatment, but the Lord uses them in order to teach a specific doctrine. This could be taken as callous treatment—and the Lord is not a callous man—if his family was expecting more out of this than simply being able to hear Him speak. They were there, the Lord was speaking, and they could have chosen to find a place to listen to Him. But, instead, they send Him the message that they are there and unable to get close to Him.

Luke 8:20 **And He was told, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus appears to be in the midst of teaching, and He finds out that His mother and brothers have come to see Him.

Jesus often allowed events occurring around Him to dictate the substance of His teaching.

Luke 8:21a **But He answered them,...** (ESV; capitalized)

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<sup>37</sup> This comes from [Kretzmann](#), who is usually a reliable commentator.

Jesus then gives a response, something that no one really expected from Him.

Now, we do not know if the Lord voiced their request and then said this aloud; or whether the message was brought to Him and He said these things to a smaller group (the one bringing Him the message and those near to him).

Luke 8:21b ...**"My mother and My brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus tells the messenger (or perhaps even the crowd around Him) that those truly related to Him hear and do the Word of God.

This suggests to me that Jesus' brothers have not yet all believed in Him. So, He was teaching the Word of God, but they were not hearing it. They did not fully believe Him to be the promised Messiah. Not all of His immediate family recognized Him for Who He was.

Because this story is remembered and published, it is my guess that Jesus taught this to the crowd.

Luke 8:21 **And the [Lord] answered, and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are the ones [who] hear and do the Word of God."** (ESV; capitalized)

This curt explanation given by Jesus—which is given in an at least semi-public way (and recorded in the Word of God)—suggests to me that Mary and the Lord's half-brothers are not hearing His word; and they are not obeying them. That is, they have heard the Lord say, "Believe in Me and you will be saved;" and yet they have chosen not to do that (John 7:5). We also know that they are sending this message to the Lord while He is teaching (as there are too many people around Him to get to Him). So, for me, there are two logical motivations for Mary and her sons: (1) they expect some sort of preferential treatment; or (2) they expect some sort of mention by the Lord. The Lord does both, but not in the way that they would have liked.

Luke 8:19–21 **Jesus's mother and brothers came to see Him at this time, but they were unable to navigate their way through the large crowds. However, someone was able to get this information to Jesus, saying, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see You.' Then the Lord look at them and said, "My mother and My brothers are those who hear and do the Word of God."** (Kukis paraphrase)

Unfortunately, this narrative is used in order to teach a very common cultic approach to their newly inducted ones.

### **Cultic Separation from Family and Friends:**

There are some additional important points to be made about this passage. It is very easy to take a passage like this and distort it. Many cults use this as a *go-to* passage to

separate the new of their flock from their family and friends. “We are your true family, not them!” they might claim. And they use this passage, along with other psychological techniques, in order to build a wall between a person new to the cult and that person’s family and friends.<sup>38</sup> If you recognize that your church or *Christian* group is suggesting this, then run—do not walk—to the nearest exit and get out of there.

We all have a relationship with our family, and sometimes it is somewhat simple (you love your family and they love you), but, more often, it is complicated. Every member of your family is a person for whom Jesus died. This does not mean that you should harass your parents and siblings daily with the gospel; but that, when there is an opening, to speak to them about the Person of Jesus Christ. The same thing is true of your friends (and, in some cases, former friends). Becoming a believer in Jesus Christ does not demand that you cut any and all human ties from your human family and from your friends. If you have members of your family and friends of yours who have not believed in Jesus Christ, then, yes, you will spend eternity with the people at your church, and that eternity will not include those friends and family who have rejected Jesus. However, for most people, this is your mission field—your unsaved family members and (former) friends.<sup>39</sup>

Over time, you may separate from some family members and from some friends; or you may see them less. This does not mean that this is a step in a series of steps that you take after believing in Jesus Christ; but it sometimes occurs. Let’s say, you have friendships and these friendships involve going to bars or parties together and getting blasted—well, clearly, that is not something you will necessarily want to do after being saved. This does not mean that you cut off your friends; but that you are simply more circumspect about your relationship with them and the mutual activities that you engage in. The same thing may be true of your relationship with family members. Some families have normal get-togethers and people in attendance enjoy this gathering; and some families gather to intensify their dysfunction, just to see what might happen this time around.

If there is some separation, it is most likely going to be based upon your gathering together to do things which are not proper (I gave the example of hanging with friends at bars or parties in order to get blasted<sup>40</sup>). In some groups of friends, the solidifying factor is taking drugs together or drinking a lot together (the Bible does not forbid drinking, but it does draw the line at drunkenness).

But, to be clear, if you are in some sort of *Christian* group or organization, and one of *their* priorities is separating you from family and friends, then you are in the wrong place. Because everyone’s family is different; because our relationship with friends is very different, that means Charley Brown will modify his relationship with family and friends in

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<sup>38</sup> Generally speaking, beware of any church that builds itself upon one or two passages from the Bible.

<sup>39</sup> Christianity does not demand that you cut off all previous friendships. I only say (former) friends because sometimes they cut you off.

<sup>40</sup> I mean drunk or high.

one way; but Lucy Van Pelt will modify her relationship with family and friends in another. There is not a cut-and-dried approach for every person at your church. Cutting off family and friends would only take place in the most extreme circumstances.

Some churches have a *new members group* (depending upon the size of the church) or they have what they call a *discipleship program*; and the key might be this: if they are going to monitor you in any way (or if one individual in the church is going to monitor your life in any way), then you are in the wrong place. Whereas, your church may not be a cult, per se, that would be a seriously cultic element of it.

No one ought to be assigned to you in order to disciple you or to *guide* you in what you should do and not do.

Back to our narrative.

Luke 8:21 But He answered them, "My mother and My brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." (ESV; capitalized)

I believe that the implication of what Jesus is saying here is, not all of His immediate family have believed in Him. They have heard the word of the gospel, but they have not done it.

Matthew gives us more information:

Matthew 12:46–50 While He was still speaking to the people, behold, His mother and His brothers stood outside, asking to speak to Him. But He replied to the man who told Him, "Who is My mother, and who are My brothers?" And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother." (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus was in the midst of teaching; Mark tells us that people are seated all around the Lord (Mark 3:31–35), which suggests that He is probably teaching in a large courtyard rather being out in an open air affair (since they are said to be *outside*). Without losing a beat, the Lord includes them in His teaching. He motions to His disciples and He tells them, "Here are My mother and My brothers."

Doing the will of the Father in heaven would be believing in Jesus and then following Him. We follow Him today by taking in the Word of God under a well-prepared pastor-teacher; and growing in grace and knowledge of Him.

## Lesson 239: Luke 8:22–25a

## Jesus and the Disciples in a Violent Storm

**Calm in the Midst of the Storm** (a graphic); from [Faith Life Sermons](#); accessed March 2, 2023.

Luke 8:22a One day...



Literally, this first phrase reads, **And it comes to pass in one of the days...**

This is an interesting phrase. Clearly, given the event which will follow, this is something which took place early on in the Lord's ministry. I think the phrasing suggests that this happened around the same time as the other events of this chapter.



There are 4 miracles—acts of power—done by the Lord—starting here and continuing to the end of this chapter; and the same 4 incidents, occurring in the same order are also found in Mark 4:35–5:43 (in fact, Luke 8 and Mark 4–5 are very nearly parallel chapters). Luke mentions the women who travel with the Lord, and this is not found in Mark, or anywhere else. Also, I should add that, the Lord's mother and brothers coming to Him is found at the end of Mark 3, so that is a 5<sup>th</sup> parallel incident found in both Matthew, Mark and Luke.

These parallel incidents—particularly, those which take place in the same order—often tie these gospels together, chronologically speaking. Since the parallels in Matthew and Mark take place early in the Lord's public ministry, we logically conclude that Luke 8 also takes place early in the Lord's ministry (this would make sense, as the Lord began His public ministry in Luke 4).

Along the same lines, when we get to Luke 9, we are going to draw some very important organizational conclusions based upon there being 8 or 9 parallel incidents in Luke 9 as well. These conclusions are going to shed some light as to the overall organization of the book of Luke.

Mark mentions two additional parables, which are not found in Luke. It would completely normal for one person to remember a set of the Lord's teachings that someone else does not (furthermore, Luke was not there; his information comes from others).

Luke 8:22b **...He got into a boat with His disciples,...** (ESV; capitalized)

What was taking place is, Jesus and His disciples got onto a ship. This was probably a fishing vessel which belonged to John and James or to Peter. This gives us an idea as to the size of this ship, which is able to hold over a dozen adults.

We do not know how many of the Lord's disciples continued with Him; but the size of the ship logically would have limited the number of those who could travel with the Lord. Given that there were so many followers that His family was unable to easily speak to Him, Jesus may be purposefully limiting those who are able to follow Him. If He went to the next city over on the lake, all those following Him in vv. 1–21 could easily walk to meet Him there.

However, going across the lake would eliminate anyone from Capernaum following Him, apart from those who are able to fit in the boat.

Luke 8:22c ...and He said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." (ESV; capitalized)

We don't know if Jesus set the destination before or after they all got into the boat. He may have said to His disciples, "I would like to minister in Gadara;" and then perhaps one of the disciples volunteered his ship. Or He may have asked one of His disciples to volunteer his boat; and then told them where they were going, when on the boat.

The *lake* here is the Sea of Galilee. At that time, it was also known as *Lake Tiberias* and *Lake of Gennesareth*. There is a small lake north of Galilee, but I am not aware of the Lord ministering that far north in Israel. Later in this narrative, Jesus and the disciples will arrive in *Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee*, which tells us that we are on the Sea of Galilee here.

There are times when the Lord's motivation and guidance are reasonably clear; and there are times when these things are not known to us. I do not believe that the Lord accesses His omniscience in order to determine where to go next. Sometimes, traveling from point A to point B is based upon, these cities or villages are next to one another and B would be the next logical stop. In this case, I don't know why Jesus has chosen to go to region of the Gadarenes.

Luke 8:22a-c One day He got into a boat with his disciples, and He said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." (ESV; capitalized)

It is Jesus Who is making the call as to where they are going next (and we would reasonably assume that He continued determining each next step). We do not have, in the book of Luke, anything to suggest what the Lord's motivation is. All that He is doing is certainly limiting the number of people who can follow Him.

V. 26 tells us where we are



going exactly (well, kind of exactly).

**The Sea of Galilee** (a map); from [Precept Austin](#); accessed April 20, 2023. Gadara is the direction that the Lord is going to. The region around Gadara and going toward the sea is the region of the Gadarenes.

The most recent city named in this context is Capernaum, which is found in Matthew 8:5. It is far back enough to allow for Jesus to have been in another city since then. If He is going from Capernaum (or anywhere near to Capernaum) to the region of the Gadarenes, that would be a relatively long ship ride (given that they are going across the length of the sea).

Luke 8:22d **So they set out,...** (ESV; capitalized)

So Jesus and His disciples set sail across the lake.

Luke 8:23a **...and as they sailed He fell asleep.** (ESV; capitalized)

During the time that they are sailing, the Lord falls asleep. A temporal participle can suggest the words *while*, *when*, *as*.

The verb here is the aorist active indicative of *aphupnoô* (ἀφύπνῳ) [pronounced *af-oop-NOH-oh*], and it means, *to awaken from sleep; to fall asleep, to fall off to sleep, to drop (off) in slumber*. Strong's #879. The word used here is only found once, and perhaps it suggests that He is falling into sleep while they are sailing.

A word which occurs only once in the New Testament is called an hapax legomenon.

The Lord was subject to His human body, and the human body requires periodic rest. Jesus takes this opportunity to sleep. For all we know, this may have been His motivation (a trip from Capernaum to Gadarenes would give Him enough time to rest).

Luke 8:23b **And a windstorm came down on the lake,...** (ESV; capitalized)

While Jesus is asleep, a whirlwind descends upon them. The violent winds are all around them on the lake.

*The NET Bible: A violent windstorm came down on the lake. The Sea of Galilee is located in a depression some 700 ft (200 m) below sea level and is surrounded by hills. Frequently a rush of wind and the right mix of temperatures can cause a storm to come suddenly on the lake. Storms on the Sea of Galilee were known for their suddenness and violence.*<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?luk8.htm> (footnote); accessed November 19, 2019.

A change of temperature can affect precipitation; and a low pressure zone could pull a storm right into the valley of this lake. The surrounding mountains can hold such a storm in the same place for a long period of time. So a storm entering into the depression of the lake would not simply blow over, as that same storm would do on flat land.

Luke 8:23c ...and they were filling with water and were in danger.

The disciples are in the ship with the Lord and Jesus is sleeping. As the storm rages, the ship begins to take on water. The disciples believe themselves to be in serious danger.

At least four of the disciples have made their living by going out on the sea and fishing.

Luke 8:22d–23 So they set out, and as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. (ESV; capitalized)



The topography and certain weather conditions will pull a violent storm into the Sea of Galilee, and there is nothing that will break the storm and the wind up when on a flat sea.

**The Man in the Boat** (a graphic); from [Marc Turnage](#); accessed March 2, 2023.

Luke 8:24a And they went and woke Him,... (ESV; capitalized)

The situation is, the disciples and Jesus are in a fishing boat on the Galilean Sea, and suddenly it is storming and water is coming into the ship and the disciples are frightened. Therefore, they go to Jesus to wake Him up.

This could be a good thing, if they woke up Jesus to solve this problem. If they woke Him up simply to emote, then the disciples clearly have not caught on yet to Who Jesus is. The latter seems to be the case, given v. 25a.



Luke 8:24b ...saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples come to Jesus, saying, "Teacher, Teacher, we are perishing!" It appears that they have awakened the Lord to emote and tell Him about this crisis. The disciples believe that they will drown at sea. Remember, these are experienced fishermen on this ship, so they know when a storm is dangerous. These are men not given to hysterics.

Luke 8:24c And He awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves,... (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus wakes up and He commands (charges, rebukes, admonishes) the wind and the sea. What He says exactly is not recorded. He may have lifted a hand and simply said, "Stop!"

Luke 8:24d ...and they [the winds and the rain] ceased, and there was a calm. (ESV; capitalized)

At the Lord's rebuke, the waters stopped raging and the wind became calm. In much less time than it took for the winds to kick up and the waves to start surging, they all suddenly stopped. Every indication here is, this was quite sudden, within seconds or minutes at most.

I believe that what Jesus said here was in accordance with the plan of God, and that God the Father calmed the winds, much the way that Moses *did* some of the miracles of the Exodus with his staff. There was no magic in his staff; nor could someone else, like one of Pharaoh's magicians have picked up the staff and done a Moses-type miracle. It was given to Moses to be able to show where God was going to act. The staff merely enlarged the person of Moses so that he might be more easily seen.

Jesus rebukes the storm, but it is not His Deity which acts, but God the Father—same as was done for Moses. Don't misunderstand me here—Jesus is God and has, at any time, the power to do what Deity is able to do (within the confines of His Own character). However, Jesus acts according to God's plan, and by His Own choice, voluntarily restricts the use of His Own Deity (this is the **Doctrine of Kenosis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)); a key doctrine for those studying any of the gospels; but it is very applicable in the book of Luke).

Just so that there is no confusion, there is nothing in this passage which suggests that Jesus Himself lacked the authority or the power to do this. Nor am I suggesting in any way that He lacks even the tiniest amount of Deity. Certainly, He restricted His Own Deity when that conformed to the plan of God. Whether this is true for His entire human life, I could not say, but I personally lean toward that point of view.

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## Lesson 240: Luke 8:22–26

## The Storm In the Sea of Galilee

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Luke 8:22–23 One day He got into a boat with His disciples, and He said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out, and as they sailed He fell asleep.

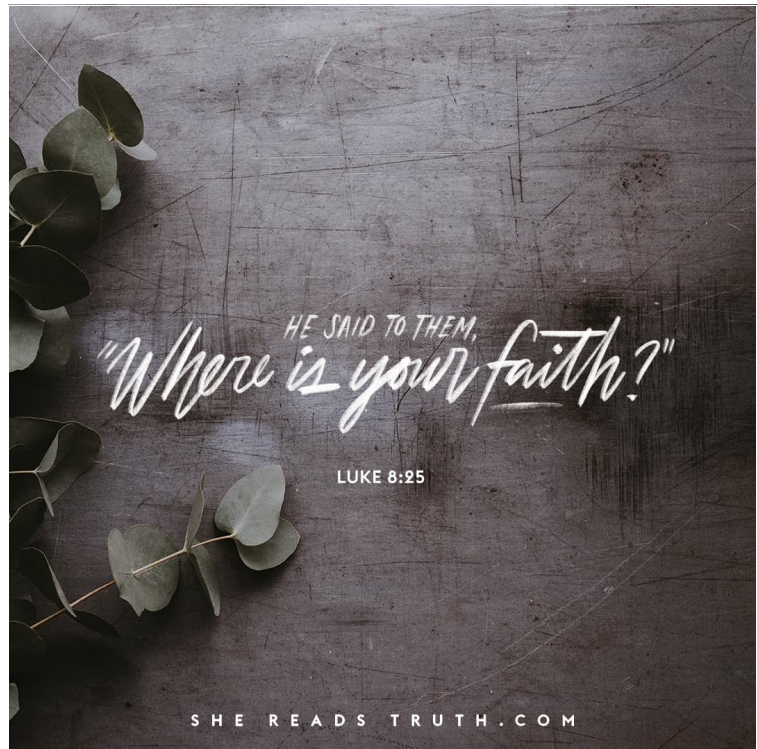
And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus has suggested to the disciples that they continue His ministry on the other side of the sea. As they set out, Jesus falls asleep; and a violent storm suddenly comes.

Luke 8:24 And they went and woke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And He awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. (ESV; capitalized)

The storm was so sudden and strong that Jesus' disciples—most of whom had spent years on this same sea—believed that they might perish in the storm.

Jesus wakes up and calms the storm. The wind ceases and the raging waves stop raging. Perhaps God changed the low pressure into a high pressure area, which would force the storm out of there. For whatever reason, the storm is suddenly gone.



**Luke 8:25a (ESV)** (a graphic); from [She Reads Truth](https://she-reads-truth.com); accessed February 23, 2023.

Luke 8:25a He said to them, "Where is your faith?" (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus then looks at the disciples and asks them, "Where is your faith?" He leaves out the verb, which puts great emphasis upon this statement. Literally, this reads, "Where the faith of you (all)?" When the verb is left out, this is an elliptical statement, which could indicate that it is being said dramatically and with great force. We often add words in to indicate an emphatic statement. "Where the hell is your faith?" would be a better English equivalent.

Jesus knows the hearts of His disciples; He knows that they woke Him up in panic. They did not wake Him up to solve the problem, they woke Him up to express their fears.



The word *faith* is *pistis* (πίστις) [pronounced *PIHS-tihs*], and it can refer both to *the act of having faith* as well as to *what is believed*. So this can be the act and the content of one's faith. Strong's #4102.

Also, given Who Jesus is, and that He has chosen these men as His disciples; He and they cannot just perish in a random storm. That would clearly be outside of the plan of God. If they understood Who Jesus is and, even to a limited degree, His mission; then they would understand that He cannot be removed from God's plan by some arbitrary storm. Also, by their relationship to Him, they cannot perish either. Why would Jesus choose twelve disciples to simply have them perish within the year of being selected?

Therefore, despite the epic storm, everyone in the ship is safe. Understanding all of that and then believing it would be faith. Jesus has just asked them, "Where is this faith?"

Bear in mind that much of this is new to the disciples. They obviously do not appreciate who Jesus is yet, as they will remark in this verse. Nor do they have any appreciation as to how Jesus will use them in the near and far future.

Luke 8:25b *And they were afraid, and they marveled,...* (ESV; capitalized)

Even though the disciples are clearly frightened, they are clearly marveling at what has just taken place. Obviously, they had never seen anything like this before. These are men, many of whom have made their living on the sea. They have seen great storms before, but for this to frighten all of the disciples as it did, it had to be quite the horrific storm.

The disciples had seen Jesus do some amazing things so far. They had not seen Him do anything like this before. How could someone command the wind and the seas?

Have you been on a roller coaster<sup>42</sup> ride where you actually feared for your life, and then it was over? You are still fearful at the very end—that does not disappear completely yet—yet, you are thinking, *wow, what a ride!* at the end of it. Whereas, this does not exactly match how the disciples felt (they truly feared that they would die), this might be a more universal approximation of their feelings at this time.

For anyone who has been in battle with a successful outcome—which is a much smaller percentage of us—that might be even a better approximation of how they felt.

Luke 8:25c *...saying to one another,...* (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples kept speaking to one another, talking about this event. Many of us have been through a dramatic storm with other people (perhaps with our family or with neighbors) and once it is over, there is an overwhelming need to talk about what we had all experienced.

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<sup>42</sup> I realize that there are newer rides now which are even more frightening—I just have not been on any of those.

Although what follows is presented as a single quote, it is probably two quotes or more, half quoted and half summarized. However, they kept on saying these things to one another.

Luke 8:25d ...**"Who then is This, that He commands even winds and water,..** (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples excitedly talk about what has just happened. "What kind of a Man is this?" one may have said, Another adds, "He commands even the winds." Another chimes in, "And the water! When have we seen waves like that before?" They had never seen anything like this. No one had ever seen anything like this—not since Moses, and even he never did anything like what Jesus has done (and, bear in mind, we are early into the Lord's ministry).

Luke 8:25e ...**and they obey Him?"** (ESV; capitalized)

Then one disciples adds the most important detail: "And they listen to Him!" It is one thing to deliver orders to the wind and the sea. It is quite another thing for those entities to listen and obey.

The verb here is the present active indicative of *hupakouô* (ὑπακούω) [pronounced *hoop-ak-OO-oh*], a compound verb. It combines the preposition *hupó* (ὑπό) [pronounced *hoop-OH*], which means, *under, beneath*; and the simple verb *to hear*, which is, *akoúô* (ἀκούω) [pronounced *ah-KOO-oh*]. *Hupakouô* means more than to simply listen; it means *to hear a command and obey it; to obey, to be obedient to, to submit to*. Strong's #5219. Somehow, the winds and the storm could hear what the Lord said and they obeyed Him.

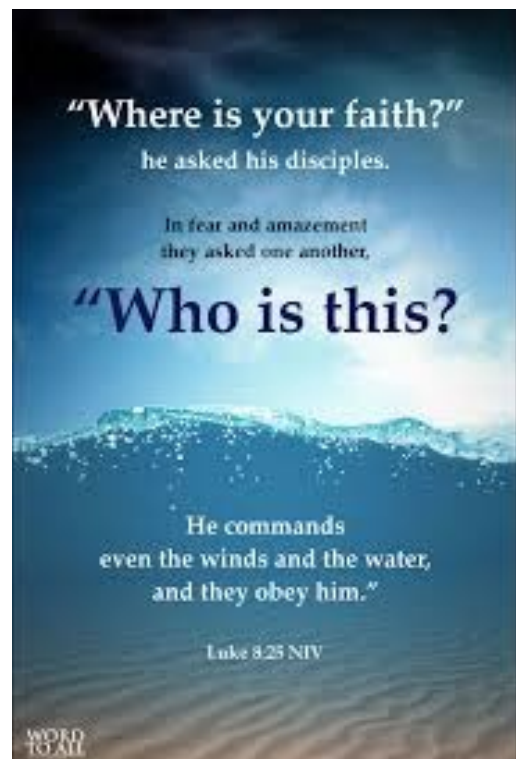
Luke 8:25 **He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is This, that He commands even winds and water, and they obey Him?"** (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples are both excited and shaken up by the storm; but they are also amazed at what Jesus just did.

**Luke 8:25 (NIV)** (a graphic); from [Facebook](#); accessed March 2, 2023.

At this point, we go to a different narrative. They arrive at their destination and suddenly are confronted by a whole new reality.

What is going to be particularly interesting in the



next narrative is, we focus on the reaction of the people of this region and upon the person that Jesus encounters.

The parallel passages for what happens next are Matthew 8:28–9:1 Mark 5:1–20. I mention these passages because the accounts are different in some significant ways. Because this narrative possibly has parallel accounts elsewhere, we have to be careful about making assumptions about what we read in the text. It is easy to form an impression of how things happen in a narrative, and then, when reading the same narrative elsewhere, believe the passages to be contradictory. However, they are not really contradictory, except for some assumptions that readers might make.

Furthermore, it is not unusual for the same narrative, seen from the eyes of two different people, to be seen in different ways, with a different set of emphases—even when both accounts are accurate and without error.

The narrative which follows is going to involve casting out a demon. It is important to bear in mind that, casting out a demon is not a process, nor is there any mumbo jumbo involved. It is a matter of authority, nothing else. When the greater authority says, “Out,” that should end the conversation. However, here, it does not. *That* is going to spur some conversation—and I suspect there will be discussion of this passage which you have never heard before or considered.<sup>43</sup>

Here is what is at stake: on the one hand, we have orthodox theology (and I am orthodox); and there are basic fundamentals which I believe: I believe in the Divine Trinity; and more specifically, I believe that Jesus is God. If you read Luke’s account carefully, the narrative appears to contradict the notion that Jesus is God. Let me explain, so that when we come to that point in the narration, your mind will already be thinking about it: Jesus tells the demons to get out of this man, and yet they stay in the man (at first) and discuss with Jesus where He will send them next. If Jesus is sovereign God, and He tells demons to do something, how do we explain them not doing what He told them to do?

## **Lessons 241–242: Luke 8:26–28**

## **Continuing in Gadara**

In the previous section, Jesus and the disciples crossed over the Sea of Galilee. Jesus fell asleep on the boat and a great storm took place—a storm which apparently upset even the experienced fishermen who are aboard (they are not named in the narrative, but this appears to have been the case).

Luke 8:26a **Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes,...** (ESV; capitalized)

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<sup>43</sup> At this point in my life, I rarely read other commentators. In some difficult passages, I may consult 4 or 5 specific writers/teachers of the Bible; but most of the time, my commentary is based upon what I read in the Greek (and, of course, the Bible teaching that I have received over the past 40 years).

Jesus originally got into the boat with the disciples and He told them, "Let's go across to the other side." The other side is Gadara.

I use the English Standard Version as my base text, and it has the word *Gerasenes* right here, whereas, I will use *Gadarenes* (or, *Gadara*) in my own translation. This will be discussed more fully as we move forward in this study.

This suggests that this was a purposeful trip, and not random. Jesus wanted to take His disciples to Gadara, and that He had some sort of plan. We don't know any more details; and that is reasonable speculation on my part.

Interestingly enough, I would suggest that the humanity of Jesus Christ was not aware of what He would find. He did not know who He would meet; He did not have a set of specific things which He planned to do when He got there.

We do not know exactly how Jesus was guided in each and every situation, but I believe that He was specifically guided by God the Holy Spirit, according to God's plan, but that Jesus Himself was not aware of exactly what would happen (now and again, Jesus is aware of future events, but this does not appear to be the case most of the time).

Gadara is a city on the Sea of Galilee, and remains of this city have been discovered (or what is believed to be that city). There seems to be a disagreement as to whether this is the city referred to here or not. In fact, there are several textual problems involving this place where Jesus and the disciples have gone. This will be [discussed in greater detail](#) later on in this study.

John Kitto writes about Gadara.

### **The City of Gadara (John Kitto)**

Gad'ara was the chief city or metropolis of Peræa, lying in the district termed Gadaritis some small distance from the southern extremity of the Sea of Galilee, sixty stadia from Tiberias, to the south of the river Hieromax, and also of the Scheriat-al-Mandhur. It was fortified, and stood on a hill of limestone. Its inhabitants were mostly heathens. After the place had been destroyed in the domestic quarrels of the Jews, it was rebuilt by Pompey, in order to gratify Demetrius of Gadara, one of his freedmen. Augustus added Gadara, with other places, to the kingdom of Herod; from which, on the death of that prince, it was sundered, and joined to the province of Syria (Josephus, De Bell, Jud. ii. 6. 3). At a later period it was the seat of an episcopal see.

Most modern authorities find Gadara in the present village of Om-keis. The hill on which it stood was full of caverns, which were used for tombs. The summit of the hill commands a very fine view.

The city formed nearly a square. The upper part of it stood on a level spot, and appears to have been walled all round, the acclivities of the hill being on all sides exceedingly

## The City of Gadara (John Kitto)

steep. The eastern gate of entrance has its portals still remaining. Among the ruins Buckingham found a theater, an Ionic temple, a second theater, besides traces and remnants of streets and houses. The prevalent orders of architecture are the Ionic and the Corinthian.

Burckhardt also found near Gadara warm sulphurous springs. According to Epiphanius, a yearly festival was held at these baths.

Gadara is the scene of the miracle recorded in Matthew 8:28; Mark 5:1; Luke 8:26. Buckingham's remarks on this event are well worth quoting:—'The accounts given of the habitation of the demoniac from whom the legion of devils was cast out here struck us very forcibly, while we ourselves were wandering among rugged mountains, and surrounded by tombs still used as dwellings by individuals and whole families. A finer subject for a masterly expression of the passions of madness in all their violence, contrasted with the serenity of virtue and benevolence in him who went about doing good, could hardly be chosen for the pencil of an artist; and a faithful delineation of the rugged and wild majesty of the mountain scenery here on the one hand, with the still calm of the waters of the lake on the other, would give an additional charm to the picture.' One of the ancient tombs was, when our traveler saw it, used as a carpenter's shop, the occupier of it being employed in constructing a rude plow. A perfect sarcophagus remained within, which was used by the family as a provision-chest

This is from The Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature, topic: Gadara.

If Gadara is the correct name here, that particular city appears to be about 5.5 miles from the shore of Galilee, according to one map which I accessed. We are told in this narrative that Jesus walked inland a bit.

There appears to be some disagreement upon where exactly this is that Jesus and His disciples have gone to; and there appear to be two primary possibilities. There is Gadara, which is southeast of the tip of the Sea of Galilee and there is Gergesa, on the east side of the Sea of Galilee (both possibilities are show in the map below).

**The Sea of Galilee** (a second map); from [Slide Player](#); accessed November 21, 2019.

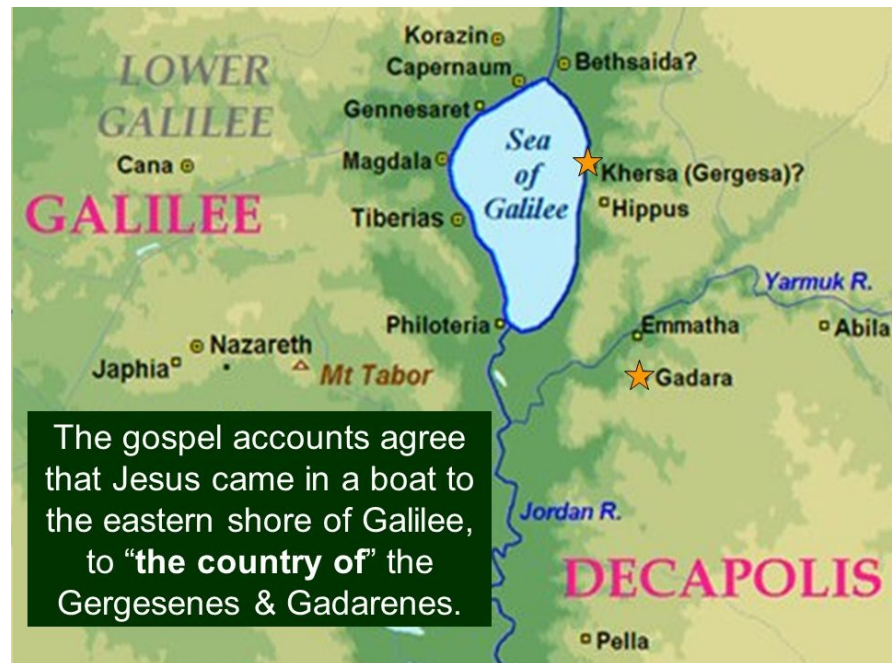
It appears that Jesus and His disciples are in Capernaum (or in an adjacent city), and they go across the lake to get to the destination named in this text.

Luke 8:26b ...which is opposite Galilee. (ESV; capitalized)

The region of Galilee is where Jesus had the bulk of His public ministry, but on the other side of the Galilean Sea is a different area, not considered to be Galilee. Possibly, He and His disciples are in Decapolis.

Luke 8:26 Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is not going to the city of Gadara but to the region near Gadara. Take note, I keep talking about Gadara but the ESV references the country of the Gerasenes. The map below shows the alternative place that maybe they went to.







**Pigs Don't Walk on Water** (a map of the Sea of Galilee); from the [Casual English Bible Site](http://CasualEnglishBible.com); accessed November 21, 2019. I particularly like the 3D appearance of this map (this particular webpage has some excellent maps).

This map presents a different viewpoint, that Jesus and His disciples sailed to Gergesa (rather than Gadara). Why do we appear to have two different sets of people and, therefore, two different destinations? The problem is apparently in Matthew 8:28 (the parallel passage). Some translations read: **And He having come to the other side, to the region of the Gergesenes,...** (Matthew 8:28a; LSV)

In some manuscripts, we have the word *Gergesēnós* (Γεργεσηνός) [pronounced *gher-ghes-ay-NOSS*], which transliterated, *Gergesene(s)*. Strong's #1086. This is what is found in the KJV, and so about half of the translations have *the region of the Gergesenes* (remember that a large number of translations are really just updated versions of the King James translation). The better reading appears to be *Gadarēnós* (Γαδαρηνός) [pronounced *gad-ar-ay-NOSS*], which is transliterated, *Gadarene(s)*. Strong's #1046.

When I exegete a passage, going back to the Greek, I generally use the Westcott Hort text as my base text, but I refer to three other texts as well when there is a discrepancy (many of these texts are available online or in e-sword). In Matthew 8:28, the Westcott Hort text and Tischendorf's Greek text both have *Gadarenes*; and the Byzantine Greek text and the Scrivener Textus Receptus both have *Gergesenes*. When you see the words *Textus Receptus*, that is a reference to the text which was accepted by the KJV translators. Because *Gergesenes* is found in the KJV, it is automatically going to be found in about half of the English translations/versions, because many translation/versions simply update the KJV text. The English Standard Version, An Understandable Version, the Berean Literal Bible, the Berean Study Bible and the International Standard Version all have *Gadarenes* (I am talking about the text in Matthew, not in Luke). If you are interested in other ancient witnesses, the Latin has *Gerasens* and the Aramaic has *Gadarenes* (which are considered to be the same word by some scholars—see the next paragraph). Perhaps a handful of Bibles will let you know by footnote that we have these two different readings.

Unfortunately, there are also problems with the Lukian text of Luke 8:26. The Byzantine Greek text and the Scrivener Textus Receptus both have *Gadarenes*; Tischendorf's Greek text has *Gergesenes*; and The Westcott Hort text has *Garasenes* (which most see as an alternate spelling or a misspelling of *Gadarenes*). The reason for this goes back to the Hebrew words, but I will spare you further explanation.

I don't know if you caught it, but Greek manuscripts do not agree about Matthew 8:28 and Luke 8:26. Of the four fundamental Greek texts to which I refer, are not all internally consistent with those two passages.

Comparing the Original Texts		
	Matthew 8:28	Luke 8:26
Gadarenes	Westcott Hort text; Tischendorf's Greek text; Aramaic	Byzantine Greek text; Scrivener Textus Receptus; Aramaic
Gergesenes	Byzantine Greek text; Scrivener Textus Receptus	Tischendorf's Greek text
Garasenes		Westcott Hort text
Gerasens	Latin	Latin

Now, I viewed the Greek text in all 8 cases; but I used the English translation for the Latin and the Aramaic (assuming that no one *fixed* it).

How does a translation choose which words to use when there is a discrepancy? Some simply follow the KJV; some choose an ancient Greek manuscript or a set of Greek manuscripts as their basis. In its time, the Textus Receptus was an excellent manuscript. Most Greek scholars believe that there are better manuscripts in existence now.

Determining which Greek manuscript (s) to depend upon is known as the science of textual criticism. The translation which begins from scratch (that is, bypasses the KJV and depends upon the Greek manuscripts) must make such a determination. Which manuscript (s) will be depended upon? In such Bible translations, you find this information in the preface or some other introductory text. Every such Bible translation will talk about the Greek manuscripts that their English text rests upon.

The NET Bible, in its footnotes, often references more than a dozen ancient Greek manuscripts when it is trying to sort out a questionable reading. In fact, for this particular verse, its footnote for this word reads:

The textual tradition here is quite complicated. Most mss, especially later ones (A W Ψ ̐<sup>13</sup> ̐ sy), read “Gadarenes,” which is the better reading in Matt 8:28. Some mss (κ L Θ ̐<sup>1</sup> 33 579 700\* 1241 pc) have “Gergesenes.” But early and important representatives of the Alexandrian and Western texttypes (̐<sup>75</sup> B D latt) have “Gerasenes,” the reading followed in the translation. The difference between Matthew and Luke may well have to do with uses of variant regional terms.<sup>44</sup>

The numbers and Greek letters and Hebrew letters in the parentheses represent specific manuscripts. There are 26,000 Greek New Testament manuscripts which are extant today (these are full and partial manuscripts). One would need to study the abbreviations used by the NET Bible (and others) so that our understanding goes beyond, “A bunch of manuscripts read *Gadarenes* and another bunch of manuscripts read *Gergesenes*; and a small number read *Gerasenes*.

There are scholars who have devoted their lives to the study of these manuscripts and they know the strengths and weaknesses of the various manuscripts. They know their age and they even know the family of manuscripts which some individual manuscripts belong to. They read the footnote above and they know exactly which manuscripts are being referenced.

I would assume that most or all Vatican-approved translations depend upon the Douay-Rheims Bible or upon the Latin Vulgate text from Saint Jerome.

Sometimes, when choosing this or that word in the text, there is no overwhelming evidence to be had. Nevertheless, some translators seem very certain on their choice at this point. Wilbur Pickering chooses Gadarenes, and footnotes this: *The eclectic text currently in vogue, following just 4 Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, reads ‘Gerasenes’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, etc.).*<sup>45</sup> I am not even sure what the heck he means here. If you are interested, you can go to Luke 8 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) and see what footnotes and comments are given for this verse from the various translators.

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<sup>44</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?luk8.htm> (taken from a footnote).

<sup>45</sup> Wilbur N. Pickering, ThM PhD, *Wilbur Pickering New Testament*; from e-Sword, Luke 8:26 (footnote).



When all is said and done, are there two different places? We do not know for certain. Which is the correct reading? We do not know for certain.

Let's return to the narrative.

Luke 8:27a **When Jesus had stepped out on land,....** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is on the ship and he leaves the ship and walks onto dry land. This is wherever they happen to be.

Luke 8:27b **...there met Him a man from the city...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus meets a man, someone who was originally from the city (we will assume the nearby city, which is probably Gadara). However, this man no longer lives in the city and we will find out why.

Luke 8:27c **...who had demons. For a long time...** (ESV; capitalized)

This man had suffered an infestation of demons; and he had been demon-possessed for a very long time. It is at this point that we realize that this man is not possessed by a single demon.

What seems to be suggested here is, he had some volition, but that his own volition was becoming less and less of an issue as time went on. There were a number of things which suggest a progressive subordination to his demons.

So that there is no confusion, these are not *emotional* or *psychological demons*; these are actual spirit creatures which took up residence in this man, causing him to do a number of odd things. They seem to have some control over him; and he seems to have some limited control over himself.

Luke 8:27d **...he had worn no clothes,...** (ESV; capitalized)

In his descent into anti-social behavior, this man stopped wearing clothing. He apparently just did not bother.

One of the reasons that this is very weird behavior is, if he is living out in the wilderness, where there is all sorts of vermin about, I would think that he might want a covering to place something between himself and the vermin. But that is not how he lived his life. He lived naked. So this lifestyle is not the choice of a fully rational person.

It is fascinating that, as demon-possessed, this man lived like an animal. I may have to give this some consideration before commenting specifically; but we know that angelic creation is superior to us in many ways. However, when they take over a person's body, in many cases, the person becomes a complete and total outcast; and in this case in particular, they behave like animals.

I don't know if the idea is, they do not feel a need to conform to any standards of civilization; and they will meet their own needs (for food, water and sleep) in any way possible. Or perhaps this is a rebellion against the clothing that God covered Adam and the woman with.

Luke 8:27e ...and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. (ESV; capitalized)

Furthermore, this man did not live in a house, but he lived among the tombs. So, he is close enough to the main city to reside where they build tombs.

So his behavior is erratic and anti-social. He was not normal; and the demons apparently affected him to cause him to live in this way.

I believe that it is significant that this man did not live in a house. In some parts of the United States, those who are given in to drugs or drinking; or have mental problems, are found in many part of our nation, living not in a house but in a tent in a park or along a road or on the concrete in a city. There is a very simple reason why these people do not live in graveyards—for the most part, graveyards are a private enterprise, and this business does not work if there are multiple transients living among the tombs and graves. Therefore, such people are not allowed to live in those places.

We do not know exactly how much control the demons had; or even how much they themselves wrestled for control of this man. We do not know if the demons were tightly organized or a very loose affiliation. We simply know that there are many who inhabit this man.

Luke 8:27 When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met Him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. (ESV; capitalized)

It is interesting to me—we get a lot of background information about this man and his being possessed by demons, but we do not know exactly where this information comes from. I would suggest that what we read here is readily apparent. That is, even a detective is not required to look at this man and figure out that he has lived out in these tombs for a long time, without clothing. Although it does not say, I would assume that bathing is not on this man's list of priorities.

Luke 8:28a When he saw Jesus, he cried out... (ESV; capitalized)

The man sees Jesus and he cries out.

Given his anti-social behavior and given that he has been demon-possessed for a long time, it is highly unlikely that he, in his humanity, knows anything about Jesus.

We will find out that this behavior appears to be related to Jesus although, for all we know, he may have screamed at anyone who got close to him.

Luke 8:28b ...and fell down before Him... (ESV; capitalized)

The demon-possessed man came up to Jesus and fell before Him. There is nothing that suggests to us that this demon-possessed man could have harmed Jesus. He appears to lack the ability to act with hostility towards Jesus.

Many have suggested that there is some human volition still at work within this man, and his falling before Jesus constitutes worship. Or could this be the demons within him showing their subservience to Jesus?

In v. 29, is it going to become apparent that, at some time in this meeting, Jesus called for the spirit beings to leave this man's body (we will later read this in a different gospel). So, perhaps when Jesus called for this, this man fell down before Jesus—but he remains possessed (this is going to require some discussion in v. 29).

Luke 8:28c ...and said with a loud voice,... (ESV; capitalized)

This man has a strong voice, which suggests that he is controlled to some degree by demons and that it is not disorganized. A person suffering from chaos might not be able to speak at all. This strength of voice suggests that there was not some sort of power play going on for control of this man's vocal chords. For the most part, there appears to be a singular demon speaking on behalf of those demons who have possessed this man.

It does not appear that the man is speaking from his own volition.

Luke 8:28d ..."What have You to do with me, Jesus,... (ESV; capitalized)

This appears to be the clear indicator that a demon (or demons<sup>46</sup>) is speaking. They know Jesus; they know exactly Who He is. And, they have a way of recognizing Him, which is different from men in general. We have had circumstances where men were unable to recognize Jesus and distinguish Him from the others; but this man knows exactly Who Jesus is.

The man who is possessed would not likely know Who Jesus is. Who would tell him? For this reason, I would assume that this interaction is between Jesus and a demon (or demons).

Luke 8:28e ...Son of the Most High God? (ESV; capitalized)

He knows that Jesus is the Son of God, and reference to the *Most High* appears to be a reference to God. Again, this is information known by the demon (s); but would not be known by the possessed man.

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<sup>46</sup> As an aside, throughout, we have the singular used; which would suggest that there is one demon doing the speaking.



I believe the idea here is, *why have You come to Me? What is going on that You have invaded My space?*

I think it is reasonable for us to assume that these demons scared off anyone who came near the man.

Luke 8:28f **I beg you, do not torment me.**" (ESV; capitalized)

The final verb can mean a great many things; so these demons may be asking, **"I request that you do not harass or distress me."**

A point of grammar—despite what we learn later—there appears to be an emphasis on the singularity of this man and the demon speaking for him. Let me suggest that only one demon is in possession of his vocal cords (at least, for most of the encounter).

There are a couple of important things that we can get from this. The demon spokesman (assuming that there is a single demon controlling the vocal cords of this man) realizes that, at some point, all these demons who have rebelled against God would be placed in torments. That is, they would be imprisoned, isolated and in pain. The sign that this might be coming near is the Messiah right there speaking to him.

Demons know the Old Testament, and when Jesus the Messiah walked the earth, they expected that the Kingdom of God was soon to follow; which meant the judgment of men and angels as well. I believe that this demon was aware of these things and, at the same time, feared this ultimate torment to which he would be subjected.

#### **Lesson 243: Luke 8:26–29**

#### **The demon refuses to leave**

Jesus is on the coast and He is speaking to a demon-possessed man. Jesus apparently is communicating with one of the demons occupying the body of this man.

Luke 8:28 **When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before Him and said with a loud voice, "What have You to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me."** (ESV; capitalized)

Did the man exercise enough volition to fall before Jesus? Or did the demons living in this man fall before Jesus in order to entreat Him for a favor?

The demon seems concerned that Jesus, the Messiah is there; and the demon is worried about the judgment which would soon follow. At some point, when Jesus is on earth, all demons would be thrown into the Lake of Fire. Prior to this, some demons have been placed into *Torments* (such as those who had carnal relations with women in Genesis 6).

In context, we have this:

Luke 8:26–28 **They** [Jesus and His disciples] **arrived in their ship at the other side of the sea at Gaderene** [opposite Capernaum]. **Jesus went onto the land and he met a man, who was originally from the city; however, he was tormented by demons for a very long time. He was naked and living around the tombs, rather than wearing clothes and living in a house like a normal person. When he saw Jesus, he began calling out to Him with a great voice. He fell before the Lord and, with a very loud voice, said, “Who am I that You, Jesus, the Son of God the Most High, have come to me? I beg You not to harass or distress me.”** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Like many demon-possessed men, this person lived in an odd place and he demonstrated very odd, antisocial behavior.

The demon-spokesman tries to strike a deal with Jesus. This is because Jesus had ordered the demons out of this man.

Luke 8:29a **For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man.** (ESV; capitalized)

V. 29 appears to provide some sort of explanation, as it contains the post-positive explanatory particle *gár* (γάρ) [pronounced *gahr*]: **For He was commanding the unclean spirit to go out from the man.**

The verb here is imperfect active indicative of *paragellō* (παράγγελλω) [pronounced *par-ang-GEL-low*], which means, *to transmit a message along from one to another, to declare, announce; to command, to order, to charge, to enjoin*. Strong's #3853.

The imperfect tense can be continuous action beginning in the past; or this can mean that Jesus *began to command that the unclean spirit come out of the man*.

But something odd has taken place. There seems to be a hold up on the exorcism here (and, when I say *exorcism*, I do not mean to imply that there was some sort of ritual which Jesus followed). Jesus simply said, “Come out of the man,” (or words to that effect), and most of the time, the demon (s) did. This time, the demon did not come out—not immediately anyway. There are several things to note here, which will be discussed further in v. 29 (below).

As an aside—let me relay to you an observation I have made here. In most of the less-than-literal translations, it is clear that v. 29 is a part of this context (which is going to lead us to some fascinating observations). In the very literal translations, very often, they follow the verse division almost religiously, so that the intimate connection between vv. 26–28 and the verse that follows them, is not as apparent. What I am saying here is, it is more obvious in the less-than-literal translations how this passage fits together and what it is telling us.

I have been raised up spiritually in Berachah Church. I was under the ministry of R. B. Thieme, Jr. for about 25 years. So, like many of his students (or, *sheep*, if you would

rather), I developed a healthy respect for an accurate translation of Scripture (and therefore, a preference for the most literal translations). So, for many years, I have set aside the less-than-literal translations aside as being inferior or not being worthy of serious consideration. Well, that view was a mistake on my part. Since I have embarked on this approach to developing a verse-by-verse commentary on whatever books of the Bible God gives me time to study, I have developed a very healthy appreciation for the translations which are not perfectly literal. Now and again, some of them will really mess up the meaning of a passage; but, more often than not, these translations often provide me insight which I did not get out of the very literal translations (and, I mean insight, when compared with the original Greek or Hebrew).

For those of you engaged by my studies, I highly recommend that you read the limited vocabulary or the less-than-literal translations which I have highlighted before studying each verse. You will find yourself having a better feel for the flow and meaning of the verse if you do. These are found in the Luke chapter studies: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) ([Folder](#)). When I complete the studies which I email out, I then take this commentary and place it back into the chapter studies of Luke. In these studies, there are 100+ translations which I refer to; and every single word in the Greek is fully examined in the Greek text boxes.

Now, back to the text at hand:

Luke 8:29a **For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man.** (ESV; capitalized)

It is the demon speaking when he asked Jesus not to torment him.

We now get a little bit of this history of this man and of his demon possession.

Jesus is sending the demon (singular?) out; and there is some resistance here.

Let's place v. 29a into context now, because this verse raises some very serious theological questions.

Luke 8:26–29a **They arrived in their ship at the other side of the sea at Gaderene. Jesus went onto the land and he met a man, who was originally from the city; however, he was tormented by demons for a very long time. He was naked and living around the tombs, rather than wearing clothes and living in a house like a normal person. When he saw Jesus, he began calling out to Him with a great voice. He fell before the Lord and, with a very loud voice, said, "Who am I that You, Jesus, the Son of God the Most High have come to me? I beg You not to harass or distress me." For He was commanding the unclean spirit to go out from the man.** (Kukis paraphrase)

We might reasonably see v. 29a as being parenthetical. An explanation is being provided here as to what appears to be a hold-up in the exorcism of these demons.

I want you to consider something here. Jesus, as God, can command demons to come out of any person (at any time and under any circumstance), and they must exit. There is none of this, “Let’s talk about this first, Jesus.” Jesus, as God, knows everything about what He is facing, and Jesus as sovereign God can say, “Get out,” and, in a split second, the demon (s) has (have) exited the person.

We are told here that *Jesus was commanding*, which is the imperfect active indicative of *paraggellô* (παραγγέλλω) [pronounced *par-ang-GEL-low*], which means, *to transmit a message along from one to another, to declare, announce; to command, to order, to charge, to enjoin*. Strong’s #3853. The imperfect voice tells us that, Jesus began doing this before the demon (using the vocal cords of the man) began to talk to him. So, these demons have remained inside of this man, even though Jesus has been telling them to get out. Now, there is an alternative reading that has this verb in the aorist tense. That would be in a point of time—in context, in the past. So we end up with the same problem. The primary difference is, Jesus was and continues commanding this spirit (spirits), but they remain in the man.

Here is what is being implied: Jesus is not casting out demons in His Own power; He is not exerting divine power over these demons; nor is He accessing His divine omnipotence to know all that is going on (although this discussion could be made for the benefit of His disciples and us reading this hundreds of years later). I believe that Jesus is doing what He understands His commission to be, which includes casting out demons. From His humanity, Jesus is ordering these demons to come out, and they are able to temporarily resist Him. This tells us that Jesus is not ordering the demons to leave from His sovereignty, as a Member of the Godhead, but from His humanity, as a part of His public ministry on earth. These demon spirits will remain within this man in order to speak to Jesus, something which God the Father has allowed.

So, the demons have not exited this man, and that is going to lead Jesus to having a discussion with the demon that possesses this man. So the demons have remained within this man, and Jesus is going to discuss the situation with the demons in order to gain some additional information.

Now, I want you to notice a few things: (1) Jesus does not panic and say, “What has happened to My powers?” He is not worried that he commanded the demons to leave, and yet they have not. (2) Jesus explores the situation with a conversation. (3) Quite obviously, there is no fear on the part of Jesus.

Given that Jesus has not used His divine authority at this juncture; it is reasonable to assume that Jesus is speaking to the occupying demon from His humanity, not exactly certain of what has just happened (that is, Jesus is not sure why the demons still remain within the man). But Jesus does not lose His cool; He changes with the changing circumstances (actually, the changing circumstances is the fact that nothing changes).

Luke 8:29b (For many a time it had seized him. (ESV; capitalized)

At this point, there is going to be some discussion of what has typically happened to this man under demonic influence. This is quite interesting because who knows this information and who explains it to Luke?

We are about to get some sort of background on this man. I have two speculative theories at this point as to why we find this information in the book of Luke: (1) Luke has met this formerly demon-possessed man and has heard all of this information directly from him; or (2) Jesus is told this information from the people in the crowd (His disciples would have heard and passed along this information to Luke at a later time).

When considering the words that we read in any of the books of the Bible, keep in mind that these books are produced by human authors, but as guided by God the Holy Spirit. Most, if not all of the time, there is going to be a human side to the writing of these words. What is the human side here? How did Luke know about these things? He would have had to have heard this information from someone else (Luke himself was not an eyewitness to any of the events in the book bearing his name). That means that someone there, when this took place, relayed this information to Luke (or to someone else who tells Luke). Who are the people who are there? The Lord's disciples, the women previously mentioned; and this demon-possessed man. Later in the narrative, some of the townsfolk will show up.

How does Luke eventually get these details? The demon-possessed man tells him (or tells someone else who tells Luke); or one of the followers of Jesus tells Luke. How would one of these followers know? Someone would have to tell him. That means that either some of the disciples went throughout this region and interviewed people in order to get more information, *or*, that information was freely revealed here (I think the demon-possessed man will talk about these things). This is how I reasoned my way to those two possible theories.

Because of the erratic behavior of this man, he was, on many occasions, seized by force and carried away.

So, as Jesus is about to engage this man in conversation, one of the bystanders tells him, "Listen, we have been dealing with this guy for awhile. We have taken him into custody due to his crazy behavior."

Luke 8:29c **He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Again, Jesus is about to engage in a conversation with the indwelling demon (as it did not exit this man's body on command), and someone offers up the fact that this man has been put into bonds and guarded.

Men placed him into various kind of bonds and they guarded him. It is reasonable to assume that he did not receive the best of treatment; and that my may have even been starved.



I would suggest that this indicates that it is the man who feels the pain of his body when subjected to such things.

Luke 8:29d ...but he would break the bonds... (ESV; capitalized)

In keeping with my approach to this background information, someone tells Jesus that this man has been put into a variety of restraints before and he just breaks out and escapes. That is why he is here living without restraints in and around the tombs.

We apparently all have great strength that we do not really use. We have all heard of stories of a man lifting up a car because a child is underneath. But even more stories of a druggie taking angel dust and requiring 5 big men to restrain him. So there is a way to access a strength which our body has that we do not do normally. These demons are well-aware of how to do this.

Luke 8:29e ...and be driven by the demon into the desert.) (ESV; capitalized)

Once free, the demon (s) would drive this man out into the desert (which is simply uninhabited areas near the city. The man would escape the bonds and then come back here to the graves to live.

Luke 8:29 For He was commanding the unclean spirit to go out from the man. For many times one had taken him and he was put into bonds [and] guarded; yet he broke [those] bonds [and escaped]. He was [continually] driven by the demon out towards the uninhabited regions. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

As previously discussed, we need to consider, *from where does this information come? How does Luke (and the other gospel writers) know about this history of this demon-possessed man?* I believe that the most logical answer is, there are people there from that region—they know about this man and about his background, and they tell Jesus about him. Is this not logically what a person would tell Jesus who is standing opposite this crazy man?

#### Lessons 244–245: Luke 8:29–34

#### Jesus, the demons and the pigs

Jesus seemed to suddenly inform His disciples that they needed to go across the lake, and so they did. They arrived in Gerasenes and a man possessed by a demon (or demons) fell before Jesus and made this rather odd statement: "What have You to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me." (From Luke 8:28; ESV; capitalized)

We do not know if it is the man or the demon falling before Jesus; but these are clearly the words of the demon, knowing that he may be cast out of this man and placed into torments.

Luke 8:29 For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus had commanded the spirit to leave the man, but it does not. This tells us that the words of Jesus come from His humanity and not His deity—else, how could the demon resist the Lord's command?

This man had been possessed for a considerable amount of time and Luke provides us with quite an amazing backstory on this guy.

Luke 8:30a Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" (ESV; capitalized)

I find this fascinating—Jesus is speaking to these demons (or to a particular demon) and He asks for the name. Throughout the Bible, it is clear that angels and demons are as much individuals as we humans are.

Luke 8:30b And he said, "Legion,"... (ESV; capitalized)

There seems to be a particular demon answering—again, we do not know exactly how this works, but there appears to be a lead demon who communicates with Jesus.

His answer is *legeōn* (λεγεών) [pronounced *lehg-eh-OHN*], which is transliterated and translated, *legion*. This indicates that there are many demons inside of this man.

What comes to my mind is the jellyfish known as the man of war, which is not a single animal, but many animals acting in concert with one another, as an inseparable union.

**A Portuguese man-of-war** (a photograph); from [Encyclopedia Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/animal/Portuguese-man-of-war); accessed June 15, 2023. *The Portuguese man-of-war is a colonial organism made up of numerous specialized polyps, and four separate kinds of polyps constitute its structure: the uppermost polyp (pneumatophore), the tentacles (dactylozooids), the digestive polyp (gastrozooids), and the reproductive polyp (gonozooids). Each part performs its very specific bodily function.*<sup>47</sup>



I do not know if there is this kind of

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<sup>47</sup> From <https://www.britannica.com/animal/Portuguese-man-of-war> accessed June 15, 2023.

relationship with these demons, but they appear to be some sort of a package deal. It is relatively easy to understand demon possession by a single demon; it is much harder to understand a person possessed by a number of demons. Off the top of my head, I recall Jesus teaching about a man who takes in 7 demons, reforms superficially, loses the demons and then takes them in again (this was an illustration). I seem to recall that Mary Magdalene had seven demons thrown out of her. So, there are cases of more than a single demon inhabiting a person; but not very many.

Even as individual humans, we carry within us a variety of bacteria, some of which we cannot live without. Now, these are living creatures which act apart from our own direction within us. My brain automatically directs my breathing and my heart and many physiological things, separate from my conscious control. However, our brains do not direct in any way these various bacteria which live throughout our bodies, and without which, we could not survive.

How this happened and how so many of them indwell this man, we are not told. Nor, do we really understand how they associate as a group in one person. It does appear that one demon speaks for the lot of them, as Jesus speaks to them using a 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular pronoun.

Luke 8:30c ...for many demons had entered him. (ESV; capitalized)

The explanation is, there are many demons in him. We do not know how exactly this took place.

I personally have not done a great deal of study in this area. The believer cannot be demon-possessed, but he can be demon-influenced. Unbelievers can be demon-possessed through a combination of their volition and the use of drugs, involvement in the occult. Perhaps the best book available—and it is free—comes from R. B. Thieme, Jr. Ministries, [Satan and Demonism](#). They have over 50 books available which can be ordered. They have 25 books available online, as PDFs or as ebooks.

Luke 8:30 Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him. (ESV; capitalized)

Because the demons did not immediately leave this man, Jesus engages the speaking demon in conversation.

Luke 8:31 And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. (ESV; capitalized)

Abyss is from the feminine singular Greek noun abussos (ἄβυσσος) [pronounced AHB-oos-soss], which means, *bottomless (pit), unbounded, the abyss, the deep; an immeasurable depth; a very deep gulf or chasm*. Strong's #12. It appears to be a place where fall angels are sent as somewhat of a holding prison until the end of times. This ends whatever freedom they enjoyed to this point in time. How much the fallen angels

know about this is unclear. Do they all know, “Do this, and you are thrown into torments?” That is hard to say. But given the fears expressed here and elsewhere by demons, they know that they do not want to be assigned there.

It appears that some demons who inhabit people can be assigned immediately to the abyss, which appears to be a place where some demons are held, as some sort of ethereal jail. Perhaps this automatically occurs after a demon exits a person? Or perhaps after they have been told to leave by divine authority.

We do know that there is a temporary place of abode for some demons, not unlike torments for humans. This is, apparently, where all of the demons and half demons are from Genesis 6.

Several translations had words like *return to*, *to go back to* in v. 31, which does not make sense to me. Would a demon be placed into the abyss, and then either get out or be let out? That would make no sense to me. Twice, because of these translations, I have gone back to this verse and checked it word-by-word, just in case I missed something (and I checked an alternative Greek text as well). Also, if you would like to view this word-by-word, every book which I study is originally in a format which includes the Greek text. Each chapter of Luke can be accessed through this document—Luke Links ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)); and also accessed in this online [folder](#). Also, when I complete a chapter in this study that you are reading now, I integrate it back into the chapter-by-chapter studies, which pretty much completes that study on that chapter (the typical chapter in Luke runs 200–600 pages; the entire book of Luke will be about 10,000 pages in total).

Luke 8:31 **And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss.** (ESV; capitalized)

The demon is aware of being placed into some sort of lockdown, and he asks not to be so incarcerated.

Luke 8:32a **Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside,...** (ESV; capitalized)

While all of this was taking place, there were hogs feeding on the mountain nearby. The demons are able to see this—likely through the eyes of the man whom they inhabit. I don’t know that we fully understand what demons are able to perceive of this world as unattached beings as opposed to being in possession of a man.

Luke 8:32b **...and they begged Him to let them enter these.** (ESV; capitalized)

In this narrative, we go back and forth between referring to the demons as a single entity (speaking of them in the singular) and referring to them as a group. Here, the plural is used to refer to them.

This certainly suggests that, in order for demons to go into a person or animal, they must have permission. This portion of Luke 8 also tells us that animals might be indwelt by demons.

I assume that it is obvious to the demons that Jesus will not allow them to enter into another person (or persons).

Luke 8:32c **So He gave them permission.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus gave them permission to go into the hogs. This is somewhat curious; and perhaps this is done so that the witnesses there can see the self-destructive nature of these demons. It will reveal that they are unable to act for the good. Having received this permission from Jesus, these demons do not live docile lives out as pigs.

This may give us an idea how Jesus was motivated. Through the gospels, someone would come up to Jesus with a serious need, and Jesus would agree to go with that person in order to deal with their problem. Perhaps this is a similar thing—the demons suggest that Jesus allow them to go into the hogs, and, simply because they asked, Jesus allows it. Allow me to temporarily postulate this, although I may change my mind later on.

Luke 8:32 **Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged Him to let them enter these. So He gave them permission.** (ESV; capitalized)

My assumption here is, the demons believed that they might be put into a holding cell of sorts waiting for eternity; (or that they might be subject to the final judgment of angels and demons). In any case, Jesus gave them this permission.

Luke 8:33a **Then the demons came out of the man...** (ESV; capitalized)

The demons went out from the possessed man. It appears that Jesus has some authority over them, but that God the Father did not expel them until this point, where the demons appear to have left this man of their own volition. I would assume that this is for our education, as well as the education of the disciples.

Luke 8:33b **...and entered the pigs,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus allows them to enter into the hogs. We are not given any sort of explanation as to why Jesus allows this. My thinking is to reveal the heart (thinking) of the townsfolk. Possibly this was to reveal to His disciples (and to us studying this gospel) the true nature of their enemy.

Luke 8:33c **...and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake...** (ESV; capitalized)

So much of the Bible is narrative, and we do not know exactly what has happened here. Was this a reflection of the volition of the hogs? Of the demons? We do not know exactly what has happened here. Is this akin to an eleven-year-old taking a car for a joy ride?

It seems obvious that, this happened as a result of the demons entering into the hogs. Whether the possession drove the hogs crazy, or if the demons themselves went wild, we do not know.

In any case, there is no peaceful coexistence with demons; or with any fallen creature. This is why all creatures under judgment will be isolated from God and God's creation forever.

Demons (fallen angels) have shown on many occasions that they simply cannot let man alone. Our universe is vast—beyond our imagination vast. But demons cannot simply choose an existence light years away. They seem to have this need to mess with man—perhaps as an aspect of their fallen nature. One result of this was the demon corruption of all mankind in Genesis 6 (those fallen angels are locked in chains of darkness right now).

**Illustration:** We have an excellent modern-day application. The society in the United States decided that we would let anyone claim to be this or that gender, or just make up a brand-new gender and be that. We have decided to allow homosexuals to be whatever they want to be and even allow them to hook up with other homosexuals in certain clubs and bars (essentially, we have chosen to look the other way while homosexuals have sex in certain public places). The whole justification for that is, "Just let us do whatever we want to do in the privacy of our own homes." But, even from the outside, this LGBTQ movement was not willing to leave it at that. They demanded to get married like men and women do; those men dressing like women somehow gained a foothold in our public schools and libraries to read books to children; our public schools have been flooded with sexually explicit books dealing with homosexual behavior and transgenderism, and there are movements to convince young children that maybe they are not in the right body for the gender that they think they are. You see, it was impossible for adult homosexuals and adult transgender-types to simply act among one another in a private setting. At some point, they had to go after children (children are more malleable when it comes to perverted suggestions). This movement could not let innocence go unchallenged. Letting them have pride parades where public decency standards are not enforced; and then allowing them marry were two very wrong steps. Our society is in the midst of deciding, just how much contact should we allow the LGBTQ movement with our children. Logically, such interaction should be zero; but that is currently not the case. It has been a downward slide since then with regards to sexual deviancy.

**Tangent:** Our society either must view gender confusion and homosexuality as sinful deviations from the norm (suggesting absolutely no contact with children); or as things which we cannot view as aberrations (in which case, their contact with children is only limited by their imagination). The Old Testament understood homosexuality as a deviant behavior to be wiped out (because the laws of the Old Testament primarily applied to nation Israel). In the New Testament, because we exist as the church in many nations, we can influence but we cannot control the society that we are a part of. Therefore, we as believers are not put on this earth to try to stamp out homosexuality (or to cure any other social problem).



**Tangent:** I would suggest a twofold approach to this social problem. First of all, we have to recognize that we cannot control the volition of others; and Romans 1 tells us to give them over to their own lusts. On the other hand, we are given a great deal of freedom when it comes to our own environment. Establishing a home is fundamental to the lives of all people; and we set the standards as to what is allowed within the home. Outside the four walls of the home, we have less control, as this involves the volition of more than just those within our home. Some take this control to an extreme, as do the Amish, who set up an entire segregated society which reflects their values. On the other hand, the believing married couple with children have to, at the very least, educate their own children regarding what they are going to run into in the outside world (many parents, believers and unbelievers alike, teach their children from a very early age to avoid drugs, sexual pervers and crime). Ideally speaking, the believing parents with doctrine look to establish guidance which falls somewhere between the Amish society and sending your children out into the world without any guidance at all.

Back to the study at hand:

Luke 8:33d ...and drowned. (ESV; capitalized)

The hogs went into the water and they all drown. Whatever the reason, the hogs all died.

*The NET Bible: Many have discussed why Jesus gave them permission, since the animals were destroyed. However, this is another example of a miracle that is a visual lesson. The demons are destructive: They were destroying the man. They destroyed the pigs. They destroy whatever they touch. The point was to take demonic influence seriously, as well as Jesus' power over it as a picture of the larger battle for human souls. There would be no doubt how the man's transformation had taken place.<sup>48</sup>*

To continue with the points being made by the NET Bible, this further reveals that there is no coexistence possible between mankind and demons. Despite having a universe that is vast, demons would not, of their own volition, pick a planet 7 million light years away and hang out there, out of everyone's hair. They just would not/could not do that. Whatever demons have by way of a sin nature; it is impossible for them to simply go off on their own and not to bother anyone else.

**Illustration:** Another good illustration is the segment of our society which takes drugs. People who take drugs most often offer up the argument, "This is something that I do by myself at my own home and I place these drugs in my own body." But, that is not always the case. More often than not, drug use affect every member of their family, all of their friends, their landlord, their neighbors (adults and children), etc. They do not always confine themselves to a safe place at home, not affecting anyone else, to use their drugs. Their drug problem is going to seep out in a number of ways, and that is going to affect all of those people I named.

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<sup>48</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?luk8.htm> (footnote); accessed November 21, 2019.

The common experience of life is, when you sin, you tend to eventually involve other people in your sinning. You may try not to, but, at some point you do. And usually not just one person, but often many.

Knowing these things helps us to understand why God will, at some point in the future, completely separate His kingdom from evil (and all who are evil will be thrown into the Lake of Fire).

Luke 8:33 The demons went out from the man and entered into the hogs. [Suddenly], the herd plunged off a precipice into the water and they drown. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

There is no peaceful coexistence between man and demons. They cannot be given a place somewhere else in the universe, as their desire will be to always mess with mankind in some way, despite our being inferior to them in so many respects. These demons cannot even keep things under control when operating a pig.

You could allow your 10 year old boy to drive your car, but that is, for the most part, courting disaster. The difference here is, these demons seem to be incapable of leading normal lives (living in such a way that seems normal to us). They cannot settle down in this herd of pigs and enjoy their lives on earth. It is their very nature to try to screw things up. They cannot avoid that.

This is not unlike the contemporary drug addict. No matter how many times you hear the phrase, *this is a victimless crime*, everyone in his periphery becomes a victim. If you have had druggies for neighbors—particularly those who sell drugs—or in your family, there will be a time at which they will negatively impact their surroundings. And a drug dealer makes his living selling drugs and ruining lives through selling these drugs.

Luke 8:30–33 Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” The lead demon said, “Legion” (as there were many demons who entered into the man). The demons then asked Jesus that He not order them into the abyss. They asked if He would permit them to enter into a herd of hogs, which were feeding on the mountain. Jesus allowed them to do this. So the demons went out of the man and entered into the hogs. Suddenly, the herd began running and they plunged off a steep precipice into the water and drown. (Kukis paraphrase)

On a personal note, God has provided me a very specific background prior to writing commentary—I was a geometry teacher, and I was the sort of geometry teacher who emphasized *proofs* (some of you know what I am talking about and some have no idea). The proper way to teach a math course is, you begin with a few accepted principles (which principles are never proven, but accepted by the students as reasonable suppositions) and then you built upon those principles. Each type of mathematics that you are familiar with (arithmetic, algebra, geometry, pre-calculus and calculus) and every type of mathematics you are not (vector bundles, fuzzy sets) are developed the same way. One of the key elements for a body of mathematics is for it to be internally sound and logical. Therefore, when I study a passage of Scripture, that background is a big part of my approach, which may possibly be unique among theologians (I don’t know the backgrounds of most pastors

or theologians, but having a mathematical background is unusual for any vocation in life). For me, the road that has taken me to this place has been a great blessing for me; and, in many narratives, this background comes into play.

Luke 8:34a **When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled...** (ESV; capitalized)

I don't know that *swine herders* is really the correct name for these men, but is the one which I find used the most. This refers to the ones who are tending to the hogs. They may be the hog farmers and they may be a separate set of men who take the hogs out to graze in open areas. Whatever, they saw all that happened and they fled.

Although they could not see the actual demons (presumably), they could see where the demons were and the results of what they were doing. Everyone apparently knew about this man and how crazy he was. Recall that he had been captured on many occasions and put into restraints and he broke out of the restraints and went out to live among the tombs. What could be more like the basis of a horror movie than something like this? An erratic character with great strength living out among the tombs.

These hog farmers also witnessed the hogs suddenly burst out running over a precipice into the water, where they all drown. This was pretty crazy stuff, and they made a run for it, having no idea what might happen next. When you see things that you have never seen before, you do not know what to do. These men made a run for it, but they did not go off somewhere and hide, they ran back home and told everyone who would listen to them.

Since there is more than one person who saw what they saw, their eyewitness is more credible.

If Charley Brown tells you that he saw a flying saucer, even if you know Charley, you might be skeptical. However, if Charley Brown and Lucy Van Pelt both saw the same thing, and you know both of them, then your curiosity is at least piqued (using the example of a flying saucer might be a mistake here).

Luke 8:34b **...and told it in the city and in the country.** (ESV; capitalized)

I have presented these men as running from fear. However, let me be quick to point out, that is how I read the situation; but that is not stated explicitly in the text. They flee and go back to the city, and they tell everyone they see (again, based upon the way I am reading this narrative); and that this spreads to the countryside around their town. If you will recall from the map shown earlier, the city is several miles from the Sea of Galilee.

There is another possible way of looking at this. These men are very concerned about their business and their sudden business losses (they may not be the owners, but they would be responsible for the hogs which are lost). So, they run and talk to the people of the town and the countryside to give their version of events, which is apparently going to emphasize the loss of these hogs and how Jesus is responsible for that (not them).

## Lessons 246–247: Luke 8:27–39    The People find the Possessed Man is Normal

This is what we have been studying:

Luke 8:27 When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. (ESV; capitalized; and so throughout)

Jesus had been ministering off the northern Galilean shores, and He suddenly took His disciples to the other side of the lake, to the Gerasenes (recall that there was some question as to the exact location and name).

Luke 8:28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before Him and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me." (ESV; capitalized)

We do not know if this man fell before Jesus based upon his own volition or that of the demons residing within him. However, the demons inside the man know Jesus. Obviously, the man himself does not.

Luke 8:29 For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus commands the unclear spirit to exit this man, but it does not do so at first.

This is not what usually happens to Jesus. He is not the power which causes the demons to exit; but He gives the command, and the power of God the Holy Spirit usually executes His command.

Since the demons do not exit, Jesus decides now is a good time to ask a few questions. That may explain what is taking place.

Luke 8:30 Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him. (ESV; capitalized)

One demon is speaking through the man's vocal cords, but many demons occupy the body of this man.

Luke 8:31 And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. (ESV; capitalized)

The abyss appears to be a place of confinement for angels who cannot seem to remain separate from mankind. This confinement continues until all of those who are against God are thrown into the Lake of Fire.

Luke 8:32 Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged Him to let them enter these. So He gave them permission. (ESV; capitalized)

Rather than be confined, these demons asked to be put into a herd of pigs.

Luke 8:33 Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned. (ESV; capitalized)

The demons moved out of the man by Jesus' orders. They entered into the bodies of the pigs and the pigs went out of control.

It is my assumption that the demons were placed in the abyss after this (I assume this because they seem to have assumed this). This would have been done by another Member of the Trinity and not by the humanity of Jesus. This suggests that the penalty of possessing a person is being placed into the abyss.

Let me suggest that a demon being aware of a person who is willing to be possessed is not unlike a kid of questionable character who walks past a parked car with keys left in the ignition. (At one time, hundreds of thousands of people kept their keys in the ignition of their cars so that they would not lose the keys.<sup>49</sup>)

Luke 8:34 When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. (ESV; capitalized)

The hog farmers had never seen anything like this. They were apparently frightened and they went to the city and told the people there what took place.

Luke 8:35a Then people went out to see what had happened,... (ESV; capitalized)

People who are living in the city and in the countryside have heard this amazing story; and they have to come out and see if for themselves. Based upon what they have heard, there will be evidence of what happened. There will be hog carcasses filling up a lake or river, and being washed onto the shore. Also, that man that everyone knows is 10x crazy is no longer out of his nut. All of this will be totally observable.

Let me also suggest that the thrust of the narrative given to them from the swine herders is, the destruction of these hogs is attributable to Jesus.

There are a number of details left out in this narrative. Recall that Jesus spoke with the demon (s) inside the man; and I have assumed that anyone nearby could hear this

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<sup>49</sup> This probably sound crazy to any person under 50 reading this.

conversation. Were the swine herders close enough to hear this? The information we do not have is, what exactly did the swine herders see and hear? Could they hear the conversation between the Lord and the demon? Obviously, they were able to observe their hogs suddenly going out of control; but why did they connect this to Jesus (and the disciples with Him)? Was it just the fact of Him arriving, and the man is suddenly well and the swine have been destroyed? Those things would have been very observable. Was that all of the connection that they needed in order to turn the town against Jesus?

Luke 8:35b ...and they came to Jesus... (ESV; capitalized)

So, the people go out and they find themselves face to face with Jesus. We may understand this on two levels: physically they come out there, and Jesus is right there, right in front of them. But, there is also a spiritual inference to take from this—when they come out to see what has transpired, Jesus is right there for them to make a decision about. He has just done some things that no other man has ever done (and we do not know what the townsfolk actually know). There are things which transpired that would never have happened without Him being there. The people coming out to see Jesus need to make a decision—how exactly should they respond to Jesus?

The person who has placed his faith in Jesus Christ knows what the next step *ought* to be; **believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved**. It is time for them to reflect on what really happened right here and Who is this Man before them?

Luke 8:35c ...and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting.... (ESV; capitalized)

Everyone either knew this man or knew of him. He was like a person on PCP all day long, each and every day. You did not want to be around him; and most people would have been afraid to be anywhere near him, particularly when alone. Yet, here this guy is, sitting normally, like any other human being would do, and he is now wearing clothes. He is also quietly listening to Jesus.

The people from the town knew the man's face; and I would suspect that his hair and beard had not been trimmed for months or years (however long he has been under possession).

How did the herdsmen speak about this? “What sort of power does Jesus have to overcome that crazy man?” They could also point out all of the destroyed stock, implying that this was Jesus' fault. If the people accepted the change in the man as a positive thing; how did this compare to the destruction of 2000 hogs? Let me suggest that weighed in the balance, the people would rather have things back the way that they were, even though this trade-out is by far the most beneficial. In any case, this hog decimation would be an important aspect to the business of Gadara.

The remarkable change in this man does not appear to change anyone's mind or to come into their thinking at all. Some of the people there saw what happened; most of them did



not, but they were told about what happened. Right now, the people from town see the man; and everything else has died down. Likely, there are hog carcasses in the lake and they understand just what a material impact that this will have on their town. .

Luke 8:35d ...clothed and in his right mind,... (ESV; capitalized)

In a demon-possessed state, living naked was normal to this man. However, once his sense and volition were restored to him, he would have felt some normal shame and rectified that situation. Perhaps one of the disciples had an extra set of clothes.

People knew this man and they knew how crazed he was and that they had no luck in restraining him. Yet here is, right before them, clothed and acting normal. Although we do not have a record of him speaking to anyone, the transformation of him indwelt by demons to free of demons was remarkable. It was apparent to everyone, even though we may not have the specifics (did he cry out, gnash his teeth, growl before? Probably). Whatever his behavior was before, it is not the same now. I believe that the text is telling us that, not only is this man in his right mind, but that this is observable by all. The people can see it with their own eyes.

Luke 8:35e ...sitting at the feet of Jesus,... (ESV; capitalized)

The formerly insane man, whose behavior was crazy and erratic and scary, was now calm and normal.

My guess is, Jesus was teaching the man, and that he was listening intently; and my guess would be, he heard the gospel directly from Jesus at this time.

There are some people who have their health restored and, they jump up and down and walk around, because, for instance, Jesus just healed them from being lame—so they cannot stop walking around. But, this man apparently was always on the move, probably always making noise, and now, he is able to just sit quietly, something that he has not done for years.

Now, I would suspect that Jesus is speaking to him and teaching him; but this is not found in our text. I believe that is the reasonable implication of our text, as this man is sitting at the feet of Jesus.

Luke 8:35f ...and they were afraid. (ESV; capitalized)

*They* refers to the townsfolk who have come here. Most of them probably avoided this place, because the demon-possessed was living here.

Everyone knew about this demon-possessed man; many had seen him personally. They all knew about his background and how he lived and how he was impossible to control. To see that same man—a man who once acted like a savage animal—just normal and

sitting there, this made the people frightened. Let me suggest that it is the power that Jesus apparently had which frightened them.

When these men put everything together, they are frightened by this series of events. Faith is not their first option. I believe that the fear that they are experiencing is not a godly fear, but a fear that is irrational and harder to explain. They have heard what happened from the swine herders, and have come to see this for themselves; and now they are frightened by what they see (despite the fact that there is nothing frightening actually taking place at this time).

The people knew the power of the demons and they recognized that Jesus was greater; He had exhibited a greater, higher power and this frightened them. Absolutely nothing weird is going on at this point, but the people realize that Jesus has a stronger power than the demonic forces that controlled that man, and that fact apparently unnerves them (I am making this assumption based upon the text).

Luke 8:35 *Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.* (ESV; capitalized)

The people of the town, who were all aware of this demon-possessed man, heard what had taken place—including the hogs running over the cliff—and all of this causes them to feel fear. They have this fear, despite nothing scary is happening right now before them.

Luke 8:36 *And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed.* (ESV; capitalized)

Throughout this passage, there are two different sets of masculine plural subjects: there are the men who were swine herders; and there are the people back in the city and in the countryside who come out to see what has taken place, being told an amazing story by these *swine herders*.

Everyone is there, looking at Jesus and looking at the man, and thinking about the hogs. How are they processing all of this in their minds?

Apparently the herdsmen did tell the townspeople about this man being delivered from the demons, but I do not think that the full impact of what happened was understood until everyone returned and saw the man sitting normally and acting human.

Luke 8:36 *The [swine herders] made know to the ones seeing [all of this for the first time] how the man controlled by a demon was made whole [or, saved].* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The order of events appears to be this. The swine herders first tell the people about Jesus and about how He caused all of their hogs to run into the waters and drown. So the people are motivated to come out and see what has happened with their own eyes. I believe that

the swine herders are getting the people worked up *against* Jesus, as they have suffered a tremendous loss (which loss, the swine herders keep emphasizing, is not their fault). When they all arrive on the scene, what stands out is, this man who was once crazy, is now sitting at the feet of Jesus and being taught by Him. *Then* the swine herders explain the whole story from the beginning, about how Jesus cured the man, but that then led to the destruction of all of their hogs (although the herders may not have understood why exactly).

Luke 8:34–36 The swine herders saw all that happened, and they fled. When they got to the city, they told everyone there and the news spread to the countryside. So, those living in the city and out in the countryside came to see what had happened. They went out and found themselves to be face to face with the Savior. They also discovered that the man from whom the demons went out, was sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, in his right mind, and acting normal. This frightened the people; and the swine herders explained to them exactly what they saw, and how the demon-possessed man was made whole. (Kukis paraphrase)

We might understand this explanation that the swine herders gave to the townspeople to be *political spin*. The men tending the hogs saw all of their hogs destroyed—they blame this on Jesus—and it is my belief that, the swine herders are primarily trying to convince the townspeople to agree with them and to ask Jesus to leave. Somehow, these herders believe that life will be better without Jesus.

**Application:** We have this in newscasts and media outlets all of the time. They do not really present the news; they have a specific set of opinions which we are supposed to believe, and most of the events that they report are reported with that in mind. For instance, today (I began to write this in 2019), most news organizations are anti-President Trump. So, 90–95% of the *news* that we hear has an anti-Trump slant to it. For instance, this past week, we have found out that the United States' economy was about the best that it has been for 50 years, and that household income has actually been going up (which was virtually flat under presidents Bush and Obama). So, do you want to know how the mainstream media presented this story? *Income inequality increases in the United States*. In presenting this *news*, the media would not have any actual statistics to back this up (income inequality, it turns out, went down during the Trump administration). Nevertheless, even without actual statistics, the media finds a way to slant the news so that their anti-Trump bias is supported, no matter what the actual events are.

The swine herdsman had an opinion, and they presented to the townspeople what happened in such a way as to sway the townspeople in a specific direction (to call for the expulsion of Jesus from their town). This man was cured—and they explain what they saw—but their emphasis appears to have been on the destruction of their property, which destruction would have affected the entire town.

There is also a human versus animal impact here. The man was favorably changed; the hogs were unfavorably changed. There is no comparison between man and animals. You no doubt have heard the question, if your worst enemy was drowning and your dog was

drowning, and you could only save one, which would you save? Despite this being a silly question, you would save your enemy. The life of a person is worth much more than the life of animal (or even 2000 animals). I understand you may be an animal lover; and I certainly concur that, people can seem to be far worse than animals. Yet, the divine viewpoint is, life of the person is far more important than the life of an animal, as man was made in the image of God.

Just to add one interesting twist to this narrative: eating pork was not really a part of Jewish culture. They were forbidden to eat pork in the Law of Moses, as it was unclean. In an era of pre-refrigeration, it was common for hogs to carry diseases and parasites that are deadly to man (today, that is no longer the case). So, what we have here is a Jewish (or, part-Jewish) population who has developed a taste for bacon (a great man once said, *there is not a meal in the world that cannot be improved with the addition of cheese and bacon*). Their great source of pork is suddenly brought to a halt.

So this man has been saved; but 2000 hogs were destroyed in the process. At this point in time, in the dispensations of God, pork would have been off-limits to a Jewish person (or part-Jewish person); and my assumption would be that this is a considerable number of the people who have come out to see what has taken place.

Luke 8:37a **Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Him to depart from them,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus has just cured this man of his demons (to be understood literally and not figuratively) and the people from round about have come to Jesus and have asked Him to leave their region.

Bear in mind, these people almost all knew about this demon-possessed man; many had seen him close up. Some had been involved in restraining him. The man had been saved, cured; but this did not seem to be important enough to the people here. What happened to the hogs overshadows this.

Luke 8:37b **...for they were seized with great fear.** (ESV; capitalized)

The reason that the Bible gives is, great fear gripped (or seized) them. This may seem odd to you, but fear can make people irrational. The demons who exploited this man, who caused him to act crazy, to make him dangerous—they are gone, and Jesus did that. However, the fear are fearful, nonetheless, and Jesus is not going to hang out and tell them, “You guys are being completely irrational, and let Me tell you exactly how.”

Even though a lot of strange things happened with the Lord being there, it appears to the demons are completely gone and the man is normal. So, even though a few of them witnessed some very strange stuff, for the most part, Jesus has brought calm to the region. Yet, they are afraid, and they cannot seem to let go of it. The imperfect tense refers to an action begun in the past and just keeps continuing.

Despite their chilly response to Him, Jesus will leave one witness behind.

Luke 8:37c **So He got into the boat and returned.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus did as the people requested. They asked Him to leave, so He stepped into a boat with the intent of returning to the Galilee area (where He accomplished most of His public ministry).

We have to remember that Jesus is a gentleman. He does not present Himself when people reject Him. He does not try to argue with them or convince them of their wrong first impressions. Furthermore, it is not necessary for every person to hear the gospel if God already knows that they are just going to reject it.

His power over demons is clear. Perhaps those who are there are wondering, “Why did you allow our hogs to be destroyed?” This would be a legitimate question; and it would be reasonable for someone there to have offered, “Please allow us to feed you all a meal, and then we have some questions.” But, that was *not* the response. The people’s attitude was, “Get out of here; leave right now. The curing of this man is not as important as the industry that You just ruined.” (I am assuming that this would be all of their thinking combined.) Their state of fear was also why they asked the Lord to leave.

Luke 8:37 **Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So He got into the boat and returned.** (ESV; capitalized)

The people of that region actually asked Jesus to leave. They believed the slanted narrative of the swine herders and did not reevaluate what they heard when they met Jesus or when they observed the previously possessed man to be in his right mind.

Luke 8:38a **The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with Him,...** (ESV; capitalized)

The man that Jesus had freed of the demons wanted to go with Jesus. He made a request to Jesus to stay with Him. He wanted to become one of Jesus’ disciples (not one of the twelve, but one of the many who simply followed and listened to Jesus). Jesus is going to do something that might surprise you.

Luke 8:38b **...but Jesus sent him away,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus sent this man away. Jesus was leaving via boat, but He apparently told the man, “No, you stay here.” This must have surprised some, who naturally assumed that, when someone says, “Sir, I will follow You;” and Jesus then says, “No you will not.”

Luke 8:38a-b **The man from whom the demons had gone begged that He might be with him, but Jesus sent him away,...** (ESV; capitalized)

The man who was saved from the demons begs Jesus to be able to follow Him.

Jesus has other plans for this man:

Luke 8:38c–39a ...saying, "Return to your home,... (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus tells this man, "Return to your house. Go home."

Think about this: this man is saying, "I want to go with You; I want to become one of Your disciples," and Jesus says, "No, stay here. Go back to your home."

We do not know how long it has been since this man has lived in his home. We do not know what his home is, exactly. Did he live with his family (parents and siblings; did he have a wife and children; did he have his own house?).

Most of the past few weeks (months or years) this man has been living naked among the tombs. Jesus, at this crucial time (during the Lord's public ministry) tells the man to go back home. How long has this man been out of his home? We have no idea. I would guess, at minimum, months, if not years (given that he had been captured several times and put into restraints).

This constant interaction, which has been described in this chapter, suggests that everyone knew this man and what was going on with him. The people of that city knew how crazed he had gotten and they know, at this time, that Jesus changed all of that.

Luke 8:39b ...and declare how much God has done for you." (ESV; capitalized)

"Here is your assignment," Jesus tells the man. "You are going to return home and you will describe what God has done for you."

You will note that Jesus' instructions for each person are not the same. For some He tells them, "Do not tell anyone." For others, He tells them, "Don't say anything, but go to the priests and offer a specific sacrifice." And to this man, Jesus says, "Proclaim to your neighbors what God has done for you." This suggests that, even though his neighbors at this time are negative towards the Lord, time will pass, and their hearts will soften. They will adjust to the economic hardship—however much that will be due to the loss of these hogs—but this man will remain in their midst as a constant reminder of the Lord's power and authority.

As a believer, we must be open to God's guidance. You may think that your only choices in the spiritual life are becoming a pastor-teacher, a deacon; a missionary or an evangelist—but God has places for all of us, including every woman who has believed in Him. Out of those things named, a woman can only fit into the missionary category if she and her husband are so disposed. Therefore, logically, God has to have more places where the woman fits in with regards to her spiritual life.



In this example, this man apparently is a one-man evangelistic witness to his own townsfolk; and for many people, that is their significant service. As a believer, you get the doctrine; you learn the Word; God will provide you with the proper direction.

**Luke 8:39a-b (NIV)** (a graphic); from [Pinterest](#); accessed March 2, 2023.

Luke 8:39c **And he went away...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus leaves the man behind as a witness; and He (and His disciples) depart.

Luke 8:39d **...proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.** (ESV; capitalized)

The man obeyed Jesus, and he did tell those in his city what Jesus had done for him. "You all know what I used to be; and you are conversing with me right now as a normal adult. This only happened because of Jesus transforming me."

We do not know anything else about this man, but let me suggest that, he had a successful ministry evangelizing his own town. How many does that mean? Did he evangelize 2, 5, 20, 200? We do not know; we have no idea. Furthermore, success is not measured in numbers. With regards to evangelism, you as an individual might be part of the reason that five or ten people turn to Jesus. Someone else, this might be one or two; and someone else, the number may be in the hundreds. We do what God puts in front of us.

In this case, remaining that city is clearly God's guidance for this man and his life. I would suggest that his mission there was successful; but success could mean 1 or 2 converts to the Lord (and it could mean many more—we just don't know).

I also want you to take note of the implication of Deity—in v. 39b, it is what God had done for this man; and in v. 39c, it is what Jesus had done for this man. Jesus told the man, "Tell everyone what **God** has done for you," and the man did as Jesus said, **proclaiming all that Jesus had done for him**. This is one of the many places in Scripture where Jesus is revealed to be God.

Luke 8:39 **..."Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.** (ESV; capitalized)



This is quite an amazing story, as Jesus has sailed across the Sea of Galilee and has saved this one man (and then He sails away from the city, at the behest of the people there). It is my assumption that many more would be saved based upon the witness of this man.

When we get to v. 40, Jesus and His disciples apparently sail right back to Capernaum (or to wherever they had launched from).

Luke 8:37–39 The people from the Gadarene region came to Jesus and asked Him to go away from them, for they were gripped with fear. Therefore, He got into a boat, intending to leave. However, the man from whom the demons had been expelled came to Him and requested to go with Him. However, Jesus sent the man away, saying, “Return to your house and describe to others what things God has done for you.” After saying this, Jesus departed, returning to Galilee. And the man stayed behind, and he proclaimed the things which Jesus had done for him. (Kukis paraphrase)

## Lessons 248–249: Luke 8:26–40

## Comparing the Accounts

In Luke 8, there are nine points of continuity with the gospels of Matthew and Mark. What I mean is, there are nine incidents (or subsets of incidents) found in Matthew, Mark and Luke in exactly the same order (depending how the various events are summarized, there may be eight events or as many as ten or eleven). One of those incidents is the interaction between Jesus and this demon-possessed man. We are going to view this particular event from the perspective of all three gospels and compare them.

At this point, we have completed this particular incident in Luke. It might be instructive to study this narrative further and compare it to the other places it is found in Scripture. Do we have any glaring errors or contradictions? How closely do these accounts match up? Does it appear that one gospel writer copied from another?

In general, there are a few things to notice:

1. Mark, who wrote the shortest gospel, preserves the longest report of this particular incident. We might understand that this is a narrative filled with a lot of action and not much talking—which appeals to Peter (Mark appears to be writing Peter’s gospel). So, in this way, the Markian narrative fits well with our understanding of Mark.
2. Mark is the only gospel where what Jesus says to order the demon out of the man is recorded.
3. Matthew speaks of two demon-possessed men; Mark and Luke focus only upon the one man.
4. Mark and Luke make note of the legion of demons which occupy the one man; Matthew does not.
5. Mark and Luke talk about this one man wanting to return with them; Matthew does not mention this.
6. Rarely are the texts of the narratives the exact same. This is because we are

reading the accounts of three different men—Matthew, Peter and then whoever told Luke about this incident. We should not expect the narratives to line up exactly.

7. The parallel gospel accounts are like the six blind men describing an elephant (this is a common parable—one man talks about the trunk, another about the flopping ears, another about the tail). Depending upon where the blind man stands relative to the elephant, each man sounds as if he is describing something completely different from the other men. However, every man is describing the same elephant, but just from his own perspective.

The ESV; capitalized will be used below.

### Comparing the Narratives of the Demon-possessed Man in Gadara

Matthew 8:28–9:1	Mark 5:1–21	Luke 8:26–40
Matthew 8:28 And when He came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met Him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way.	Mark 5:1–2 They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.	Luke 8:26–27a Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met Him a man from the city who had demons.

I even considered the possibility that Matthew is describing a similar incident taking place at the same time (but in a different nearby region). The initial description (two men, the different place name) seems to allow for that interpretation. However, there are so many points of continuity at the end of these narratives as to rule them out as different incidents (in my opinion).

In all three accounts, there will be a legion of demons possessing a man and those demons will all go into a herd of hogs. There are so many similarities, particularly at the end, that seem to indicate that all three gospels must be describing the same incident.

There are some important differences: the people are called the Gadarenes in Matthew and the Garasenes in Mark and Luke; then there are two men spoken of in Matthew but only one in Mark and Luke.

Luke seems to know more about this incident than Mark or Matthew, so let me suggest that someone told Luke about this, someone other than Matthew or Peter (the source for the book of Mark).

## Comparing the Narratives of the Demon-possessed Man in Gadara

Matthew 8:28–9:1

Mark 5:1–21

Luke 8:26–40

Dr. Bob Utley: *This area goes by several names in the Gospels:*

1. Gadarenes (Matthew 8:28; MSS A, W)
2. Gerasenes (Mark 5:1, MSS P775, B, D)
3. Gergesenes (Luke 8:26; Luke 8:37; MSS  $\kappa$ , L)

*It is sometimes called Gadara. There is a town by this same name several miles away from the sea, but we have learned from archeological evidence that this town owned land near the sea.*<sup>50</sup>

.....  
This explanation from Utley for the different names of this region is one of several.

.....  
So, instead of there being several cities here, Utley suggests that it is the same city, the same region, but with various similar names.

.....  
When it comes to the exact location, there is much more disagreement than appears here. In the Hebrew, the letter translated by our *d* and *r* are confounded a lot; and lacking the vowel points originally could explain the different vowels; but, if these gospels are all written in Greek, there is no reason to confound these letters.

.....  
If any of the gospels were written in Aramaic, originally, this discrepancy is easily explained (there is not a lot of difference between the Hebrew and the Aramaic letter). If the gospels are all written in Greek (which they are), then the difference in spelling is more difficult to explain.

.....  
One possible explanation is, there are two nearby cities, and some herdsmen go to one, and others go to the other. Another explanation is, it is a singular city called by more than one name. A third possible explanation is, there are two peoples living in the same city, the Gadarenes and the Gerasenes.

.....  
Personally, I lean toward there being two peoples in that region, and the area having a different name depending upon who you talked to.

.....  
Now, Matthew's narrative where two men are spoken of does not make the Markian or Lukian narratives false; it simply means that there was another man in the tombs beside the one mentioned in the other two narratives.

.....  
These are the most difficult discrepancies found in these different accounts. However, there are several explanations for them.

.....  
Mark and Luke both describe the sort of life that this man has led.

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<sup>50</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Luke 8:26-31.

## Comparing the Narratives of the Demon-possessed Man in Gadara

Matthew 8:28–9:1	Mark 5:1–21	Luke 8:26–40
	Mark 5:3–4 He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him.	Luke 8:29 For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.)
At some point, the witnesses for Mark and Luke found out about how impossible it was to control this man. The descriptions of the man from Mark 5:3–5 and Luke 8:27b, 29 describe past events which neither primary source witnessed himself. I believe that there are three different primary witnesses.		
	Mark 5:5 Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.	Luke 8:27b For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs.
The demon-possessed man himself may have provided these descriptions (after the demons had been cast out). Matthew provides no such description from the past.		
Matthew 8:29 And behold, they cried out, "What have You to do with us, O Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"	Mark 5:6–7 And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before Him. And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have You to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure You by God, do not torment me."	Luke 8:28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before Him and said with a loud voice, "What have You to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me."
We do not know if the man falls before Jesus under the volition of the man or of the demons controlling the man. Demons know who Jesus is and that He has authority over them. Given how this man's behavior is described, perhaps he has no control at all over his body or tongue.		



## Comparing the Narratives of the Demon-possessed Man in Gadara

**Matthew 8:28–9:1**

**Mark 5:1–21**

**Luke 8:26–40**

At first, in Mark and Luke, it appears as if the man is possessed by a singular demon, the one who generally spoke through the man. However, upon further examination, it will become apparent that many demons inhabit one of the men (and perhaps, both of them).

The plural in Matthew may refer to the two men; but it more likely refers to the legion of demons possessing the men.

*The time* (Matthew 8:28) refers to the time when all demons will be cast into the Lake of Fire. However, some demons have been placed in chains of darkness already (those from Genesis 6, for instance).

Mark 5:8 For He was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"

Only Mark records what Jesus said to bring the spirits out of the man (although Luke 8:29a tells us that Jesus ordered the demon out). Jesus, in His humanity, did not know that this man was inhabited by many demons, so He speaks to him as if inhabited by a single demon.

There is no lengthy ceremony suggested when it comes to expelling the demons.

Despite Jesus ordering the demon out of this man, the man remains possessed. Having read Mark's account, it is possible that a single demon exited this man, but that there were many left behind (what Jesus says in Mark is specifically worded to a singular demon). The other alternative is, none of the demons left the body.

The fact that this man continues to be possessed causes Jesus to take a different tact. He will converse with the demons possessing the man.

Mark 5:9–10 And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." And he begged Him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

Luke 8:30–31 Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him. And they begged Him not to command them to depart into the abyss.

Although Jesus speaks to the demon-possessed man, He is actually speaking to the demons who are in the man.



## Comparing the Narratives of the Demon-possessed Man in Gadara

**Matthew 8:28–9:1**

**Mark 5:1–21**

**Luke 8:26–40**

It is at this point, that it became apparent that the man in Mark and Luke was inhabited by many demons. So, the singular demon asks not to be sent out of the country; but the other demons asked not to be sent into the abyss. The demons speaking through the man would have said both things.

The word for *country* in Mark is chôra (χώρα, ας, ῆ) [pronounced *KHOH-ra*], and it means *country, land; district, region, place; [open] country [as opposed to the city]; [dry] land [as opposed to the sea]*. Strong's #5561. So the demons do not want sent away from where they are, even if they are required to leave the body of this man.

Abyss is the word abussos (ἄβυσσος) [pronounced *AHB-oos-soss*], and it means, *bottomless (pit), unbounded, the abyss, the deep; an immeasurable depth; a very deep gulf or chasm*. Thayer definitions: 1) *bottomless*; 2) *unbounded*; 3) *the abyss; the deep, a depthless place*; 3a) *the [bottomless] pit*; 3b) *the immeasurable depth*; 3c) *of Orcus, a very deep gulf or chasm in the lowest parts of the earth used as the common receptacle of the dead and especially as the abode of demons*. Strong's #12.

The abyss appears to be a place where demons are sometimes kept in the interim, prior to being thrown into the Lake of Fire.

Matthew 8:30–31 **Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them. And the demons begged Him, saying, "If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs."**

Mark 5:11–12 **Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged Him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them."**

Luke 8:32 **Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged Him to let them enter these. So He gave them permission.**

Mark 5:11 and Luke 8:32 appears to be very similar in the English. However, these phrases are less alike in the Greek:

Mark 5:11 ην G2258 V-IXI-3S was δε G1161 CONJ now εκει G1563 ADV nearby προς G4314 PREP nigh τω G3588 T-DSN the ορει G3735 N-DSN mountain αγελη G34 N-NSF herd χοιρων G5519 N-GPM of swine μεγαλη G3173 A-NSF large βοσκομενη G1006 V-PPP-NSF feeding

Luke 8:32 ην G2258 V-IXI-3S was δε G1161 CONJ now εκει G1563 ADV there αγελη G34 N-NSF herd χοιρων G5519 N-GPM swine ικανων G2425 A-GPM of considerable βοσκομενη G1006 V-PPP-NSF feeding εν G1722 PREP on τω G3588 T-DSN the ορει G3735 N-DSN mountain

The first four words do match up, but the first three are often found together in that order.

## Comparing the Narratives of the Demon-possessed Man in Gadara

**Matthew 8:28–9:1**

**Mark 5:1–21**

**Luke 8:26–40**

The demons realize that they will not be given permission to enter into another person, so they ask to be allowed to enter into the pigs grazing on the hillside.

Even living within these pigs was preferable over the abyss.

Matthew 8:32 And He said to them, "Go." So they came out and went into the pigs, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters.

Mark 5:13 So He gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.

Luke 8:33 Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

When Jesus gives them that permission, they go into the pigs, but the pigs suddenly rush down the steep bank and into the sea, all downing there.

The Bible does not give us any sort of explanation as to why this happened, whether it was the demons in the pigs or the volition of the pigs themselves, which caused them all to rush into the sea.

The pig is considered unclean; but being controlled by a demon makes the doubly unclean.

In the exposition of Luke, I have likened this to a ten-year-old being given the keys to the family car and, because of his age, is unable to control it.

I think this is the only instance in the gospels of demons indwelling dumb animals.

Did Jesus know what the pigs were going to do? Let me suggest that He did not. Based upon the Old Testament, it is not clear what would happen if a demon entered into an animal.

Matthew 8:33 The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, especially what had happened to the demon-possessed men.

Mark 5:14 The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened.

Luke 8:34 When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country.

The herdsmen see their pigs rush into the sea, and they run back into the city to tell everyone there what happened.

## Comparing the Narratives of the Demon-possessed Man in Gadara

Matthew 8:28–9:1	Mark 5:1–21	Luke 8:26–40
	Mark 5:15 And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.	Luke 8:35 Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.
Many people from the city returned with the herdsmen. When they saw the formerly possessed man in his right mind, wearing clothes and acting normally, it frightened them. Perhaps they are aware, to a limited degree, of the unseen powers which had been at work there.		
It is possible Jesus' power (being able to cast these demons out) and the absolute calm of the scene that the people came upon made the people disconcerted. Recall that people avoided this area because of the demon-possessed man.		
There is nothing there which ought to frighten the people; but, nevertheless, they are frightened.		
Matthew 8:34 And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw Him, they begged Him to leave their region.	Mark 5:16–17 And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region.	Luke 8:36–37b And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear.
The herdsmen first went into the city and began to describe what they had seen. Then, when the people of the city had come upon Jesus and the man who had been demon-possessed—who was now normal—the herdsmen described more about what they saw (“The pigs were right over there, on that hill, and suddenly...”).		
	Mark 5:18 As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged Him that he might be with Him.	Luke 8:37c–38a So He got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with Him,...

## Comparing the Narratives of the Demon-possessed Man in Gadara

**Matthew 8:28–9:1**

**Mark 5:1–21**

**Luke 8:26–40**

The formerly demon-possessed man wants to go with Jesus, along with the other disciples. He wants to become a follower of Jesus.

Mark 5:19–20 And He did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how He has had mercy on you." And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.

Luke 8:38b–39 ...but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

Both the Markain and the Lukian accounts speak of the Deity of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Declare how much God has done for you;" and the man proclaims to the city how much Jesus had done for him.

Jesus leaves the man behind as a witness to these events, so that people might yet believe in Jesus. The impression given is, virtually everyone in that city knew of this man.

Matthew 9:1 And getting into a boat He crossed over and came to His own city.

Mark 5:21 And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about Him, and He was beside the sea.

Luke 8:40 Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him.

This last verse begins the next narrative.

Whereas, I believe that Luke had access both to the manuscripts of Matthew and Mark, it is clear that he did not copy directly from them. There may have been times when Luke used both eyewitness accounts from people he spoke to, and the gospels of Matthew and Mark when necessary. When it comes to the narrative portion, it is surprising as to how different these accounts are.

What I have noticed in general is, the narrative portions covered by Matthew, Mark and Luke almost never match up word-for-word (at this point, I cannot think of a single instance where they do). In this particular narrative, I came across a single verse where four Greek words matched up exactly. However, the first three of these words are often placed together that way in other narratives.

What follows is an interesting narrative, as it has a story along with a subplot, which subplot directly affects the original narrative. These two narratives must be viewed as a whole, as they are interrelated. The original or overall story involves a twelve year old girl who is very sick, and her father comes to Jesus on her behalf. But while Jesus begins going in that direction, to the man's home, He is slowed for a short, but critical period of time by a woman who has an ailment which has hung on for twelve years.

Luke 8:40a **Now when Jesus returned,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus had been teaching in Galilee (which is the region west and north of the Sea of Galilee), and the people appeared to listen to Him, but it was the disciples who asked Him to explain His parables (Luke 8:9). Although Jesus had been teaching to a large crowd of people (Luke 8:4), it is not clear just how many of them were there out of positive volition for what Jesus was teaching. Jesus taught His inner circle of disciples what the parables meant; but He did not explain this during His *sermon* (Luke 8:4–15). This is fascinating, as we would generally perceive teaching to be the understood communication of important information, but Jesus did not always teach people with the intended purpose that they understand Him (Luke 8:10). Quite frankly, some (many?) in Jesus' audience were not interested in accurate teaching.

You may recall that Jesus taught a multitude of people in this chapter, but did not really explain what He had been teaching until He was alone with His inner circle (Luke 8:9–15). When hearing a parable, no one stood up and said, "Teacher, what do You mean by that?" Only did His disciples inquire further.

So, Jesus has done some teaching to a large impromptu public gathering, then He went away with His disciples and explained to them what He had been teaching (since He was teaching via parables). Then they went across the Sea of Galilee for a quick stop in Gadara; and now—taking us to this point in time in the narrative—Jesus and His disciples have returned to the people to whom Jesus was teaching in the first place.

Interestingly enough, Jesus, on this trip to Gadara, essentially saved one man there, and the rest of the townsfolk asked Jesus to leave. However, now that Jesus has returned to the northern section of the Galilee shores, many people are waiting for Him.

Luke 8:40b **...the crowd welcomed Him,...** (ESV; capitalized)

The people waiting for Him back in the Galilee region appear to be on positive signals. There are indications that, when Jesus first spoke to the crowd that there was information which He could have revealed to them, but He chose not to (which I would think indicates negative volition on the part of the crowd).

This is very possibly a subset of the original crowd who are welcoming the Lord back. That is, earlier in this chapter, there may have been many curiosity seekers and even those who opposed him within the crowd; but this phrase suggests that those waiting for Jesus have some real interest in what He is teaching.

Luke 8:40c ...for they were all waiting for Him. (ESV; capitalized)

This is interesting, and I do not know if I fully appreciate what is being said here. Jesus taught, then He went off with His disciples, and then suddenly, took off (for parts unknown, insofar as the crowd was concerned). However, it appears that many of them were waiting for Him at the shore where they last saw Him (when Jesus sailed away with the disciples). This phrase suggests positive volition toward the Lord's teaching, even though some of His teaching likely confused the people there.

Did the people simply stay there talking about Jesus? Did they leave lookouts to see if His ship was to be seen returning? We do not know, but there is a crowd there waiting for Jesus when He is ready to dock.

Man is often very perplexed by what is meaningful in life. What these men are seeing here—being able to see and interact with the Lord—might be considered the greatest experience and the greatest event in human history (up to this point in time). The fact that they are still here, in some capacity or another, makes it likely that they appreciated the circumstances in which they found themselves. They understood that the Lord's teaching was unique to those times.

Luke 8:40 Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him. (ESV; capitalized)

This narrative, begun here, is interrupted, beginning in v. 42c. It resumes in v. 49 (or v. 50). Although that may seem confusing to read, it will make sense when we get further into the passage itself.

We begin this narrative where Jesus returns to the shore (to the place where He left) and a man, Jairus, approaches the Lord, asking for healing for his only daughter. Whereas Jesus appears to take note of this and begins to move in the direction of Jairus's daughter, something happens along the way, which slows the Lord down. Jesus is going to perform two miracles in this section (vv. 40–56), but these are not disjoint events. Jesus begins in the direction of Jairus, to help his daughter; but then is interrupted by a woman who, in the big crowd, reaches out and touches the Lord's outer garment).

V. 41 introduces us to Jairus.

Luke 8:41a And there came a man named Jairus,... (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is back onshore in the Galilee region and there is a man named Jairus who comes to Him. Jairus was likely among the people who were waiting for the Lord to return.



Luke 8:41b ...who was a ruler of the synagogue. (ESV; capitalized)

Jairus is a leader in the synagogue. Therefore, not all of those associated with the religious worship in Judah and Galilee were necessarily against Jesus. Also, this appears to be early days<sup>51</sup> in the Lord's ministry (recall that the beginning of the Lord's public ministry was Luke 4 and we are now in Luke 8). At this point in time, not everyone in the Jewish religion had a negative opinion about Jesus. Some believed Him to be the Messiah; some were unsure, but were willing to gather more information before coming to a conclusion about Jesus.

Jesus, at this time, traveled from synagogue to synagogue and He both read and taught the Word of God (the Old Testament). He would have also healed and cast out demons. We do not know about Jairus. Had he had seen the Lord teach or had he simply heard about what He had done. Whatever the circumstance, Jairus was a man without a negative predisposition towards Jesus. He had a serious problem and he believed that Jesus could help him.

Also, even if Jairus had some misgivings about Jesus (there is nothing implied here that he did), the health of his daughter was of far greater importance to him. One thing that appears to be clear about this era is, no one really questioned what Jesus was able to do. People came to Him and were cured. Some people doubted that He was the Messiah (something which Jesus almost never asserted) yet others came to that conclusion on their own. But, no matter what people thought of Him in that regard, it seems to be accepted that He was able to heal.

Luke 8:41c And falling at Jesus' feet,... (ESV; capitalized)

Jairus fell down before feet of Jesus, indicating that he was under the Lord's authority. This is a good first step for someone associated with a synagogue.

It is interesting that this man, Jarius; and the demon-possessed man both fell at the feet of Jesus on their initial meeting with the Lord (one of the translations takes note of this as well). Although there are many instances in the Bible of men falling on their knees before Jesus, there is never an instance where Jesus says something like, "You don't have to do that. I am a servant just like you." Angels have been known to say these things; but Jesus never says anything like this.

Luke 8:41d ...he implored Him to come to his house,... (ESV; capitalized)

Jairus asked the Lord to come to his house. His daughter was too ill to be brought to Jesus. And, unlike the Roman soldier who understood levels of authority,<sup>52</sup> Jairus believed that Jesus needed to be there in order to help his daughter.

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<sup>51</sup> However, in Luke 9, Jesus appears to set His direction towards Jerusalem for the final Passover there.

<sup>52</sup> That is, the Roman centurion who said, "I am not worthy for you to come under my roof; but I know that You can simply say the word and my servant will be healed."

Luke 8:41 *And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored Him to come to his house,...* (ESV; capitalized)

Jairus had been in charge of a synagogue, meaning that he would have been on-site often, hearing the Word of God read. Throughout the Lord's ministry, there are some who heard God's Word read and opposed Jesus and others who supported Jesus. Jairus appeared to have a great deal of trust in Jesus.

When Jesus returned, Jairus fell at His feet, asking Jesus to come to his house.

Luke 8:42a *...for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age,...* (ESV; capitalized)

This man has an only daughter, and she is about 12 years old. This daughter is the reason that Jairus has approached Jesus personally.

Luke 8:42b *...and she was dying.* (ESV; capitalized)

This man's daughter is dying. A sad fact of life is, there are children who die at a very early age. This sickly daughter is the reason that this synagogue leader has come to Jesus.

As an aside, there are times in our own lives where tragedy strikes, and often that tragedy is designed to refocus our attention on God.

Luke 8:41–42b *At the Lord's return, a man named Jairus, who was a leader in the local synagogue, came to Him. Falling before Jesus, he asked Him to come to his house, for he has a 12-year-old daughter who is dying.* (Kukis paraphrase)

This narrative is about to be interrupted by another narrative. So, we will continue with this narrative in v. 49. Between these verses will be something else which happens during the time that Jairus comes to Jesus and Jesus goes to his home. This very little bit of time lost will appear to be a crucial factor in this narrative. These events appear to ask the question, *how does Jesus prioritize?*

Luke 8:42c *As Jesus went, the people pressed around Him.* (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is now following Jairus to his home. There are the Lord's disciples and a crowd who all follow Jesus.

V. 42c is very much a transition verse. Jesus is in the midst of departing from where He is, going with Jairus to look into his daughter's illness. However, as Jesus does this, the crowd of people surround and envelop the Lord.

So, in the first half of v. 42c, Jesus is going along with Jairus; but the second half of v. 42c is related to how Jesus will suddenly stop when one from the crowd touches His outer garment (exercising faith at the same time). Probably the best way for this transition to be denoted in English is for this sentence to be its own paragraph. Most translations affixed

this verse to the preceding or following paragraph. In a rare case, This sentence and the section that follows is presented as an indented paragraph (denoting a narrative within another narrative).

Luke 8:42c *As Jesus went, the people pressed around Him.* (ESV; capitalized)

A leader of the synagogue had come to Jesus and asked for Him to come and heal his daughter. Jesus appears to be on His way to help Jairus, and the people there—apparently a lot of people—began to crowd around Him.

Given what we read in this context, there are apparently many people coming to Jesus to be cured (or, to ask that a family member be cured). And all of these people crowd around the Lord.

Luke 8:42c *As Jesus went, the people pressed around Him.* (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is surrounded by people on every side. They are pushing closer to Him to speak with Him, to ask for something.

#### **Lesson 251: Luke 8:43–45      A woman touches the hem of the Lord's garment**

Jesus had returned to the northern shore of Galilee, and He was met by a crowd of people, one of whom implored Jesus to quickly come to his home to heal his daughter. As Jesus sets out to follow this man, Jesus is surrounded.

Luke 8:43a *And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years,...* (ESV; capitalized)

Someone new is introduced into this narrative. This woman has been suffering from bleeding just as long as the daughter previously mentioned has been alive.

Is there a parallel here of some sort, or is this just a simple coincidence?

The NET Bible suggests<sup>53</sup> that this is a vaginal discharge, making the woman ceremonially unclean, setting up an interesting contrast.

The Voice takes a similar position in its translation:

The Voice      *The crowd came along, too, pressing hard against Him.  
In the crowd was a woman. She had suffered from an incurable menstrual disorder for 12 years [and had spent her livelihood on doctors with no effect].  
It had kept her miserable and ritually unclean, unable to participate fully in*

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<sup>53</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?luk8.htm> (footnote); accessed December 5, 2019.

*Jewish life. She followed Jesus, until she could reach Him. She touched the fringe of the robe Jesus wore, and at that moment the bleeding stopped.*

This approach—that the woman is suffering from continued vaginal bleeding—would make sense; from where else would a woman suffer continued bleeding in this way?

Luke 8:43b ...and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone. (ESV; capitalized)

There are some manuscripts where she is said to spend all of her substance on finding a cure, but being unsuccessful at it (as we read in the Voice). There may have been some words dropped out of this text (that seems likely as they seem to be lacking as is). Whether those were the words that dropped out or whether someone inserted their own ideas at this point, we do not know. My impression is, the manuscript evidence is not overwhelming in either way.

As an aside, most manuscript problems do not affect a narrative. Maybe she spent all of her substance and maybe not. The Westcott Hort text looks like this: *A woman having a discharge of blood for 12 years, who was unable by none to heal [her].*

The double negative in the Greek intensifies the negative. Now, if we add in the words missing from the Westcott Hort text, we get this:

Luke 8:43 *A woman having a discharge of blood for 12 years, who [having spent all (her) substance on physicians] was unable by none to heal [her].* (Kukis mostly literal translation)  
The first set of brackets contains texts from other manuscripts.

As we will find out, much of her background with this illness is not really essential to the narrative. About the only thing which is important is, she has suffered from this malady for 12 years, and that fact is preserved in all of the manuscripts.

At the beginning, a leader of a local synagogue had approach Jesus to heal his twelve-year-old daughter. Jesus was about to do this when He recognizes that power leaves Him or goes through Him as He moves through the crowds.

Luke 8:43 *And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone.* (ESV; capitalized)

For these 12 years, she could not find anyone who could heal her.

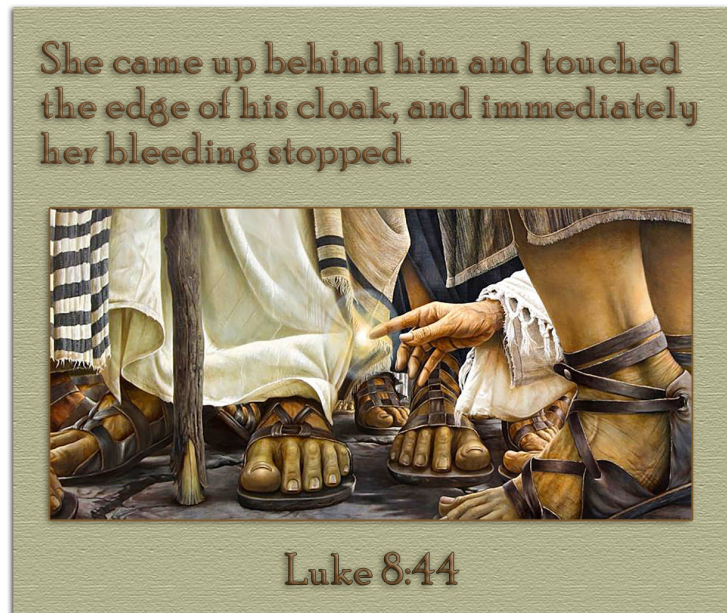
We have two simultaneous narratives at this time. There is the man who approached to Lord asking Him to come and heal his twelve-year-old daughter; but, as Jesus is going with the man, the crowds move in on Jesus. In this crowd is a woman who has been sick for the past twelve years. For all the time this daughter has been alive, the woman has suffered this malady.

**Luke 8:44 (NIV)** (a graphic); from [Warren Camp Design](#); accessed February 23, 2023.

Luke 8:44a **She came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His garment,...** (ESV; capitalized)

She understands that the One Who can cure her is Jesus, and she comes close enough to Him to surreptitiously touch the hem of His garment.

Her doing this helps to understand how this can happen, as there is this throng of people were crowding the Lord. She sees the hem of His garment and touches it, having faith in Him.



*The NET Bible: The edge of his cloak refers to the kraspedon, the blue tassel on the garment that symbolized a Jewish man's obedience to the law (cf. Num 15:37-41). The woman thus touched the very part of Jesus' clothing that indicated his ritual purity.<sup>54</sup>*

The contrast that the NET Bible is making is, this woman, who is ceremonially unclean, touches the edge of Jesus' outer garment, which is related to ritual purity. In any case, the woman is made clean; Jesus is not made unclean.

Luke 8:44b **...and immediately her discharge of blood ceased.** (ESV; capitalized)

As soon as she touches the hem of the Lord's garment, her bleeding stops. The woman, apart from the Lord actually doing anything, is cured. There is no conscious act of Jesus which made this woman clean.

Generally speaking, it is the unclean that spoils that which is clean. However, in this instance, it is exactly the opposite. Jesus, the clean, cleanses this woman, who is unclean. When she touches the Lord's garment, He is not made unclean, but she is made clean.

This is also a parallel to salvation, where Jesus, the clean, makes the woman who is unclean, clean (that is, saved, purified, righteous).

Luke 8:44b **...and immediately her discharge of blood ceased.** (ESV; capitalized)

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<sup>54</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?luk8.htm> (footnote); accessed December 5, 2019.



As an aside, I would take this as additional evidence that the Lord is not providing, from His Own Deity, the power to effect these cures, but from God the Holy Spirit. Jesus appears to function in His humanity—by His Own choice—in accordance with God's plan. Jesus does not use any innate power to heal, but this comes from the power of the Holy Spirit. Although Jesus is wholly God, He does not access the power of His Own Deity. This is known as the Doctrine of Kenosis, already alluded to in this chapter.

Luke 8:44 **She came up behind Him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased.** (ESV; capitalized)

The unclean woman, suffering from a malady of a dozen years, surreptitiously touches the hem of the Lord's garment, and she stops bleeding. Rather than her contaminating the Lord (as she is unclean), this physical contact (with the hem of His garment) makes her clean.

Luke 8:45a **And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched Me?"** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is in the midst of a bustling crowd of people who want to speak with Him or get close to Him. He perceives that effective power has gone through Him.

During all of this, the hem of the Lord's garment was touched, and He knew that it happened. In another passage, we find out that He could feel the power go out of Him. So there was a relationship with the Holy Spirit such that the Spirit's power could be felt/perceived by the Lord.

Kretzmann and others suggest that Jesus is perfectly aware of all that is going on, including knowing who touched Him. I would disagree. Jesus clearly knows that He has been touched and that power has gone out through Him; but He does not appear to be taking this tact in order to teach something. Again, the Lord saying this—indicating later that power has gone out through Him—further suggests that Jesus is not healing by means of His Own Deity; nor is He exercising His omniscience so that He knows exactly who touched Him.

Believing that Jesus is fully God should not impair our understanding of how He functioned on this earth. Jesus set aside His Deity, relying entirely upon the plan of God and the power and guidance of God the Holy Spirit (this is called the Doctrine of Kenosis). It is possible that, at no time, did Jesus rely upon His Deity during His time on earth (that is a very strong statement and I may be missing a few passages which might contradict this view). That Jesus willingly set aside the function of His Deity and depended fully upon the other two Members of the Trinity does not deny or diminish His Deity or His claims of equality with God.

Now, how can Jesus be God, holding the universe together with the word of His mouth, and yet, not exercise the function and power of His Deity during His public ministry? Here is how I would understand it (I am going to draw an analogy at this point): our heart beats, our blood pumps, our kidneys cleanse, etc, without the slightest act of volition on our



part—and, about 99% of the time, we are totally unaware of these things occurring. You cannot, at any given moment, say, “Blood stop,” and temporarily halt the flow of blood in your body; and then resume 2 seconds later. Your brain is doing all of this; your brain is coordinating all of this. The same place where you think all of your great thoughts, in that same brain, signals are being sent out throughout your body telling it what to do. When you masticate your food, the brain tells the body what to do. Furthermore, you do not have to even be awake in order for any of this to take place.

The analogy is, Jesus’ Deity functions much in the same way that our natural body processes occur. The Bible tells us that He holds the universe together; and let me suggest that, that is done without Him making a conscious choice from His humanity to hold it together. I don’t believe that Jesus, every few seconds, thinks about what He must do as God, and somehow sets that into motion. I believe that there is some way by which this process is done apart from the humanity of Jesus making a conscious choice for it to be done, much the way our brain sends out signals to our body, telling every organ what to do, but without any of our volitional input.

Let’s return to the narrative:

Luke 8:45b **When all denied it...** (ESV; capitalized)

Literally, this phrase reads, *and everyone is denying*. What they are denying is, touching the hem of Jesus’ garment.

What appears to be the case is, Jesus is walking along with His twelve disciples. For the most part, some of His disciples form a barrier around Him so that, there might have been some jostling and people bumping into one another, but, regarding the people who are standing around the Lord, none of them reached out and actually touched Him.

Luke 8:45c **...Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround You and are pressing in on You!"** (ESV; capitalized)

Peter, always having an opinion, speaks up, and tells Jesus that there are people all around Him, pressing in close and crowding Him. “Of course you are feeling people around You; there are people all around us pressing up against You!”

Luke 8:45d **Yet You say, ‘Who is the one touching Me?’ ”** (Kukis mostly literal translation) [This is additional text found in the Byzantine Greek text and Scrivener Textus Receptus]

Even though these six Greek words are not found in the Westcott-Hort text, this final phrase seems logical to be here. **Peter goes on to say, “How can you ask, ‘Who is touching Me?’”** People have crowded the Lord from all sides. If someone brushed up against Him or touched Him or anything, how could He notice that? Wasn’t the Lord being bumped into and jostled just for being in the midst of this crowd?

## Lesson 252: Luke 8:45–49     The Woman Admits to Touching the Lord's Garment

Jesus is surrounded by dozens and perhaps hundreds of people. Even though the disciples form somewhat of a barrier around the Lord, people do get through to speak to Jesus directly; and some come close enough to Him to actually touch His garment.

A woman, who had a constant flow of blood from her vagina, got close enough to Jesus to touch the hem of his over-garment, and that this brief contact cured her ailment.

Luke 8:45 **And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched Me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on You!"** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus asks who has touched Him; and Peter points out the obvious, that there are people all around Him, and anyone may have bumped into Him or reached out to Him, or had some kind of physical contact, whether intentional or not.

Luke 8:46a **But Jesus said, "Someone touched Me,..."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is clearly aware that He has been touched; but it is not due to the sense of touch.

Luke 8:46b **...for I perceive that power has gone out from Me."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus knew that He had been touched in some way, because He knew that power went through Him to someone else.

The words used with this phrase are all very common words. The verb is the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, aorist active indicative of *ginōskō* (γινώσκω) [pronounced *gih-NOH-skoh*], which is perhaps the most common verb that means, *to know, to learn to know, come to know, to gain (get, have) a knowledge of, to perceive, to feel*. Strong's #1097. In addition to this verb, we have the emphatic use of the personal pronoun *egō* (ἐγώ) [pronounced *ehg-OH*], which means, *I, me, my*. Strong's #1473. This pronoun emphasizes that Jesus *knows, perceives, feels*.

What Jesus felt was the feminine singular noun *dúnamis* (δύναμις) [pronounced *DOO-nahm-iss*], which means, *power, ability, able, capable; inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature*. Strong's #1411.

Jesus feels this power going out from Him. The secondary verb is the feminine singular, perfect passive participle of *exerchomai* (ἐξέρχομαι) [pronounced *ex-EHR-khoh-mai*], which means, *going out, coming out, exiting; going away; retiring; proceeding from*. Strong's #1831. The last two words mean, *from Me*. The passive voice means that Jesus did not do anything to make this happen; and the perfect tense means, this happened in the past, but there are results which continue into the future.

This woman is apparently healed (and she will remain healed), but not as a result of the volition of the Lord. Jesus did not will for her to be healed; Jesus was not aware that she was there, who she was, or what her physical problem was. Nevertheless, she was healed. Jesus only knows this because He was able to perceive that power went out from Him. Somehow, Jesus is able to sense this.

Jesus did not have the power in His humanity for His healings. Logically, that would have required Jesus to exercise His volition, but this woman was made whole without the Lord's volition being involved.

Jesus functioned in His humanity by means of the power of God the Holy Spirit. His humanity is the same as ours. By the doctrine of Kenosis,<sup>55</sup> He voluntarily confines or limits Himself to functioning only to the extent of His humanity. Nevertheless, He is aware of this power being used, even when His volition is not a party to this use of power. There is some manner in which He can feel when the power of the Holy Spirit is channeled through Him to heal.

Luke 8:46 **But Jesus said, "Someone touched Me, for I perceive that power has gone out from Me."** (ESV; capitalized)

When the Lord's power—which is power that seems to travel through Him and not originate with Him—is accessed, He is aware of that taking place.

At this time, there is Jesus, surrounded by His disciples, surrounded by followers; and they are all walking toward the home of Jairus. But now, this march forward comes to a dead halt. Jesus' disciples are looking around at all of the people with them. Several must have looked directly at this woman, simply because she was so close to the Lord.

Luke 8:47a **And when the woman saw that she was not hidden,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is demanding to know who touched Him, and this woman realizes that what she did could not remain a secret. If the very Person Who just healed her had the power to heal her, does He not also have the power to know who she is?

Based upon the narrative, Jesus is aware of the power which has gone through Him but this power did not originate from Him. In fact, this power was not even subject to the Lord's choice. He did not consciously think, "If anyone touches Me, I will that they be healed." However, He does not know exactly who touched Him or even what the actual healing was. This portion of the narrative indicates that Jesus did not perform healings from His Own power.

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<sup>55</sup> I keep on repeating this word because this is a fundamental doctrine to help us understand the public ministry of the Lord.

**The Woman Touches the Tassel of the Lord's Garment** (a graphic); from [End of the Matter](#); accessed August 4, 2023. End of the Matter goes into great detail on this (perhaps three typewritten pages), found at the other end of that link.

Luke 8:47b ...she came trembling,... (ESV; capitalized)



I suspect that Jesus sounded stern. The woman comes forward, meaning that she moves closer to Jesus—perhaps flanked by some of His disciples—and she is trembling. Let me suggest that she is trembling from fear (and this may be trembling in her mind, she may or may not be physically trembling). The woman knows that she is the one about whom the Lord is speaking.

Let me also suggest that the crowd, in general, has stopped, and there is no more jostling, and it is relatively quiet (possibly apart from many people saying, “We did not touch You, Lord”).

Luke 8:47c ...and falling down before Him... (ESV; capitalized)

Virtually every artistic rendering has this woman touching a part of the Lord's garment (most often, the very bottom of his over-garment, which is close to the ground), and she is always portrayed as being on her hands and knees in order to touch this part of the Lord's clothing. I have several problems with this: (1) If she goes to her hands and knees, wouldn't this by itself virtually stop the procession? (2) The answer to, *who touched Me?* would be obviously answered because the woman is on her hands and knees behind Him. (3) And here, she falls down before Him. That means that she must get up, and then fall down before Him. My conclusion is, the woman touched a tassel which is not at the lowest part of His over-garment.

The woman shows Jesus respect, and she falls down before Him. This is an act of worship and Jesus *never* discourages anyone from expressing an act of worship directed towards Him (and this occurs on many occasions).

On the other hand, angels would rebuff those who tried to worship them. In Revelation, there is a recorded instance of people worshiping an angel, and the angel stops them, saying, “**I am a servant just like you.**” (Revelation 19:10 22:8–9)

My point being, that hidden within this narrative is another proof of the Lord's divinity.

Luke 8:47d ...why she had touched Him,... (ESV; capitalized)

The woman touched the Lord in order to receive relief from her physical affliction, knowing that contact with Him—actually, with the hem of His garment—would make her whole. Given the crowd situation, she likely could not get close enough to get His attention and to speak directly with Him.

Luke 8:47e ...declared in the presence of all the people.... (ESV; capitalized)

When she told what she had done, she also testified as to what happened after. Everyone there heard her testimony.

What appears to be the situation is, Jesus has stopped, He is speaking to those around Him; and everyone around Him has stopped as well.

Luke 8:47f ...and how she had been immediately healed. (ESV; capitalized)

She was healed immediately after touching the hem of the Lord's garment. She testifies publically to that fact.

It is most likely that this woman had been suffering from vaginal hemorrhaging, but I don't know that we can draw any specific conclusions about the type of outer wear that the Lord had on; or about its hem. Whether or not this is related to the blue tassel spoken of in Num. 15:37-41 (as per the NET Bible footnote of a few verses back), it is hard to say. I do not believe that is the thrust or emphasis of this passage.

Luke 8:47 And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before Him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately healed. (ESV; capitalized)

**The Woman Touches the Fringe of the Lord's Garment** (a graphic); from [The Peanut Gallery](#); accessed March 2, 2023.

This appears to be a photo of real people. Is the Lord standing on a raised pathway or on top of a limited-height wall? They do not appear to be standing on the same ground.

Obviously, missing from this picture are the dozens of people who





surrounded the Lord when she touched this piece of fabric.

Luke 8:48a **And He said to her,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus wanted her to give a testimony, and He accepted all that she said. Now He will speak to her.

Luke 8:48b **..."Daughter, your faith has made you well;...** (ESV; capitalized)

Salvation comes in the same way to all mankind. You believe in Jesus and you are saved. You direct your faith towards Him to be saved.

The woman understood that direct contact with the Lord would mean healing; and this parallels the concept of eternal salvation. I would assume that she also believed that He is the Messiah, sent from God.

The temporal healing that she received was wonderful; but the eternal life that she was given is a much greater thing. She is healed temporally; but she is, more importantly, she was saved.

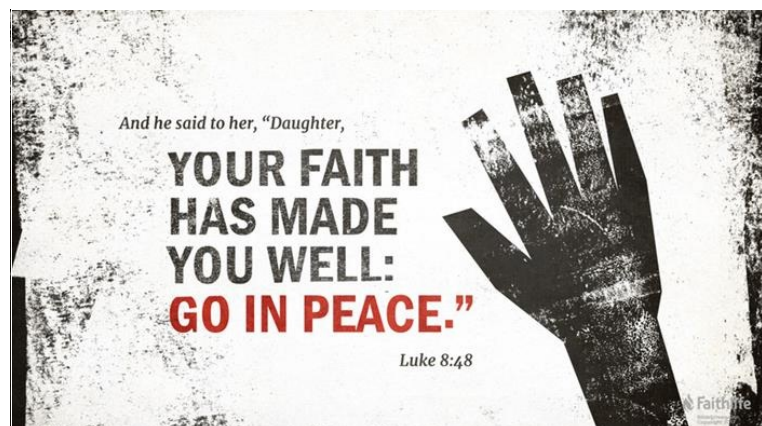
Luke 8:48c **...go in peace."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus tells her to go in peace. This is a peace between her and God. All natural barriers between her and God have been removed, because she has exercised faith in Christ. She now has an eternal relationship with God, represented by the word *peace*.

Luke 8:48 **And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus' emphasis is often how one's faith made a person well. The woman is physically healed, but she is also permanently delivered from eternal judgment. Therefore, she can do what Jesus says: "Go in peace." She now has peace with God.

**Luke 8:48 (ESV)** (a graphic); from [Biblia](#); accessed February 23, 2023.





Now, recall what brought us to this place in Luke's narrative. A man, Jairus, had come to the Lord to request that the Lord come to his home and heal his daughter. On the way to that man's home, a woman touched a portion of the Lord's cloak and was healed of a twelve-year malady. This woman, who reached out to touch the outer garment of the Lord, knew nothing about where Jesus was going. She simply reached out and touched the hem of the Lord's robe, and she found herself healed.

Nevertheless, even though this woman has been healed, this narrative began with Jairus, the leader of the synagogue, coming to Jesus to ask Him to heal his daughter. Jesus began to go with him, but got slowed down by this incident with this woman. Now, Jesus is about to get back on track with Jairus, but then this happens:

Luke 8:49a **While He was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is interacting with this woman; and He may be teaching some things to the people who are gathered around Him. While He is doing this, someone from Jairus' home comes.

The *ruler* refers to Jairus, who was the synagogue director. He had come to Jesus earlier, requesting for the Lord to heal his only daughter. This person does not go to Jesus, but he goes up to the synagogue director and talks with him. He does this even while Jesus is speaking.

Luke 8:49b **...and said, "Your daughter is dead;..."** (ESV; capitalized)

The man—perhaps a servant—tells the leader of the synagogue, "Your daughter has died."

So, Jesus is teaching about this woman whose faith has made her whole; and, at the same time, one from Jairus's home takes Jairus aside to give him the bad news about his daughter's passing.

Luke 8:49c **...do not trouble the Teacher any more."** (ESV; capitalized)

The messenger also advises the synagogue director to no longer trouble Jesus for help. His daughter is beyond help. "At this point, there is no reason for Jesus to be brought to your home."

Luke 8:49 **While He was still speaking, someone from the [synagogue] ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is speaking to the crowd about the woman who touched His garment and was healed as a result. Meanwhile, a message comes from the synagogue leader's home that his daughter has just died.

Luke 8:50a **But Jesus on hearing this answered him,...**(ESV; capitalized)

Someone has come from the home of the leader of the synagogue has come and told the leader that his daughter has died. Jesus hears this, and speaks to them with reassurances.

Luke 8:50b ...**"Do not fear;..."**(ESV; capitalized)

Jesus tells this man not to be frightened. Now, I would have thought, Jesus would say, "Do not be upset." So this is an interesting thing for Jesus to say. This unusual thing said by Jesus would have broken through to the man, even in his emotional pain at hearing the news of his daughter's death. This word can also mean, *to be alarmed*; and this certainly would have been a great blow to this man's emotional state.

I would suggest that this command from Jesus would catch the man's attention. He would begin to reason within himself, "I'm not afraid, at this point. I am heartbroken. Why did Jesus just say that?" Jesus' purpose was to get this man to think rationally rather than emotionally.

Luke 8:50c ...**only believe, and she will be well."** (ESV; capitalized)

The opposite of an emotional state of grief is one of thought and reasoning. Jesus tells this man **only believe**, and the result will be, **she will be saved**. Jesus is guiding this man away from his numbing sadness.

It is unlikely that the messenger or the synagogue leader responded to these words of Jesus in faith. But it probably caused both men to stop and think.

Luke 8:50 **But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well."** (ESV; capitalized)

The father is not to fear that he has lost his young daughter but to believe and she will be made well. Jesus expects the man to start thinking and then to direct his faith toward Jesus. Obviously, that is a pretty tall request.

Luke 8:50 (KJV) (a graphic); from [Bibliatodo](http://Bibliatodo.com); accessed February 23, 2023.

Luke 8:51a **And when He came to the house,....** (ESV; capitalized)

We do not know exactly how many people follow Jesus to the home of this man. Certainly, this would be many or all of the disciples (they do not necessarily have a function apart from Jesus). Obviously the messenger and the synagogue leader would be a part of this



group. Many would have hung back, simply because this would seem to be a much more private affair.

No one really knows what Jesus has planned here. The synagogue leader is struck with grief and sorrow; and, as such, is probably not fully aware of everything that is happening. But, whatever is his thinking, there are at least an additional dozen people coming along with him. It would be my guess that he is giving very little thought to this troop of people accompanying him. I would think that the synagogue leader is in a state of shock, and that he takes very little notice of what Jesus is saying; nor does he question Jesus and the disciples coming with him.

Luke 8:51b ...**He allowed no one to enter with Him,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus asserts His authority at this point. A number of people have followed Jesus to the home of Jairus. Jesus takes charge.

What Jesus does is aorist active infinitive of *aphíēmi* (ἀφίημι) [pronounced *af-EE-ay-meet*], which means, *to pardon, to forgive; to send [forth, away], to dismiss; to let go [free]*. This word also means, *to permit, to allow*. This verb has quite a number of meanings, but, *permit, allow* appear to be the only meanings which fit the context. Strong's #863. With this is the negative *ouk* and the infinitive of the verb *to enter, to go inside*. ...**He did not permit anyone to enter with Him...** is the translation of this phrase.

Interestingly enough, Jesus, knowing what He is about to do, limits the number of people there with Him. With many religious leaders, whatever it is they are going to do, they want a crowd, and the bigger the crowd, the better. Jesus here, and on many other occasions, will limit the number of people in His periphery. The people He admits are very specific and important to the event; but Jesus is not going to bring in a big group into the home where the child's body is lying.

Certainly, there are practical reasons for doing this. The room where the little girl's body is, would not have been large.

Luke 8:51c ...**except Peter and John and James,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus brings in three of His disciples, men who often join Him when the others do not.

Jesus choice is interesting. We might ask, *why not bring in Doubting Thomas or one of the others to help bolster their faith?* But this is not what Jesus does. Jesus brings in His strongest disciples to witness this event. Rank has its privileges.

Luke 8:51d ...**and the father and mother of the child.** (ESV; capitalized)

The mother and father of the girl are also brought in. Again, the father is no doubt so grief-stricken that, when he is told to do something, he just does it. The mother has likely been there at the home all of this time, also grief stricken.

Luke 8:51 **And when He came to the house, He allowed no one to enter with Him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus travels with a great many people. We think of the twelve disciples and a handful of female devotees, but there are dozens more with Him at this time.

Jesus goes to the home of Jairus, despite being told that his daughter had died. Only six people will enter into the home where the body of the deceased daughter is.

Jesus enters the room with his three lead disciples and both of the parents. Given what is about to transpire, this seems to be the right people to enter into the room. There are sufficient witnesses with Jesus to attest to what He is about to do.

At no time does Jesus turn to the man and offer up an excuse. "Listen, I am so sorry that I could not get here sooner, but you saw what happened back there, right?"

There are no excuses; and Jesus takes charge. Most of the people there are in no emotional condition to take charge of the situation.

Luke 8:52a **And all were weeping...** (ESV; capitalized)

I would guess that there is a fairly large crowd there at the house, given this man's position; and many people are there to pray for the daughter and, at this point, to share in the man's grief.

There are suggestions made by commentators and translators that professional mourners were possibly there. Well, possibly; but, this man had a position in the community which would have brought out the entire town for this funeral. I don't know that professional mourners would have been necessary.

Luke 8:52b **...and mourning for her,...** (ESV; capitalized)

The people there are lamenting over the child's death. There is verb here which means *to beat the breast*, and this simply goes along with the very demonstrative nature of the Jewish people.

Luke 8:52c **...but He said, "Do not weep,..."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus tells everyone to stop weeping. It appears to me that this is before the smaller group of 6 enter into the room with the deceased girl, rather than to the people who are gathered there on the outside (whether outside of the house or outside of the room where the child's body lay).

Luke 8:52d **... for she is not dead but sleeping."** (ESV; capitalized)

After telling the people to stop crying, Jesus then tells everyone that the child is not dead but sleeping. I believe that Jesus says this in the sense that all people who have died are *sleeping*.

Luke 8:52 **And all were weeping and mourning for her, but He said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping."** (ESV; capitalized)

What appears to be the case—and I am certainly speculating here—Jesus perhaps told the parents to stop weeping—but others outside of that room (or house) could hear all that Jesus said. They heard that Jesus said, **"She has not died; she is only sleeping;"** and they scoff at this.

Luke 8:53a **And they laughed at Him,...** (ESV; capitalized)

There were a number of people there, and Jesus apparently was speaking when they are outside of the house where the girl is. When Jesus said, "She is not dead, she is only sleeping," many people there scoffed or derided Him, as they knew that the girl was dead. Based upon v. 54 and some missing text, it appears that, at first, there were a number of people inside the house (or room) where the child's body was. Jesus will dismiss them out of that room.

Luke 8:53b **...knowing that she was dead.** (ESV; capitalized)

Whether these people were eyewitnesses or not, we do not know. But someone there has proclaimed the child dead, and, no doubt, others have checked her. It seems most reasonable that the mother held her child and clearly knew of her state.

Therefore, we know that there are many witnesses at this place to the death of this child.

Luke 8:53 **And they laughed at Him, knowing that she was dead.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus, by making these statements, temporarily breaks through the emotional grief that many of them are feeling.

There is some missing text called (Luke 8:54a) below. This is not found in the Westcott Hort text, but it is found in Scrivener's Textus Receptus and in the Robinson-Pierpont Greek text.<sup>56</sup>

Luke 8:54a **But He, casting [them] all outside and...** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

It is this small portion of text which helps us better understand what is taking place here. Jesus is going to go into the house (or into the room) where the child's body is. He intends only for 3 of His disciples and the parents to go with Him. There are apparently a number

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<sup>56</sup> It is generally more likely for text to drop out than it is for text to be added in.

of other people in this room, and He will tell them to leave (given the words used here, Jesus appears to have been rather forceful).

This would also help to explain the response of laughter that Jesus received when He asserted that the girl was only sleeping.

Now, Jesus is about to raise this child from the dead; but, instead of allowing the skeptics to remain, He sends them out. The word usage here allows for Him to even physically evict them. No doubt, Jesus ordered them out; and He may have even grabbed one or two of them by the scruff of their cloak to help guide them outside of the room where they were.

Luke 8:54b **But taking her by the hand...** (ESV; capitalized)

Now, Jesus is in the home where the girl is, and there are only five others with Him at this point: Peter, James and John; and the parents of the little girl.

Jesus takes the lifeless hand of the little girl.

Luke 8:54c **...He called, saying, "Child, arise."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus speaks loudly, and I would assume that this is for the benefit of those outside of the house. He takes the girl's hand and says, very loudly, "Rise up!"

Luke 8:54 **But taking her by the hand He called, saying, "Child, arise."** (ESV; capitalized)

There are five others in the room with Jesus when He takes the daughter's hand and tells her to rise up.

Luke 8:54 **But He, casting [them] all outside and taking her hand, cried out, saying to the child, "Rise up!"** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

This is v. 54 with the additional text. Jesus had to send some people out of the room.

Jesus spoke to the child, telling her to rise up. Then this happens:

Luke 8:55a **And her spirit returned,...** (ESV; capitalized)

There is a technical use of the word *spirit* in the Bible, and a non-technical use as well. This can refer to the part of man which communes with God (that is, what we understand about God is placed in the human spirit, which is possessed only by the believer).





There is a less technical use of this word which simply refers to the life of a person (very often, the word *soul* is also used in this way).

I would suggest that there are two factors at work—just as God breathes life into us, our life is removed when we are no longer breathing. It would seem apropos in this resuscitation that God would breathe life back into this young lady. It is also possible—and I would lean towards this to be true as well—that this child has already believed in the Revealed God. Therefore, it is her human spirit which is restored to her, along with her life.

To clarify, this is a resuscitation, not a resurrection. This girl would, at some point in the future, die again. She is brought back to life, but in her old body,

a body subject to corruption. Jesus will be the first person raised up in a true resurrection body.

**Jesus raises the young girl from the dead** (a graphic); from [Pinterest](#); accessed August 4, 2023.

Luke 8:55b ...and she got up at once. (ESV; capitalized)

The verb here suggests more that the girl stood up rather than simply sat up. Obviously, as deceased, she was laying down somewhere (I assume on whatever they used as a bed then), and that she is revived and she stands right up.

Luke 8:55c And He directed that something should be given her to eat. (ESV; capitalized)

It is Jesus Who says this.

The girl's parents, as we will see, are astonished; they are in a state of amazement. Therefore, Jesus orders them to do what is most normal for a parent to do—that they go about and get some food for her to eat.

Jesus needs for the parents to be normal and thinking; not emotional and confused.

Luke 8:55 Her spirit returned and she stood up immediately. Jesus [lit., He or she] gave orders [that] she be given [food] to eat. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

It should be noted that, properly speaking, the girl was resuscitated, not resurrected. She was given life again; her soul returned to her body and she was able to spend many more years with her parents. However, at some point in time, her body would give out and she would die physically. Although raised by Jesus, the little girl did not have a resurrection body. She did not have eternal life in the strict sense of not being able to continue without an intervening physical death at some point in time.

Luke 8:55 **And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And He directed that something should be given her to eat.** (ESV; capitalized)

The young girl had gone for a period of time without food and water, so Jesus directed her parents to see to her needs.

The parents are probably both taken aback by all that has taken place. Jesus gets them out of this shock by telling them what they need to do.

Luke 8:56a **And her parents were amazed,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Neither the mother or father expected anything like this. They are astonished by what has happened. As I suggested before, when Jesus and the disciples went with the man to return to his home, he was probably too upset and introspective to really think about, “Why is Jesus coming with me?” Or, if he wonders that, he might be too despondent to ask. Or, maybe he thought that Jesus might say some very meaningful words at his daughter’s funeral. But, for Jesus to enter the house with him and his wife and to raise up their daughter—this came completely out of left field. Both parents are astonished; and, therefore, Jesus has given them a simple task to do.

Luke 8:56b **...but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.** (ESV; capitalized)

I think the way that this is to be understood is, the parents are to shuffle around the house and get food for their daughter. They are not to stop and talk to the people who are gathered there, to tell them what just happened.

Because the aorist tense is used, and not the present tense (which can refer to continuous action), I believe that this is not a forever, all-time prohibition; but that Jesus wants these parents to take care of their daughter’s needs right then, and to hold off, at least in the beginning, of telling everyone what just happened. How many conversations would that have started?

Now, would these parents talk about what happened later? I suspect that is allowed; but just not right at this point in time (again, this is the aorist tense as opposed to the present tense).

Also, I have found that, it is best if people do not talk and give their opinion about something big which has just happened. They need time for their minds and frame of reference to

kick in. The importance of what has happened and their proper understanding of it is more likely if some time is spent in contemplation before speaking.

Furthermore, we have already seen that the people outside of the home were on negative signals. They derided Jesus for what He said; they rejected His authority. So, telling the parents to not talk about this was also to keep them from casting pearls before swine. That is, people who are negative are negative. Often, despite what a negative person says, he is often set in his opinion, regardless of the events which take place.

Luke 8:56b **...but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.** (ESV; capitalized)

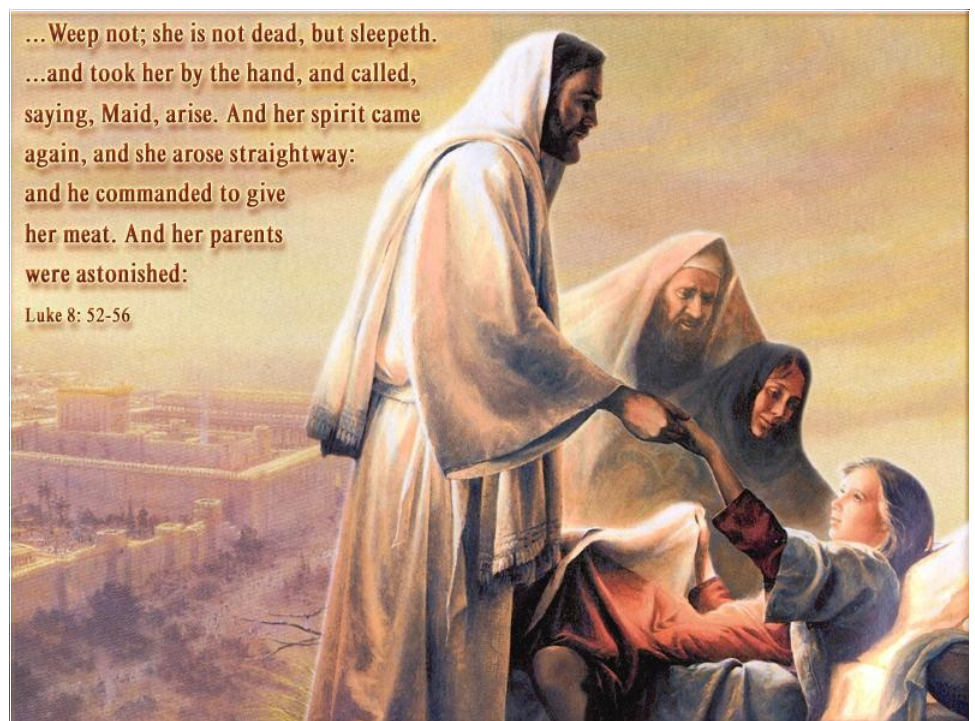
We might consider that there are other people in the home—friends and family—some of whom made fun of Jesus when He arrived and asked to see the girl. Did He charge them also to be quiet? Obviously, they will find out immediately that the little girl is alive.

Luke 8:56 **Her spirit returned and she stood up immediately. Jesus [lit., He or she] gave orders [that] she be given [food] to eat. Her parents were astonished. However, Jesus charged them not to speak of what happened.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Let me suggest a very practical reason why Jesus adjured these people not to speak of what happened. His ministry would have changed dramatically, as people would be bringing Him the dead bodies of recently deceased loved ones and family members. Jesus, on special occasions, showed that He had power over death; but this could not be the thrust of His short ministry.

A more practical question would be, *how would they keep this quiet?* Bear in mind, given this man's position as the authority in the synagogue, everyone from his city—for the most part—would have been there for the funeral. So what is done?

To answer this question, I can but offer speculation. Remember that, going into the room (or house), Jesus suggested that the girl was only sleeping. Was He going to allow that explanation to stand, even though He had been mocked by a



number of people? Do the people come outside and sheepishly say, the daughter is okay; thank you all for coming?

Without hearing a full explanation—without someone saying out loud, “Jesus raised this little girl from the dead,” the people are left to their own devices to sort out what happened in their own minds. When left to their own thinking, how do you think they will respond?

Luke 8:56 **And her parents were amazed, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.** (ESV; capitalized)

For Peter, James, John and the two parents, the truth was clear. The little girl was stone cold dead and at Jesus’ command, she became alive again. They all knew this for a fact; but they were charged not to say this; and, I suppose, allow people to think what they want to think.

Now, they will be asked about what happened; and their answer is, logically, very simple: “Jesus has asked us not to speak to anyone about this. This is all we can say.” Obviously, this response is conjecture on my part.

**Luke 8:52-56 (KJV)** (a graphic); from a [Christian Pilgrimage](#); accessed March 2, 2023.

## Lesson 255: Luke 8

## Luke Being Matched to the Other Gospels

What follows is only going to be helpful if you follow along with the passages from your own Bible (whether it is a physical book or an electronic book). Have it open to Luke 8, but be prepared to jump back and forth between Matthew and Mark as well.

At this point, we normally go to the chapter summary, where we cover the entire chapter in 10–15 pages. We have something else to touch on first. There are nine parallel events found in Luke 8, which match up with these same events in portions of two chapters of Matthew and in portions of two chapters of Mark. With the exception of one event, these events can be matched together in the same order in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. This is important, because the same thing will also take place in Luke 9. You may be thinking, *big deal; isn't this what we should expect?* Here is the oddity. Luke 8 appears to take place early in the Lord’s ministry—maybe the end of the first year or early into the second year. By contrast, Luke 9 appears to take place at the time that Jesus sets His face toward Jerusalem for the last time (that is, Luke 9 appears to take place in the final few months of the Lord’s public ministry). So there is a considerable gap in the Lord’s public ministry in the book of Luke between chapters 8 and 9—a gap of 1–2 years. This empty gap is not found in Matthew or Mark. There are quite a number of events taking place in both of those books between the sets of parallel events. In both Matthew and Mark there are passages which match up with Luke 8; and then there are a few chapters in both Matthew and Mark. Then we have parallel events to match with Luke 9. However, between Luke 8 and Luke 9, there is nothing.



Although we have studied some parallel events in previous chapters of Luke, we are now looking at parallel events from an overview of time (9 or so events from Luke 8 and 9 or so events from Luke 9). In particular, we are considering how time relates to the book of Luke (as Luke is our primary study). The number of events listed depends upon how these events are divided up. But we have a considerable amount of continuity beginning with Luke 8:4 all the way to the end of Luke 8 (recall that Luke 8:1–3 is simply a list of the women who traveled with the Lord).

In this section, we will match up Luke 8 with both Matthew and Mark.

Here are the parallel events: I specify four big narratives in Luke 8, but there are specific subsets of each event which match up between Matthew, Mark and Luke. Since there is more than one way to count the parallels—I list as many as 16 parallels by subdividing the narratives.

I discovered this chart by Palmer online a few years ago. It looked reasonable so I included it with my online notes. Even though the chart is 9 pages long, I took issue with its lack of detail, and, from time to time, I have expanded it. I took Palmer's work and provided more details.

Peter is believed to be the source of Mark's gospel. Therefore, some references below to Peter are related directly to Mark's gospel.

It would be easy for this chart to simply seem to be a bunch of words along with a bunch of Scriptural references, which you have no intention of looking up. What you get out of this chart is going to be very limited if you do not take the time to look these verses up. As a result, this potentially may take 30 minutes of more to read through (if you read all of the references).

I have found that the best way to follow along with this chart is using e-sword (a program which is free from [www.e-sword.net](http://www.e-sword.net)). I have Luke 8 open in the Bible section and Treasure of Scriptural Knowledge open in the commentary section. As I go through each verse in Luke 8, the parallel verses in Matthew and Mark are displayed by TSK (or TSKe) tabs. I can read the text from Matthew and Mark by running the mouse over the passage in TSK. If you then want to follow the narrative in Matthew, it is as simple as clicking on the Matthew Bible text. One click in e-sword and you have moved from the Lukian narrative to the Matthew narrative.

I personally like e-sword; but there are other free Bible programs out there, such as *theWord* and *The Sword Project*. E-sword eats up a lot of memory. I choose e-sword over those other programs, as there are many more modules designed for e-sword.

Harmony of the Gospel Chart from Life of Christ (Palmer/Kukis)			
Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke
1 <sup>st</sup> main narrative:			

Harmony of the Gospel Chart from Life of Christ (Palmer/Kukis)			
Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke
Jesus' family seeking Him out is the first narrative presented in Matthew and Mark (of all the narratives which we will match up). It is the second overall narrative in Luke 8.			
Jesus' genetic family seeks Him out. Jesus is teaching and there is a large crowd listening to Him.	12:46	3:31	8:19
Jesus is made aware of them being there.	12:47	3:32	8:20
Jesus then uses His genetic family in order to present a new concept. He teaches that His true family are those listening to Him teach and those who choose to do the will of God.	12:48–50	3:33–35	8:21
It is not clear whether this concept was taught to all of those hearing Jesus teach the parables or if this concept was limited to just a few people (which included Jesus' genetic family).			
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> main narrative:</b>			
Jesus teaching a number of parables is the second narrative.			
Parables by the Sea	13:1–35	4:1–34	8:4–18
Jesus goes out to teach a large crowd by the sea; the crowd is so large, He gets into a boat which is a short distance from shore. Then He teaches from this boat.	13:1–2	4:1–2	8:4
This allows Jesus to teach a greater number of people.			
Luke has little to say about the teaching environment; but Matthew and Peter were both there, so what they saw and experienced stood out to them. Luke was more focused on the content of the Lord's teaching.			
Parable of the farmer sowing seed.	13:3–9	4:3–9	8:5–8
Jesus explains to His disciples the purpose of teaching with parables.	13:10–17	4:10–12	8:9–10
Jesus explains privately to His disciples the parable of sowing seed.	13:18–23	4:13–20	8:11–15
Jesus teaching the disciples directly is something which takes place later that day, privately. Matthew 13:10 Mark 4:10. This is not as clearly presented in Luke.			



Harmony of the Gospel Chart from Life of Christ (Palmer/Kukis)			
Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke
The parable of placing a lamp under a basket.		4:21–23	8:16–18
Jesus apparently taught this parable at least twice, as it is found as a part of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:15–16). This fact highlights the fact that, finding two similar sets of teachings does not necessarily refer to the same incident.			
There are two general events above: Jesus' family seeking Him out and Jesus teaching parables. There are so many similarities that we consider these as parallel events taught in the first three gospels.			
The different order is easily explained. Jesus is giving a number of parables in Luke 8:4–18. While He is teaching these parables, His family shows up and tries to move closer to Him. <i>When</i> the family is mentioned is up to the gospel writer recording the events.			
Matthew and Mark teach this as taking place before the parables; but Luke places this after the parables. The explanation is simpler than you might expect.			
Although these events above appear to be in a different order, they really are not. When Jesus' family begins to seek Him and at what point Jesus becomes aware of this are two events which take place at two different times. Matthew and Mark present this as taking place before Jesus begins to teach, because they look at this from the view of Jesus' family. They began to search out Jesus before Jesus began to teach (Matthew 13:1-35 Mark 4:1-34 Luke 8:4-18). Jesus becomes aware that they are too far away to hear Him in Luke 8:20.			
Luke presents this from Jesus' view, where He first becomes aware of His family being nearby, and He has already been teaching for awhile. When Jesus is made aware of them, He then teaches the concept of the permanent Christian family.			
We do not know if this teaching was for the entire crowd or for a small subset of them.			
<b>Additional parables found only in Matthew and Mark:</b>			
This next section consists mostly of parables, which are apparently taught at this same time. Luke does not record any of these parables. Matthew and Mark only have one parable and one explanation in common.			
The disciples will be held responsible for what they hear taught.		4:24–25	
The parable of growing seeds.		4:26–29	
Jesus teaches the parable of the weeds that grow among the wheat.	13:23–30		

Harmony of the Gospel Chart from Life of Christ (Palmer/Kukis)			
Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke
Parable of the mustard seed.	13:31–32	4:30–32	
Parable of the yeast.	13:33		
Why Jesus teaches parables to the crowds.	13:34–35	4:33–34	
Jesus explains the parable of the weeds.	13:36–43		
Parables of the hidden treasure, the pearl of great value, the net, and the old and new treasures.	13:44–52		
Jesus is rejected at Nazareth.	13:53–58		
Matthew remembers a number of similar parables, parables which may have been taught <i>by the sea</i> from the boat. Matthew goes from this teaching that takes place <i>by the sea</i> to another incident which follows soon thereafter. Jesus returns to His hometown, Nazareth (which is possibly inspired by Jesus' family coming to see Him). This transition is found in Matthew 13:53. What we read in Matthew 13:53–58 is unique to Matthew's gospel.			
It appears that Jesus is rejected twice at Nazareth. First, very early in His ministry, when He proclaims in the synagogue that the words from Isaiah were being fulfilled right before their eyes (we already studied this in Luke at the end of Luke 4). Then there appears to be a second rejection by the Nazarene people, who know Jesus' family, and they cannot reconcile that with Jesus the great teacher of truth (which would take place perhaps a year or so into the Lord's ministry). This is recorded in Matthew 13:53–58. One primary difference between Matthew and Luke's narratives is, the people in attendance in the Matthew narrative know something about the Lord's background.			
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> main narrative (in Luke):</b>			
We now have a new problem. Whereas both Mark and Luke move forward from where they were to the next event, in Matthew, we go from Matthew 13 (above) back to Matthew 8–9 (below). There are so many parallels in the accounts that we should see them as parallel accounts.			

Harmony of the Gospel Chart from Life of Christ (Palmer/Kukis)			
Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke
<p>Although I believe Matthew, Mark and Luke to be placed generally in chronological order, we have to take into account several things: (1) One incident may lead to remembering another incident, which may lead to remembering a third incident. These may have occurred in this general chronological order, but there may have been additional incidents which take place between those incidents remembered. So when those incidents come to mind, the Apostle writes them down. (2) These gospels were likely written down one time, over a period a few weeks, months or even years. They did not have cut and paste back then. So Matthew may be writing his gospel, have some stuff going on, and then go back to it a week later, and pick up at whatever place his memory takes him.</p>			
<p>Given my personal experience with the gospels, I think that Mark and Luke are both most likely to be in chronological order; but Matthew less so. Taking these things into account does not mean that there are historical inaccuracies in any of the gospels.</p>			
Jesus orders His disciples to cross the Sea of Galilee	8:18	4:35	8:22
Jesus calms a stormy sea	8:23-27	4:36-41	8:23-25
A legion of demons is cast out of violent man	8:28-34	5:1-20	8:26-39
This final event could have been broken down into many subset events.			
<b>4<sup>th</sup> main narrative (in Luke):</b>			
Jesus sails back to Capernaum	9:1	5:21	8:40
Jairus asks Jesus to heal his daughter	9:18-19	5:22-23	8:41-42
An ill woman is healed by touching Jesus. Jesus demands to know who touched His garment.	9:20-22	5:24-34	8:42-48
The daughter's death is reported to Jairus		5:35-36	8:49-50
Jesus raises Jairus' daughter to life	9:23-26	5:37-43	8:51-56
The event could have been broken down into several sub-events.			

Harmony of the Gospel Chart from Life of Christ (Palmer/Kukis)			
Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke
At this point, I do not know why the Matthew text goes from chapter 13 back to chapters 8 and 9. Mark and Luke are completely in synch with regards to the events of the second narrative leading right into the third and fourth narratives. Let me suggest that Matthew wrote chapters 8 & 9 (and possibly others); set his gospel down for a period of time; and then picked it up again, remembering some additional material. What he wrote previously is chronological order, what he writes later is in chronological order; but these sets of incidents could have been integrated after the fact, only if Matthew had written his gospel on a word processor.			
There are so many points of commonality in Matthew 9 with Mark 5 and Luke 8, that it would be hard to write off Matthew 8–9 as simply a series of similar incidents.			
Ken Palmer's chart is most recently placed here: <a href="http://www.onthewing.org/user/Gospel_Harmony.pdf">http://www.onthewing.org/user/Gospel_Harmony.pdf</a> (accessed April 7, 2023) I have expanded this section of the chart considerably. Instead of simply listing the section on <i>parables taught by the sea</i> , I break them down into 13 subsections.			

There is enough information to make the following conclusions:

1. This is a set of parallel events.
  - 1) There are simply too many parallel teachings and specific details within each general event to think that these are only similar events.
  - 2) The list of these events in the exact same order suggests that Matthew, Mark and Luke are all recording exactly the same series of events (with the exception of the few events as recorded in earlier chapters of Matthew).
2. Even though there are differences, most of these differences simply indicate the perspective of a different person. For instance:
  - 1) Matthew and Mark mention Jesus' family prior to the parable section, because they see it from the perspective of Jesus' family (they began to seek Him out before He started teaching this particular session). Luke presents this same incident from Jesus' perspective, which is when He was told that they were nearby. This information would have come to Him partway through His sets of parables.
  - 2) Mark and Luke both record the parable of placing a lamp under a basket; Matthew does not record that parable.
3. Assuming that the book of Luke is most in a chronological order, these events all take place early on in the Lord's ministry.
  - 1) Jesus' genetic family becomes interested in His teaching and His notoriety, so they seek Him out. Logically, this would take place early on in His ministry. What He was doing and saying would have come back to the family very early on. Since His half-brothers are not all believers, this would have been interesting to them.
  - 2) Jesus explains to His disciples *why* He teaches with parables. This would have also taken place very early in His ministry. His disciples were not shy

about asking Him questions when in a smaller group. They are not going to have heard Jesus teaching with parables for two years and *then* ask Him why He teaches in parables. “Why do you teach in parables?” is a very good question, and one which was posed to Jesus early on.

When giving a set of points like this, showing logically *when* these events take place, I am setting up some general time frames for the book of Luke which may not be, from a simple reading of the book, immediately apparent.

What I am teaching is, Luke 8 occurs during the first year of the Lord’s public ministry, or perhaps early in the second year. On the other hand, Luke 9 (or portions of Luke 9) take place in the final few months of the Lord’s ministry. I come to such a conclusion by carefully examining both chapters and their parallels.

In between the events recorded by Luke in chapters 8 and 9; and the parallel passages in Matthew and Mark, there are several chapters of Matthew and Mark. They fill in the gap of going from the first year to the final few months.

Let me explain just where I am going with all of this: there are 8½ chapters of Luke which follow Luke 9, which take us to the final week or two prior to the crucifixion. We therefore need to ask, what about this 8½ chapters? Where do they go in terms of chronology? Are these events which all take place between Luke 9 and Luke 18? They do not appear to me to fall chronologically between these two chapters.

So that you are prepared for it, from time to time, I will stop moving forward and discuss where Luke is, in terms of absolute chronology; and then, I will have to explain why Luke has 8½ chapters which are not in any sort of chronological order.

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**Lessons 256–257: Luke 8:1–25****Chapter 8 Summary Part I**

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ESV (capitalized) translation used below for chapter review. The bracketed material comes from me to clarify some of the verses.

I believe that reading this chapter and hearing it explained as a whole will be extremely informative. It is easy to lose the continuity and the progression when each and every verse is dissected.

We may stand at the edge of a forest and I start describing in detail each and every tree and all there is to know about them. Obviously, there is a wealth of knowledge to be disseminated. But in that approach, do you appreciate the forest itself? That is why these chapter summaries are so important.

The chapter subtitles from e-sword have been retained and used as links below:

**Chapter Subtitles from E-sword** (linked to the chapter summary that follows)

Luke 8:1–3	<a href="#"><u>Women Accompanying Jesus</u></a>
Luke 8:4–8	<a href="#"><u>The Parable of the Sower</u></a>
Luke 8:9–15	<a href="#"><u>The Purpose of the Parables</u></a>
Luke 8:16–18	<a href="#"><u>A Lamp Under a Jar</u></a>
Luke 8:19–21	<a href="#"><u>Jesus' Mother and Brothers</u></a>
Luke 8:22–25	<a href="#"><u>Jesus Calms a Storm</u></a>
Luke 8:26–39	<a href="#"><u>Jesus Heals a Man with a Demon</u></a>
Luke 8:40–56	<a href="#"><u>Jesus Heals a Woman and Jairus's Daughter</u></a>

As we have studied, there are a number of parallels between the texts of Matthew, Mark and Luke; suggesting that these events took place in this order, early on in the Lord's ministry (perhaps at the end of the first year or the beginning of the second). Your concept of time may be thrown off when we complete this chapter and move to the next, as the events of Luke 9 match up with events taking place in the last few months of the Lord's public ministry. So we make a jump in the book of Luke from early in the Lord's ministry to late in the Lord's ministry, but with nothing in between. At the end of Luke 9, I will speak to the organization of the book of Luke.

## **Women Accompanying Jesus**

Luke 8:1 **Soon afterward He [Jesus] went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus traveled with the twelve disciples, but there were more people than the twelve who traveled with Him. Since this is early in His ministry, there are perhaps 50–100 people who are with Him. Some of these disciples are women.

Luke 8:2–3 **...and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.** (ESV; capitalized)

We know less about Mary Magdalene than you might think. What we read here is probably the most extensive bio of her. We do not know where this took place; what the circumstances were, or anything else. Based upon the narratives which follow, these women are identified early on with the Lord's public ministry.

Mary's name associates her with Magdala, which is a place on the southern region of Galilee.

Tradition sometimes connects her to the woman (women) who washed the Lord's feet with her hair (this takes place at least twice in the Lord's ministry). Mary is not so specifically identified. However, we do not know if the first connection is true (it would explain the gratefulness of the woman moisturizing the Lord's feet); but Jesus would have healed and helped many men and women in a great variety of ways.



Tradition also connects Mary to the woman caught in the act of adultery. The second incident mentioned (the woman taken in adultery) may not have even taken place; or it may have been much different than is described (the actual text is in question). For me, it seemed weird that Jesus would be crouching over and writing stuff in the sand (this is from the text of this incident). It was also kind of goofy that her accusers left one-by-one, starting with the oldest. This incident is only found in one gospel (John 8:1–11). I think it is a later addition to the text or that portions of it are distorted.

On the other hand, this Mary is certainly more well-known after the crucifixion where she makes contact with the risen Lord and tells the disciples about it.

Similarly, Joanna is associated by some as being the wife of the centurion's servant who was healed in Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10. However, as with Mary, there is nothing to actually connect her or her husband Chuza to that centurion. In fact, his being called a household manager for Herod Agrippa would suggest that there is no such connection. Joanna remained with the Lord throughout His public ministry, as she will be among the women going to His tomb after the resurrection (Luke 24:10).

Everything that we know about Susanna (not much) is found in this one passage.

Jesus is associate with these women and many others who supported them (Jesus and His disciples and followers) from their own personal wealth.

Luke typically gives some time and space to the women. None of the other disciples make reference to this list.

### **The Parable of the Sower**

Luke 8:4–8 **And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to Him, He said in a parable, "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold." As He said these things, He called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (ESV; capitalized)**

Jesus would often give a parable and then give no explanation for it. He would depend upon His audience to remember it, think about it and decipher it (if they could).

When Jesus said, "He who has ears, let him hear"; He is referring to a person with positive volition toward his message. *Hearing* is more than simply hearing these words. It is both hearing and understanding the meaning (sometimes, this word is used in the sense of *to hear and obey*).

However, His disciples do not understand what Jesus is talking about and they will ask Him about this parable.

## The Purpose of the Parables

Vv. 9–15 is parenthetical. The disciples heard this parable, they wondered about it, and later on, they ask Jesus about it.

Luke 8:9–10 **And when His disciples asked Him what this parable meant, He said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are [taught] in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'** (ESV; capitalized)

When Jesus is asked by His disciples about the meaning of this parable, He gives one of the most fascinating answers on record. He tells them, "It has been given to you to understand the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; but not to others, who will hear My parables and not understand them."

Jesus is actually acknowledging that not everyone would understand all that He was teaching. We know this to be true, as some parables which He gave have been discussed and even debated hundreds and thousands of years later.

So, people showed up to hear Jesus speak, but often they did not understand everything that He said. On occasion, His parables left them wondering (as was true of the disciples).

When it comes to spiritual understanding, it is progressive. To use myself as an example: when I first moved to Houston and attended Berachah Church, Bob was teaching the book of Romans. He was nearly finished at the time I arrived. Did I understand everything that he was teaching? I did not. Most often, I did not even know that I did not understand it. I mention this because I am currently listening to that series again, and most of it is as if I had never heard the series in the first place. After nearly 50 years, I have a somewhat better background than I did the first time I heard it.

So, in some cases, what Jesus is teaching simply requires a better background and knowledge than many of His hearers had.

In other cases, His listeners may not have liked what He was teaching, but, since the information was couched in parables, they did not object to it (as they did not understand the parables).

When I taught Algebra II, most of the students were college-bound, had taken Algebra I and Geometry; so I could expect them to have some common areas of knowledge. Many times when I taught, perhaps as high as 60 or even 80% knew what I was teaching and it made sense to them.

A Bible teacher does not have this kind of audience. Some of them do not even know the full gospel message. Others know a handful of things, but have tremendous gaps in their understanding. Others have been attending Bible-based teaching for decades, and they have a very well-rounded cohesive understanding of theology. The pastor-teacher cannot

teach the gospel every time; nor can he teach the finer points of justification, imputations, and the hypostatic union all of the time. A good pastor-teacher is going to teach on several different levels and those attending his church will understand whatever they can understand. Ideally speaking, new believers, growing believers and mature believers all get something from what is being taught.

Here is how the parables worked. Some crowds in attendance did not even know the gospel message (they were not even saved). Others knew a little bit about Jesus and redemption and the Messiah. So Jesus would often teach parables, and their chief advantage is this: believers could hear the parables but not understand them. However, the parables stayed with them for a long time and, maybe a few months or years later, they will think about a particular parable and suddenly understand what Jesus was saying.

That being said, this particular parable is relatively straightforward. Jesus explains it to His disciples. Some of those reading this probably understood its meaning straightaway.

Luke 8:11 **Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.** (ESV; capitalized)

The key to this parable is, the seed being scattered is the Word of God. This could be seen as the gospel message or as Bible doctrine (depending upon the recipients of the word).

Luke 8:12 **The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes [along] and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.** (ESV; capitalized)

In order for God's Word to be efficacious, it must be heard and understood and believed. This process was called gap (grace apparatus for perception) by R. B. Thieme, Jr.; and it is also known as Operation Z. Briefly, gap means that the regenerated man has a human spirit, and it is the human spirit where believed information about God is placed. As this spirit grows in content, the believer is better able to understand more and more spiritual things. This comes from 1 Corinthians 2:6–16, a passage taught by both R. B. Thieme, Jr. and R. B. Thieme, III.

This parable can also be understood to be directed to the unbeliever (or it has application to the unbeliever). The unbeliever has no spiritual information in his soul. Therefore, when he hears the gospel message, God the Holy Spirit acts as a human spirit for him, and makes that message understandable. The unbeliever can then believe the gospel or he can reject it. At some point, the understanding of that message will be taken from him. Somehow, it appears that Satan is involved in that process. Perhaps Satan petitions God for that information to be removed?

For the believer, he hears divine truth being taught (Bible doctrine) and he has a human spirit. Depending upon the amount of doctrine in that believer's spirit, he may fully or only partially understand what is being taught (when I heard R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s Roman series for the first time, I probably understood 30% of what he was teaching). If the hearer

chooses not to believe what he is hearing, at some point, that information is also lost to him.

As the believer increases his understanding of divine truth, information which was previously obscure to him can suddenly make sense.

Luke 8:13 **And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away.** (ESV; capitalized)

For the unbeliever, perhaps he hears the gospel message and believes; but he only experiences minimal spiritual growth. So, at some point, he is tested, but the gospel message has no root in his soul. There is no place for spiritual information to grow; and they fall away from the faith (this does not mean that they lose their salvation; only that they retrogress as a believer).

The focus of this parable is the Word of God more than it is on the individual believer hearing the Word of God.

For the believer, he may hear Bible doctrine which, at some point, he begins to reject. He says, "Where did he (the pastor) get that from? I have never heard that before. Dear old Dr. So-and-so never taught that before." (that was my best imitation of R. B. Thieme, Jr.) God has seen to it that this believer has been given the doctrine to withstand testing, but he has rejected some of that doctrine; and the Word of God does not take further root in his soul. Such a believer apparently advanced, but at some point, he falls away, having rejected the teaching which would have carried him through a time of testing.

Luke 8:14 **And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.** (ESV; capitalized)

Again, there are two applications: to the unbeliever hearing the gospel and to the believer hearing new doctrinal information.

Most unbelievers have a lot of stuff going on (as do believers), and they may hear and understand the gospel message. However, this unbeliever may set this information aside, temporarily, because there are so many other things demanding this person's attention. At some point, the gospel message is simply choked out.

Now, let's consider the believer. There are believers who are so involved in their own life that, they may attend church and hear some teaching; but they have so much more going on in their lives—even with prosperity—that these temporal things choke out the Word of God. This person might simply be too busy to take in the Word of God; or maybe things might be going too well for him. As a result, that person has stopped advancing spiritually, and he produces no fruit (production is a natural outgrowth of spiritual growth). He hears

doctrinal information which is important to his spiritual growth, but he just sets it aside for the time being. At some point, it is lost.

Luke 8:15 **As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.** (ESV; capitalized)

Let's first consider the unbeliever hearing the message of the gospel. The person is ready for it; and God the Holy Spirit makes it real to him. When he believes, it is as if a seed has fallen on good ground and it sprouts and produces fruit. The unbeliever hears the gospel and believes, and that sticks in his newly regenerated spirit.

This part of the parable also has application to the believer. The believer who pursues Bible doctrine; who grows spiritually; who believes Bible doctrine when it is taught—such a person grows spiritually and produces much fruit in his (or her) life.

### **A Lamp Under a Jar**

At this point, we appear to return to the Lord's teaching along the Galilee shore (Luke 8:9–15 was Jesus teaching His disciples privately). What takes place before and after this teaching suggests that Matthew, Mark and Luke are recording the same series of events.

Luke 8:16 **"No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light.** (ESV; capitalized)

Light is often used as a symbol of truth; therefore, the believer who has truth should not hide it. That would be like taking a lamp into a dark room and then sticking the lamp into a closet and closing the closet door. It is no good there.

Now, this does not mean that you are going to spout Bible doctrine every moment of the day. Something happens and you immediately have a verse for it. The wise believer picks his spots and chooses his battles. The mature believer knows when the time is right and when it is not (after all, we are also warned not to cast our pearls before swine). When it is the proper time to express the truth, then the mature believer should express the truth (whether this is the gospel message, or Bible doctrine, or divine establishment truth).

When our founding fathers were writing the Constitution, the book they quoted the most in their discussions was the Bible. Under those circumstances, the Bible was recognized as a font of truth and knowledge by many of the founding fathers. Therefore, when discussion was had concerning what our government ought to be, various contributors spoke appropriate truths right from the Scriptures.

Luke 8:17 **For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light.** (ESV; capitalized)

All truth will become manifest; and nothing will be hidden from the light. There are periods of time when lies and dishonesty rule the day (such as the United States in the 2020s), but in the end, truth will win out.

We live in a world filled with falsehoods (I write this in 2023). Some are so crazy as to boggle our collective imaginations (like the idea that a man can become a woman or vice versa). But this is what is going to be a part of life in a fallen world.

Luke 8:18 **Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.**" (ESV; capitalized)

When it comes to divine truth, believers are entrusted with it or not. When you are given truth, then you are responsible for it. You are responsible to know it, to believe it and to apply it. And at various points in time, you are responsible to speak it.

### **Jesus' Mother and Brothers**

At some point, Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the Lord's half brothers went to see the Lord in action (they all knew that He taught the Scriptures and they would have heard of His healings). We know that Mary believes in Jesus, but her other sons do not necessarily believe in Him.

Joseph is not named here; so he may be out of the picture entirely (meaning that he is possibly dead).

Luke 8:19 **Then His mother and His brothers came to Him, but they could not reach Him because of the crowd.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is teaching somewhere along the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee (Capernaum?), but the crowd is so large as to make it impossible for Mary and her sons to make direct contact with Jesus. They are apparently able to get a message to Jesus.

Luke 8:20 **And He was told, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You."** (ESV; capitalized)

They sent a message to the Lord, which indicated that they wanted to see Him. This message and the response of Jesus is interesting. We do not know if Jesus taught this to the people who are there; or if He simply sent a message back to them. I am leaning toward the latter interpretation.

Luke 8:21 **But He answered them, "My mother and My brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."** (ESV; capitalized)

It says that Jesus *answers them*. This does not mean that Jesus uses this message as a teaching tool. That is, He does not necessarily hold this note aloft from His mother and



say, "I want you all to hear this note that I just received." In the three gospels which record this incident, Jesus speaks these words to the messenger (s). This is portrayed in the singular in Matthew 12:48 and as a plural in Mark 3:33. Matthew simply noticed an individual who said this to Jesus; and Peter (the source of the book of Mark) noticed that several people were involved in passing this message along.

Jesus' true family are those who hear the Word of God and then do it (for the unbeliever, this would mean to believe in Him). Several and possibly all of the Lord's half-brothers have not yet believed in Him.

It is clear in the other gospels that Jesus says these things to the messenger, which things would have been conveyed to His mother and half-brothers. It is not clear that Jesus taught this as a part of His message on this day. In any case, someone remembered these words of Jesus and shared them with Luke (perhaps it was James, the half-brother of Jesus).

Unfortunately, these words of Jesus have been used by cults over the years to separate new believers from their friends and family. If separating yourself from friends and family is a fundamental truth taught in your church group, let me suggest that you are in a cult. In some cases, some friends in some circumstances are to be avoided by the new believer; and some family members under certain circumstances are to be avoided.

I am associated online with a woman whose parents were sexual deviants—they were very public about this—and they involved her in their acts of perversion. She separated from them. People have friends who drink to excess or use drugs. New believers often recognize that these are habits to leave behind (at salvation, the scar tissue of one's soul is eliminated, so a former alcoholic or druggie can more easily walk away from these things).

However, there is no call for a person to separate himself from friends or family who were divine establishment oriented (that is, if they are normal, hard-working people). If such separation is taught in your church as an emphatic truth for all, then you may want to try out another church.

### **Jesus Calms a Storm**

Luke 8:22–23a **One day He got into a boat with His disciples, and He said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out, and as they sailed he fell asleep.** (ESV; capitalized)

Despite all there is to read about Jesus and His public ministry, we still do not know in every case why Jesus was motivated to do this or that. In many cases, it is easy. Someone comes up to Him with a need or a problem or a loved one who is ill, and Jesus is willing to go wherever to heal that person. However, here, He is teaching in northern Galilee, and then, out of the blue, He tells His disciples, "Let take a ride across the sea." At this point, I still do not have a clear explanation for this. However, this could be as

simple as, Jesus, as a man, recognized that He needed to sleep, and there was not going to be any peace and quiet on shore in the area where He was.

Although Luke makes it sound like this trip across the Sea of Galilee is unrelated to what has been taking place, Mark's gospel sounds as if they left that very night. Mark's gospel reads like this: *With many such parables He spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to His Own disciples He explained everything. On that day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."* (Mark 4:33–35)

Both Luke and Mark record the parable about, *not hiding your lamp under a bed*. The problem is, Jesus taught this parable at least twice that we know of; so there is nothing which tells us that all of Mark 4 matches up with all of Luke 8. That is, there may be an additional few days here or there; or even a few weeks, between the parables found in Luke and this sudden boat trip across Galilee.

Luke would have been influenced by whomever recounted these things. If someone did not make it clear that Jesus was teaching parables and then, that night, said, "Let go across Galilee," then Luke would not have spoken of these things as taking place on the same day.

In any case, for an undisclosed reason, Jesus tells His disciple to go across the Sea of Galilee and land on the other side.

While this is taking place, the Lord catches a few Zs.

Luke 8:23b *And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger.* (ESV; capitalized)

However, while Jesus is asleep, a sudden storm came upon them on the lake (which was not an unusual thing to happen).

Luke 8:24a *And they went and woke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"* (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples—at least four of them being experienced fishermen who are used to such storms—wake the Lord up. The storm is that dramatic.

Luke 8:24b *And He awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm.* (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus awakens, rebukes the storm, and calm is restored.

Luke 8:25a *He said to them, "Where is your faith?"* (ESV; capitalized)

He asks them, “Where is your faith?” This is what Jesus means: the relationship that the Lord has with His disciples is not going to suddenly disappear; and His public ministry will not come to a sudden, unexpected halt. As the Messiah of the Old Testament, Jesus is not going to perish at sea with His disciples. They should know this much at this time.

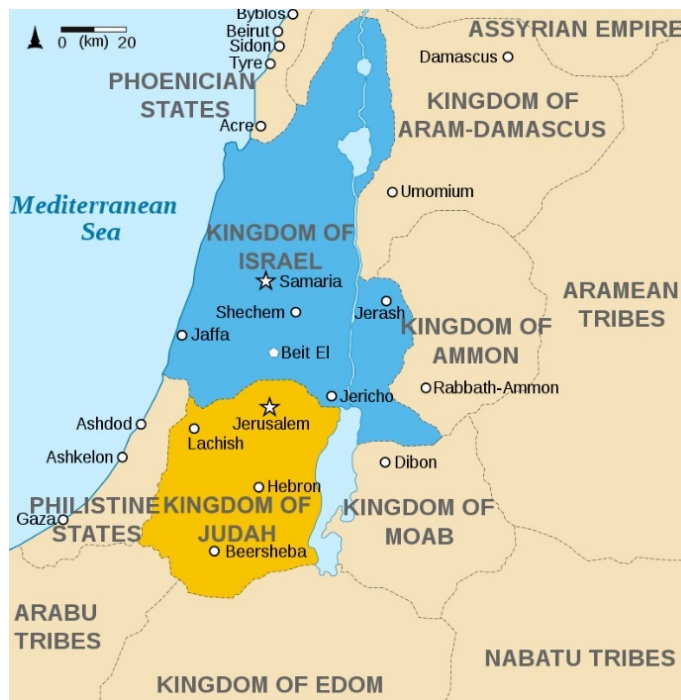
Luke 8:25b **And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even winds and water, and they obey Him?"** (ESV; capitalized)

Nevertheless, the disciples are afraid; but some of them marveled at this series of events. They knew that they had to wake Jesus up, but it never occurred to them that He could calm a storm. “Who is this Man, that the winds and water obey Him?” they say to one another.

## Lessons 258–259: Luke 8:26–56

## Chapter 8 Summary Part II

### Jesus Heals a Man with a Demon



Luke 8:26 **Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.** (ESV; capitalized)

There is some question about the location and the name of this village. Galilee is properly the region north and west of the Sea of Galilee. Most of Jesus’ public ministry took place in Galilee, which corresponds very roughly to the Northern Kingdom (this region was more or less divided up between Galilee and Samaria).

**Northern and Southern Kingdoms** (a map); from [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_and_Southern_Kingdoms); accessed June 17, 2023. This is what Israel would have looked like after the death of Solomon (circa 900–800 B.C.).

The medium-sized body of water on the map is the Sea of Galilee.

Interestingly enough, it is the northern kingdom which originally sponsored most of the negative volition in the Old Testament. However, despite the location of the Temple in the southern kingdom and the priests being there as well, the negative volition toward Jesus seems to primarily emanate from the south now. Things change; people change; and regions change.

Luke 8:27 When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. (ESV; capitalized)

Luke, the writer of this narrative, tells us from the beginning that this man is possessed by demons and that his behavior is very strange. Some of these things could be observed by the disciples and Jesus upon landing. Some of that information would have been told to them.

Luke 8:28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before Him and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me." (ESV; capitalized)

The man cries out and then falls before the feet of Jesus. Theologically, we might guess that the lead demon speaks to Jesus through the man; but that it is the man's volition to fall before Jesus. However, given the nature of the conversation, it may be the demons in this man who bow before Jesus.

The demon knows Who Jesus is; and he begs for Jesus not to torment him. I postulate that when a demon is thrown out of a man's body, that it is then put into some form of confinement called the abyss. All of the demons were aware of the abyss, and when they possessed anyone, they were in danger of being evicted and then sent to the abyss.

Luke 8:29 For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) (ESV; capitalized)

Luke gives us some background on this demon-possessed man, which would have become known to the disciples later in the narrative. Nevertheless, this is where the description of this man and his behavior belong.

Jesus commanded for the unclean spirit to come out of the man but it does not appear to come out. There are two possible explanations: (1) the demon simply did not exit the body; or (2) the demon with whom Jesus was speaking left the man's body, but there were 200 other demons remaining behind (Jesus specifically called for the removal of the demon with whom He spoke<sup>57</sup>).

As long as we understand that Jesus makes this command from His humanity, this narrative continues. If Jesus commanded this demon to exit from His Deity, then we face a great theological problem (I have suggested throughout this gospel that Jesus acted within the confines of His humanity, with very few, if any, exceptions).

Clearly the man remains possessed, no matter what the case.

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<sup>57</sup> The command was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular imperative.

Luke 8:30 Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him. (ESV; capitalized)

If the first demon has been cast out (which is the interpretation that I lean toward), there are 200 additional demons within this man to deal with. The other possibility is, Jesus called for the demons to leave this man, and they simply did not.

Jesus acts within the confines of His humanity and when He calls for something to happen (in this case, for the demons to leave this man), it appears that His command is not followed. As I suggested previously, perhaps the command was followed, technically speaking (the one demon left the body of this man); but another 200 remained behind.

Luke 8:31 And they begged Him not to command them to depart into the abyss. (ESV; capitalized)

If the primary demon (the one who controlled the man's vocal cords) is cast out, the other demons ask not to be cast into the abyss. I would suggest that this communication is taking place verbally (so the disciples can hear it take place), through the man's vocal cords, which are now used by many of the occupying demons.

This verse indicates that there is a place that demons who possess men are sent to called *the abyss*. The implication is, this place is both confining and painful.

Even though the universe is more vast than our minds can comprehend, the demons are not off exploring other worlds. They do not go off and attempt to hide from God. They choose to cause problems with God's human creation.

Luke 8:32 Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged Him to let them enter these. So He gave them permission. (ESV; capitalized)

This is interesting that Jesus allows these demons to enter into a herd of pigs. This is an unusual request to grant; and we do not know whether Jesus knew what would happen next (Jesus has human limitations; and being a prophet does not mean you know everything that is about to happen).

Luke 8:33 Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned. (ESV; capitalized)

I liken this to a ten-year-old child being given the keys to the family vehicle and then standing back to see what will happen. Is the volition of the pigs an issue here? Did Jesus know what the pigs were going to do? Is the uncleanness of the pig an issue (they were unclean insofar as the Jews were concerned)? Why didn't Jesus tell the demons, "No, you do not have My permission; now come out of him"?

This incident is such an oddity in the gospels, that it leaves us with many questions.

R. B. Thieme, III gives the most logical partial explanation: the demons intended to destroy these hogs. This would harm the economy and likely tarnish the Lord's reputation in the process. That would seem to be a good day's work for a demon. They may have simply resigned themselves to going into the abyss, and this was their last hurrah, so to speak.

Luke 8:34 **When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country.** (ESV; capitalized)

The swine herders were going to be the first to tell the townspeople what happened, and the emphasis was going to be on the pigs drowning and about how this would ruin the economy of the town.

Luke 8:35 **Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.** (ESV; capitalized)

The people had been afraid of the demon-possessed man; but seeing him sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and not crazy—well, that frightened them as well. Despite the calmness of the scene, these people knew that somehow, Jesus was able to overpower the demons in this man. That sort of power caused them to be afraid.

They were afraid of Jesus because they did not know Him.

Perhaps some of them believed that the demons could be anywhere around them, and that unnerved them (the abyss would be well-known to demons but not to man).

Luke 8:36 **And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed.** (ESV; capitalized)

When the hog farmers told the people what happened, they also talked about the crazy possessed man who seemed to be healed. Everyone knew about this man. Knowing of his previous condition (which many of the townspeople may have witnessed directly) and then seeing him there being normal—this could prompt two responses from the people: (1) An appreciation for this man returning to normal; (2) a fear concerning the whereabouts of the demons who previously possessed him. We readers know enough from this chapter to understand that the demons are now in the abyss and, therefore, cannot harm anyone. The townsfolk did not know this. Therefore, their response to this situation is fear.

Luke 8:37 **Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So He got into the boat and returned.** (ESV; capitalized)

The people seemed to weigh the two things which occurred—the destruction of the pigs and the cleansing of this man of demons. From a purely economic standpoint, the people believed that the loss of the pigs was far more damaging and did not outweigh the recovery of this man. In the balance, they would have preferred for things to have been left



unchanged. That is exactly the wrong viewpoint to have. The change in this man is far more important than the destruction of the swine.

The people have exactly the wrong scale of values.

You may or may not find this narrative interesting. However, for most of us, this narrative appears detached from our real lives. Let me suggest some parallels to your life right now. Are you seeing events take place which are unnerving? Are you concerned about the economy right now? Can you observe events taking place which disturb you—even frighten you? Are you seriously concerned about your future and what might take place? Are you ready to set God aside and solve these massive problems on your own (say, with a political movement)?

If you momentarily set the demons aside, are you beginning to recognize parallels that you did not see before? Can you make sense of the response of this people, even though it is the wrong response?

The people are now organized and they believe that they have identified the key to their economic woes—Jesus—and they want Him to leave. You are a believer, so this approach seems silly to you. Yet there are organized groups of atheists and agnostics who believe that Christians and churches are the problem in America. What has been preserving America for all of this time has been the pivot of believers; yet some have identified us as the problem with America.

My point being, there are a great many parallels between this narrative and our life today, parallels which may not seem obvious at first.

Luke 8:38–39 The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with Him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him. (ESV; capitalized)

The man who had been possessed desired to travel with Jesus. Jesus said no and told him to remain there.

Bear in mind that Jesus had His disciples take him clear across the Galilee Sea in order to convert this one man. But let me suggest that this one man had a great ministry after all of this. The people were not ready in those circumstances to believe in Jesus; but, given some time and the testimony of this man, it seems likely that many of them believed in the Lord at a later date.

Also, take note the inferred reference to Deity. Jesus tells him to declare how much God has done for him; and he proclaims how much Jesus had done for him. This suggests that this man understood a great deal about what had taken place and even had a basic understanding of the Deity of Jesus.

My assumption is, he was a walking testimony for the Lord and that many people believed in Jesus as a result of him staying there.

### **Jesus Heals a Woman and Jairus's Daughter**

At this point, we have a narrative within a narrative. The big picture is, Jairus, a synagogue head, asks Jesus to come to his home and heal his daughter. As Jesus is on the way, something happens, which slows Jesus down. In fact, while Jesus deals with this interim event, the daughter dies.

Luke 8:40 **Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus had been well-received on the northern Galilee shore. There were some skeptics and others who only wanted to be healed, but those types appear to have gone their own way after waiting a day or so.

However, there seem to be a considerable number of people who are on positive signals toward the teaching of Jesus. Positive volition is willing to wait.

Luke 8:41–42a **And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored Him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jairus, the head of the local synagogue, came out to meet Jesus and to make a strong request.

Although many religious types generally resented Jesus, Jairus did not fall into that category. Furthermore, this is early in the Lord's ministry, so there was less pressure from other religious types to repudiate Jesus.

Jairus speaks of his daughter, who is only twelve, but appears to be dying.

Luke 8:42b **As Jesus went, the people pressed around Him.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus begins to go with the man, but the people press in all around Him as He goes. Something is about to happen that will bring this procession to a dead halt.

Luke 8:43 **And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone.** (ESV; capitalized)

One of those following Jesus was a woman who suffered from vaginal bleeding. She had so suffered this malady for twelve years. This made the woman perpetually unclean, as women on their periods were considered unclean.

She had consulted many doctors concerning this ailment, but without any success. She had spent a great deal of money to find a cure.

Luke 8:44 She came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. (ESV; capitalized)

The woman could not confront Jesus and ask Him for healing, as she was unclean. However, she was able to come up behind Him and touch the tassel of his outer garment. At that very moment, she was cured.

Luke 8:45 And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched Me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround You and are pressing in on You!" (ESV; capitalized)

No one knows that this has taken place, apart from Jesus and this woman. Jesus asked aloud, "Who just touched Me?"

Peter thought this was an odd question, as there are people all around Jesus who are trying to get to Him. This is certainly a lot of jostling and movement which is occurring as Jesus walks along. At any time, one person could bump into another who might bump into Jesus.

Luke 8:46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched Me, for I perceive that power has gone out from Me." (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus knows that someone has touched Him, as He could feel power going out of Him. We do not know exactly how Jesus sensed this, but He knew for a certainty that this took place.

If Jesus were operating as God, with all the attributes of God, He would not need to ask who touched Him, as He would have known this. Furthermore, any power coming out of Him would be an act of His volition.

In this situation, Jesus is a conduit of God's power; and God chose to heal this woman the moment that she touched any part of Jesus' clothing. Jesus, from His humanity, did not will for this healing to take place. He was simply aware that power flowed through Him to someone in the crowd.

Luke 8:47 And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before Him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately healed. (ESV; capitalized)

This woman admits to what she has done. Everyone is watching her and Jesus.

Generally speaking, when someone unclean has contact with someone who is clean, the clean person become unclean due to this contact. However, it was the opposite with

Jesus. The woman's contact with Jesus made her clean; and she did not spoil Jesus in any way.

Luke 8:48 **And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus proclaims her both physically and spiritually cleansed, and says that she may go in peace.

Most often, *peace* in the Bible refers to peace between man and God, the most important peace to have. The woman had faith that contact with Jesus would cure her. Jesus tells her, "More than that, you are at peace with God."

Man's natural state is being at enmity with God. It is our very nature to rebel against Him. However, this was no longer the case for this woman (at least, while she is in fellowship).

We do not know how much time the Lord was slowed for. The brief narrative suggests perhaps five minutes. However, it was enough time to cause an unwanted result.

Luke 8:49 **While He was still speaking, someone from the [synagogue] ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more."** (ESV; capitalized)

At this exact same instant, someone from the synagogue leader's home comes and informs him that his daughter has just died. He is advised not to trouble Jesus any further.

Luke 8:50 **But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus, having heard this, reassures Jairus about his daughter. Jesus tells him not to fear, but to believe, and she will be fine.

We know that Jairus had faith in the Lord, because he came to the Lord for help. Does he have that same faith at this point? Let me suggest that, upon hearing that his young daughter had died, Jairus went numb. There was a separation between him and the people around him. He was in one place, they were in another, even though they were all around him. He was filled with memories, but not with faith.

Luke 8:51 **And when He came to the house, He allowed no one to enter with Him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child.** (ESV; capitalized)

Although Jesus moved with a large retinue of people, He only allowed the parents, Peter, James and John to enter into the house. There was going to be a bare minimum of people to observe what takes place.

Jesus appears to be very confident that God will raise this child up from the dead. However, He does not bring hundreds of people with Him to see this take place.

When it comes to signs and miracles, God always makes them appropriate for the crowd. Jesus chooses three disciples and the parents to go with Him into the house.

Luke 8:52 **And all were weeping and mourning for her, but He said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping."** (ESV; capitalized)

Certainly the two parents are weeping. Perhaps even one or two of the disciples are as well. There are people milling about, and many of them are weeping because of this child.

Jesus tells them to stop crying. A person cannot think or discern situations while they are in some emotional upheaval. Jesus wants the parents to see and appreciate what is about to take place.

Luke 8:53 **And they laughed at Him, knowing that she was dead.** (ESV; capitalized)

When Jesus said that the girl is simply asleep, that seems to break the sad tension, and several laughed at Him. This would be both nervous and derisive laughter.

If they are inside of the house, it would be the child's two parents who are laughing at Him. If they have not yet gone in, this would be some of the friends and family who are there. Obviously, no one is really believing the Lord's power at this point.

Now, how does this happen? The parents are both crying, and suddenly, they begin to laugh. The crying indicates that they are in an emotional swing. To hear Jesus say something like this was something which cause them to go from crying to laughing in an instant.

There are only five people and Jesus at the bedside of this little girl. Let me suggest that there is a point in time when their tears and laughing have been stifled.

Luke 8:54 **But taking her by the hand He called, saying, "Child, arise."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus takes the little girl's hand and He orders the child to rise up.

Luke 8:55 **And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And He directed that something should be given her to eat.** (ESV; capitalized)

The girl's spirit (life) returns to her and she immediately stands up. Jesus tells her parents to fetch some food and water.

Luke 8:56 **And her parents were amazed, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.** (ESV; capitalized)

The parents are amazed, but Jesus tells them to keep this a secret.

Jesus does not tell them, “Go from house to house and tell them what you saw. Tell them that I, Jesus, healed your little girl, bringing her to life.” But Jesus says exactly the opposite.

Remember previously in this chapter of the man who was demon-possessed. Jesus told him to go about and tell what God had done for him. Jesus tells the parents not to do this.

James, John and Peter all witness this miracle; and the parents. Jesus tells them all not to tell anyone else. Given the circumstances and the aorist verb form, Jesus is not telling the parents, “Never speak of this again to anybody.” Instead He is saying, “Focus upon your daughter right now. There is no reason to spread this news all over town.”

Let me suggest that the reason why Jesus told this family not to reveal what happened is, how many would be coming to Jesus, after this time, with the remains of loved one who has passed away? Clearly, everyone has a loved one they would want to see again; and this by itself could have become the Lord’s entire ministry (had He allowed it to).

And so ends one of the richest chapters in the Word of God.

## Lesson 260: Luke 9:1

## Introduction to Luke 9

Every gospel has its own organization and train of thought.

### Organization of the Book of Luke

1. Matthew, Peter (Mark’s source) and John all lived the events which they write about in their respective gospels (Mark write Peter’s memories). Therefore, it would be likely that they would arranged these events in chronological order. However, John writes his gospel 60 years after these events take place, so he might have an organization in mind which does not conform to a strict chronology.
2. Because Luke collected information from perhaps 5–10 believers who experienced these events firsthand, he does not know where every incident belongs in relationship to time. The reason for this is, his sources were not necessarily with Jesus throughout His entire public ministry. How many people spoke to Luke and they remembered this sermon, or that series of events; but were not able to more exactly place it chronologically into the public ministry narrative? A person like this would not have told Luke, “This thing that I am telling you about—it took place during the second year of the Lord’s public ministry, eighth month.” Who said such words to Luke? Probably no one.
3. The incidents most easily tied to a point in time would be those which occurred at the very beginning and at the very end of the Lord’s 3–4 year ministry.
4. In the book of Luke, chapter 8 seems to match up with Matthew and Mark at around the one year mark of the Lord’s public ministry (or early into the second year). We will find that much of Luke 9 will parallel Matthew and Mark right before Jesus walks toward and into Jerusalem for the final time.



## Organization of the Book of Luke

5. Matthew and Mark have several intervening chapters; Luke has no intervening chapters between Luke 8 and Luke 9. So Matthew and Mark more or less move forward chronologically; whereas Luke (1) talks about the life of Jesus prior to His public ministry (Luke 1–4a). (2) Then Luke covers the first year/year and a half of the Lord's public ministry (Luke 4b–8); and (3) then suddenly moves to the final month or so of His public ministry (Luke 8).
6. (4) Then Luke has some stuff which is untethered to time (Luke 11–18½) followed by (5) Jesus entering into Jerusalem, being crucified and raised from the dead (Luke 18b–24).
7. Allow me to postulate that Luke 11–18½ are incidents in the Lord's life which could have taken place at any time during His public ministry.
8. These were incidents and teachings that Luke collected (mostly, these chapters are all about the Lord teaching); and Luke was not sure where to put them, so he set up a middle section of Luke for the miscellaneous teachings of Jesus.
9. Luke 1–8: from before the Lord's birth through the end of the first year of His public ministry.
10. Luke 9–10: the final months before walking into Jerusalem for the last time.
11. Luke 11–18½: Miscellaneous teachings.
12. Luke 18½–24: The final week, the crucifixion, the resurrection and the ascension.
13. Based upon my reading of the book of Luke, this is how I see it laid out.

Another option is, the section of miscellaneous teachings all took place on the trek to Jerusalem. The problem with this viewpoint is, that is a lot of stuff to take place in a very short period of time; and its location in time cannot be corroborated with Matthew or Mark.

There is so much which happens in Luke 9 that a 1, 2, or 3 line summary always leaves out a very important section. This chapter is made up of 14 vignettes:

(1) At the beginning of this chapter, Jesus sends out His 12 disciples to heal and to proclaim both the Kingdom of God and the gospel. (2) Around this same time, it is apparent that Herod the Tetrarch has heard about Jesus and His doings and he has questions about Who Jesus really is (which is somewhat of the theme of this chapter). This, by the way, is the Herod who cut off John the baptizer's head.

(3) Jesus will be teaching a large number of people, and when it comes time for them to eat, His disciples will suggest that they be allowed to split off and forage for food and shelter. Jesus feeds them instead, there being about 5000 (or possibly 10,000) people there.

(4) Jesus later quizzes His disciples about who people say that He is (a topic of discussion, apparently, even in the palace of Herod). Peter recognizes that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus enjoins His disciples not to tell anyone Who He is. (5) Jesus then tells them at this time that He will be taken by men and slain, but that He would rise up on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day.

Jesus repeated this prophecy several times during the final month of two of His public ministry. (6) Jesus tells His disciples to take up their crosses and follow Him.

(7) Jesus then separates out three of His disciples (Peter, James and John) from the others and takes them to a private place. He allows Himself to be transformed before them, revealing His Shekinah Glory. He tells them to keep this vision to themselves.

(8) Later, Jesus and His disciples come across a man who is worried for his demon-possessed son. Jesus casts out the demon. (9) While everyone there is amazed by what Jesus has done, He tells His disciples again how He will be violently seized by men. His disciples do not really get it.

(10) Later, the disciples get into an argument over who of them is the greatest. Jesus uses a child to explain a principle to them. (11) John, not really getting the principle, asks about a man who was casting out demons in Jesus' name and tells Jesus that they told him to stop doing that.

(12) Luke 9:51 is quite important as it is right here when Jesus is said to set His face toward Jerusalem. Between this chapter and their entrance into Jerusalem, there will be a lot of teaching which takes place; but it is here where Jesus, in His humanity, consciously begins to move toward His prophesied fate.

(13) Jesus also sends some disciples ahead to set up logistics at the next village, which is a village of Samaritans. The village refuses Jesus, and this is apparently related to His going towards Jerusalem (where they are not welcome). The disciples react quite badly to this, suggesting that fire be brought down upon that city. Jesus tells them to back off.

(14) At the end of this chapter, there are several men who propose to follow Jesus, but they have some things to take care of first.

At this point, we will begin the first section:

This first section is descriptive and not prescriptive. That is, Luke is simply telling us what happened. This does not mean that you should try to copy what you read here.

Jesus is going to send His disciples out on a trial run, in preparation for their future ministries. When I was taking courses to become a teacher, I first did practice teaching under the auspices of two veteran teachers (in retrospect, these teachers did not have a great deal of experience, but they had more than I did). One might see this as an internship, but with real power and authority vested in the disciples.

Interestingly enough, Jesus will send out 70 (or 72) disciples at the beginning of Luke 10, disciples who will appear to prepare the way for Him in towns and villages that He will visit. Logically, that would take place earlier in His ministry than this sending out. The organization of Luke is described in the **Introduction to Luke** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)), in the [introduction](#) to this chapter, the preceding [doctrine](#), and in **Luke 10** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#))

(WPD). Understanding the way the book of Luke is organized will help straighten this out for you.

Almost all of Luke 9 is in chronological order, and this all takes place right before Jesus walks the final miles into Jerusalem prior to His crucifixion. We know this because there are 8 or 9 incidents which all line up in the same order with Matthew and Mark. Then, in those two books, the final ascent into Jerusalem is what follows these incidents (which lines up with the middle of Luke 18 going forward).

Matthew, Mark and Luke 9 all match up—same incidents in the same order. After these incidents in Matthew and Mark, the next event is walking the ascent into Jerusalem (Jerusalem is on a mountain). But next in Luke is chapters 10–18½; and in the middle of Luke 18, Jesus begins His ascent into Jerusalem.

Further study will suggest that Luke 10 follows Luke 9 chronologically. However, what happens at the beginning of Luke 11 and going through to mid-Luke 18 is, Luke appears to throw chronology out the window. The reason for this is, Luke was not an original eyewitness of any of the events which he writes about, so these teachings of Jesus do not necessarily fit into a chronological narrative. These were things which he heard from eyewitnesses, was unable to place them chronologically, so he simply put them altogether for the second major section of Luke (which will begin with Luke 11:1).

Luke 9:1a **And He called the twelve together...**

Jesus had 12 particular men who were His chief disciples, who were known as *the twelve*. These were the men that Jesus was training to actually further His ministry. Most of the time when we hear the word *disciples*, we think of these twelve, but that is a term which describes a much larger group of followers.

The twelve would first proclaim the kingdom; and later, they would proclaim Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. The Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 is not too far off in the future from the end of Luke 9; at that point, we are only 4–6 months out from Pentecost. It may take us in this study a long time to get there, from this point forward, the famous Acts 2 Pentecost is less than half a year in the future.

Luke 9:1b **...and gave them power and authority over all demons,...**

At this period of time, there was a great deal of demon activity on the earth. There were many demon possessions and many demon-induced illnesses. God allows stepped up demonic power on earth to reveal His greater power, even in the hands of such men as the disciples (who were not a very impressive lot, spiritually speaking). The disciples would be given authority over these demons.

Luke 9:1c **...and to cure diseases,...**

The disciples were also given the ability to heal diseases—those which were caused for a myriad of reasons. No matter what the root cause of the disease, the disciples had the power to heal that disease.

Jesus, when He healed a disease, it was as if that disease never existed (a lame man could stand up and run around—there was no rehabilitation period needed). We would assume that His Apostles had the same power.

The purpose of these healings was not to alleviate suffering (not principally, anyway), but to reveal the power of God through Jesus and through His disciples. It was a recognition of this power which brought many to a saving faith in Jesus.

Luke 9:1 **And He called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus was about to send His disciples out on a trial run. He gave them great power and authority. Any one of them could walk through a hospital and cure every patient there instantly (obviously, there were no hospitals in that era as there are today).

This ability to heal and to cast out demons was the credit card of the disciples. These things were not an end in themselves. That is, Jesus instructions are not, “Get out there and cure as many sick people as you can find!” Healing and casting out demons was a means to an end.

## **Lesson 261: Luke 9:2–3**

## **Jesus Sends His Disciples Out**

What we know so far is there is something odd about the chronology of Luke 8–9. We will begin to nail down exactly what is off in Luke 9 partway through the chapter. That is when it will become clear.

Luke 9:1 **And He called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus speaks to the twelve disciples and tells them that they now have power and authority over demons and that they will be able to cure diseases. This means that the disciples would begin to use those powers.

Luke 9:2a **...and He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God...** (ESV; capitalized)

The verb *to send out* is the verb upon which the word *apostles* is built. They were the Lord’s *sent-out ones*.

At this point in the Lord’s ministry, Jesus is offering to Israel the Kingdom of God to those who would hear Him; and He is offering Himself as their King. He is the King of Kings and

Lord of Lords; and Israel could choose to accept or to reject Him. The free will of man is fundamental to the Christian faith.

His disciples are His representatives; His ambassadors. Jesus is sending them out to act without Him being there. This is a trial run, a practice run.

Luke 9:2b **...and to heal.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus revealed His power through healings and other amazing things that He did. He gave this authority to His disciples as well. The key was to present the message of the Kingdom.

Jesus was sending out his closest disciples—the twelve—on a trial mission. This would be their lives at some point in the future.

Luke 9:2 **...and He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.** (ESV; capitalized)

I went to college and became a teacher. Part of my training involved me doing practice teachings, taking over two classes of two different teachers. Those teachers watched me, at first, and then let me take it from there (for the most part). I learned some invaluable lessons by taking over these classes, and from having the input and guidance of my two master teachers. Even though I was at an age where I knew nearly everything about what I was going to do in the classroom, they nevertheless guided and sometimes talked me down from some ideas that I had.

What is happening here is, Jesus is sending out His disciples for their practice teaching as well. There would be a time when Jesus would no longer be with His disciples. So this was their practicum; this was their chance as interns to actually do something that mattered.

**Luke 9:2 (Legacy Standard Bible)** (a graphic); from [Pinterest](#); accessed October 12, 2023.



Luke 9:1–2 **And He called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.** (ESV; capitalized)



The idea was that, Jesus presented Himself as having the power of God. Strictly speaking, Jesus, from His humanity, effected no cure or exorcism. When He chose for a man to be cured, God the Father or God the Holy Spirit would cure that person, completely and wholly. Jesus essentially pointed out where God was going to act (yes, I know that Jesus is God, but Jesus did not use his abilities as God to effect these cures).

Any time that great changes took place in the plan of God, these changes would be preceded by great signs and wonders. Moses, for example, when he returned to Egypt to free his people. Moses was going to establish a new nation, suddenly, from a massive collection of Hebrew slaves. God allowed a great many signs to take place at the hand of Moses, as this was such a big deal.

Luke 9:3a **And He said to them,...** (ESV; capitalized)

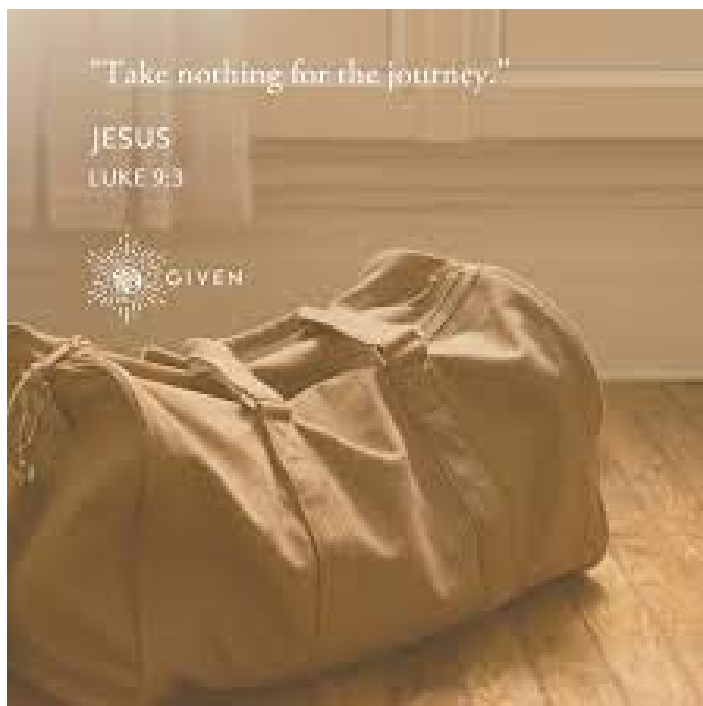
Jesus is sending His disciples out on a practice missionary/teaching tour. What they are able to teach is, for the most part, limited. In vv. 3–5 verses, Jesus will give the twelve men their marching orders.

Luke 9:3b **..."Take nothing for your journey,..."** (ESV; capitalized)

Unlike previous journeys, these men are not to carry anything with them. They are to take no additional provisions as they would normally take for a trip.

I understand Jesus' words to be heading His disciples off at the pass. It is as if one of them would stand up and say, "Well, surely, we need to take food along for this journey." And Jesus tells them, "No food." Except that Jesus does all of this preemptively.

Everything that we would consider normal to take along for a trip, Jesus ixnays.



What is the reason for this? The disciples here are beginning to be trained as to what they will do in the future. Now, packing and preparing for a trip can take a great deal of time in itself. Jesus is not looking to waste any time on that, as His time on earth for what remains as His earthly ministry is extremely short.

As an aside, the shortness of the Lord's ministry is one of the great oddities of Jesus, if viewed from a human perspective. The brevity of his public ministry is under-



appreciated by believers and unbelievers alike.

Unbelievers who know something about religious movements possibly know that, a well-known religious leader spends much of his life—30 years, perhaps even 50 years—spreading his message. Jesus was very different. From a human viewpoint approach, we should not even know Who Jesus was. A three-year public ministry is nothing. Yet, the Lord changes everything in these scant three years.

**Take nothing for the journey (Luke 9:3b)** (a graphic); from [Facebook](#); accessed October 12, 2023.

Luke 9:3c ...no staff, nor bag,... (ESV; capitalized)

Shepherds in particular carried their staffs with them everywhere. It would be second-nature for me to put my wallet in my pocket, even if I am driving only two miles away. Shepherds will carry their staffs in the same way.

**Application:** We need to recognize that this is a particular mission for a particular time. God is not requiring that we attempt to imitate what Jesus tells His disciples to do here. A missionary is not supposed to go out into another land with nothing in his hand.

Back when Moses and Aaron spoke before Pharaoh, God told Moses to be certain to take his staff along, as it would be used for the signs and miracles that God would do at Moses' hand (or at Aaron's). So, in one case, they carry a staff; in this situation, they do not.

All of this has all been preordained from eternity past. The disciples are going to carry the message of the kingdom to the people, and some will receive them and some will not. Those who will receive them will provide them with the necessary provisions. God is teaching these men how to depend upon Him for sustenance. Sometimes they will be abased and sometimes they will abound, but the twelve disciples will not live normal lives.

Again, this does not mean that, every time we go to the store, we take nothing with us. A few years back, I went to the store to pick up something for my mother (when I was visiting her). She gave me a \$10 bill to buy it; and, stupidly, I just left my wallet at home, as the trip was just a few miles away. Both of us thought that the necessary item would cost around \$5. It cost \$10.23, so I had to drive all the way back home to get my wallet. She did not even have 23¢ in change laying around in her car. Not taking my wallet was simply my lack of foresight. I was not attempting to obey Jesus' mandate here to His disciples.

Luke 9:3d ...nor bread, nor money;... (ESV; capitalized)

What makes sense to me is, if you are going on a trip, you pack a lunch and you take a few hundred dollar bills along to handle any incidentals. However, for this particular assignment, Jesus said, "No. You are just going."

Jesus was preparing His disciples for the future, as they would have to make many decisions based upon the message with which Jesus sent them out. There would be numerous times when the disciples, not too far off in the future, would get into dangerous scrapes and have to suddenly move out (we will study some of those episodes in the book of Acts). There would not be time for them to pack their stuff and go. Sometimes, the thing they needed to do was to move out without a lot of detailed planning.

There are times in human history where this is a real thing as well. That is, suddenly disaster strikes and human viewpoint tells you, "I need to get X, Y and Z, and then move out." But the circumstances override all of this, telling you to move out immediately, leaving all behind. I am not saying that this is something that will take place in your life; but it does happen to some believers.

Luke 9:3e ...and do not have two tunics. (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus even instructs His disciples to not even bring with them a change of clothing. It is God's plan for them to go out there and to see that everything would be provided for them.

Luke 9:3 And he said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples needed to trust God's plan for their lives more than what would be normal behavior. Normal behavior for such a trip is to pack carefully. But not in this instance.

**Application:** All of this is descriptive not prescriptive. Theoretically speaking, we can come up with scenarios in which you would need to move out without taking anything with you (death, of course, is one of those scenarios). But, for the most part, in human existence, we plan out and we think ahead. The lesson here is *not*, "Never plan ahead." It is, "There are some times when you cannot plan ahead."

When the disciples are without Jesus, they are going to face the persecution of religion and the attacks of Satan. Some things will be planned out (like Paul's<sup>58</sup> missionary tours) but some events will require them to adapt and think on their feet (example Paul's escapes from dangerous circumstances).

**Application:** There are so many instances where people take *trust God* to ridiculous levels. You have lost a job, so trusting God, you go and sit on a park bench in order to wait for God to drop a job into your lap. That is not really trusting God. You break your arm, but, instead of going to the doctor's, you trust God for your arm. Using normal common sense is not a repudiation of God or of faith in Him. After all, God did give us common sense. There are potentially times when you have nothing to depend upon except for faith in God—where you have no choice and no other resources to go to. Even then, there may be things in your environment which you can use.

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<sup>58</sup> Paul will become an Apostle in the future.

In the test that Jesus is proposing, let's say hungry disciples are walking by a fig tree or by a field where a portion of the wheat has not been harvest as per the Mosaic Law. Does trusting God mean that you do not eat a few of those figs or take some of that grain while you are hungry? Or if someone who loves God invites you into their home for a meal and a bed, do you say, "No thanks, I am trusting God for this next meal"? So, you see that what Jesus is requiring here does not mean that the disciples are to go to ridiculous lengths.

## Lesson 262: Luke 9:4–6

## Jesus Sends His Disciples Out (part II)

Luke 9:1–2 **And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.**

Jesus is giving His disciples instructions for a trial run of evangelizing on their own. There are some additional instructions.

Luke 9:3 **And he said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics.**

This trial run was going to rely entirely upon God, without any normal preparation.

Luke 9:4a **And whatever house you enter,...** (ESV; capitalized)

When the disciples arrive at a city, they would proclaim the kingdom of God; they would proclaim the King (Who is Jesus). They expected at some point that someone would come up to them and say, "Do you need a place to stay? Are you all hungry?" They were to enter into that house and to stay there. They are to eat whatever is being served for dinner.

The disciples had to get used to the idea that they were in the plan of God and that God's plan for their lives had taken care of everything. As the Lord's disciples, they led very unusual lives and that fact would continue.

**Application:** Although we are also in the plan of God and although God has taken care of everything that we face, this does not mean we should not plan ahead. You don't hop in your car to go to the store without having money in your pocket to buy the stuff you need. Or do not sit at home, praying that God will show up on your doorstep bringing you the stuff that you need. When making application from Scripture, do not be insane.

**Application:** There is nothing wrong with a believer saving for the future or having a variety of backup plans in the future just in case. If you are in an unstable country, there is nothing unchristian about making emergency plans and stocking provisions for the future, whether it be food, water, guns, medical supplies, or negotiable currency. And if you are in a stable country, there is nothing wrong with investing in stocks and bonds or

having some sort of a financial portfolio (if you have the wherewithal to do that). Christians should not act as their brains have been removed.

**Application:** R. B. Thieme, Jr. suggested, in a variety of ways, that believers needed to learn under his ministry (or under another pastor-teacher) before they went out into the world *to do great things for God*. The believer needs to have a full knowledge of the Christian life before producing. Let's put this another way. If you have believed in Jesus Christ and you read the first 9 chapters of Luke, do you think you are ready to go out and be a missionary? Are you ready to go out into the world with nothing in your hand? You would not get to the time for your first meal before you realized, "I have made a huge mistake."

Jesus had a very short public ministry. He did not have time to develop a full-on missionary program, as a local church might do. These practice runs with His disciples was His missionary program. A missionary program in the Church Age would be organized much differently.

**Application:** Jesus will send His disciples out again, future from this experience. However, this next time, they will carry with them the necessary stuff for a trip. We should not ignore the circumstances of both trips. We do not try to imitate exactly what we read in this chapter while ignoring the Lord's instructions in the other. We are studying what has taken place (and has taken place in another dispensation). The Christian life is not reading about these various incidents from the Bible and then copying what we see.

**Application:** There are times when you plan for disaster (or simply for life) and you have things on hand for that disaster. There is also the chance that, you may have to abandon all of the planning that you have done. Having Bible doctrine in the soul helps you to face uncertain and difficult conditions and make the right decision.

Luke 9:4b ...*stay there, and from there depart*. (ESV; capitalized)

When it is time for them to leave that city and move on to another city, they will leave that house where they are first invited. Until then, they are to depend upon the graciousness of whatever host offered up his home to them. They are not to shop around for better accommodations.

In this general era, some philosophers and religious types would move from house to house in order to take up another offering. The disciples were not to be doing this at all. They are not being commanded to take up an offering.

It was not the aim of the disciples to make this evangelistic exercise into a money-making venture. They were there to be witness of Jesus and His kingdom; and then move on. When they found positive volition, they were to stick with it. God would provide the hearers. Wherever the disciples stopped for a night or more, God would bring the people to them to hear them and to be healed by them.

**Illustration:** I have seen this firsthand. The first time that Gary Horton (he spoke to young people about Jesus in his ministry) spoke at the high school where I taught, he did not have the auditorium, but a double classroom setting. That double classroom acted as a magnet around this high school of 2000+ students. That room was filled to overflowing by students who were pulled into that room. There was no advertising, there were no posters. Once Gary spoke to a double class the first period, kids at that school did everything possible to hear him after that.

Luke 9:4 **And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart.** (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples are being sent out by the Lord on an evangelistic mission. They are not to go into one house, find a better offer, and go into that house instead. Or, they are not to accept the provisions of one house, but spend some of the day trying to find better accommodations.

Luke 9:5a **And wherever they do not receive you,...** (ESV; capitalized)

It will become apparent that some cities and towns will not receive them. In the previous chapter, Jesus freed a man of all of his demons (literally, not figuratively speaking), and everyone in that town knew what had happened. There were witnesses to the event. But, because a herd of pigs were destroyed in the process, the people came to Jesus and asked Him to leave. Some disciples would come to a city and they would get this same sort of reception.

Jesus is telling them, “Just like we recently experienced, you will not be welcomed everywhere that you go.”

You cannot force people to be positive toward the Word of God. People must choose for or against God. The evangelist may be able to get the attention of a large crowd; but he cannot turn negative volition into positive volition.

Luke 9:5b **...when you leave that town...** (ESV; capitalized)

If that is the case—if the city let's them know that they are not welcome—then they are to walk out of that city.

The disciples were looking for a positive response. If they were asked to leave by a large group of people or by the town leaders, then they were to leave.

Now, this tells us about God's grace and how far He will go. If there is negative volition, then God *does not* owe the gospel to that person (or that city). Now, obviously, some people on negative signals will hear the gospel message and they will reject it. But, God knows the hearts of man and He is not obligated to give the gospel to anyone who will reject it.

Luke 9:5c ...shake off the dust from your feet... (ESV; capitalized)

Upon exiting the city, the disciples are to shake the dust from their feet. The Jewish people were a very demonstrative people. You may recall in the previous chapter, when the little girl had died—the people there were beating their breasts as they mourned. You may be similarly demonstrative and you may be rather stoic; or somewhere in between. Being demonstrative does not make you more or less spiritual.

There were two possible messages from this. Shaking the dust from one's sandals meant, there was nothing from that city that they wanted to take with them. The other understanding would be, the city was polluted and the disciples did not want to carry any of that pollution (negative volition) with them.

The townspeople would see the disciples exiting their city, stopping at the city gates, and shaking the dust off from their feet. "You are now in God's rearview mirror," is the message the townsfolk would get from this.

Luke 9:5d ...as a testimony against them." (ESV; capitalized)

This shaking the dust off of their feet is a testimony against the people of that city. It is witness to all that there is no positive volition here. It is telling the people of that city that you will not teach there because they are negative.

Luke 9:5 And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them." (ESV; capitalized)

Every region can respond either with interest or with disinterest. The disciples need to be able to recognize what they are facing and make decisions based upon that. Sometimes they are to stay and proclaim the Kingdom of God; other times, they are to walk to the edge of the city, shake the dust off their sandals and move on.

Jesus' instructions to the disciples for this missionary exercise were as following:

Luke 9:3–5 And he said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them." (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples needed to learn to be flexible and to respond to the circumstances which they encounter on the ground. There are times when they will have very few supplies and can only depend upon the kindness of strangers (fellow workers, if you will). Also there will be times to exit a city after not being there for very long.

The believer needs to know when to be flexible and when not to be flexible. As R. B. Thieme, Jr. often said, we need to be inflexible in the essentials (the essentials being the

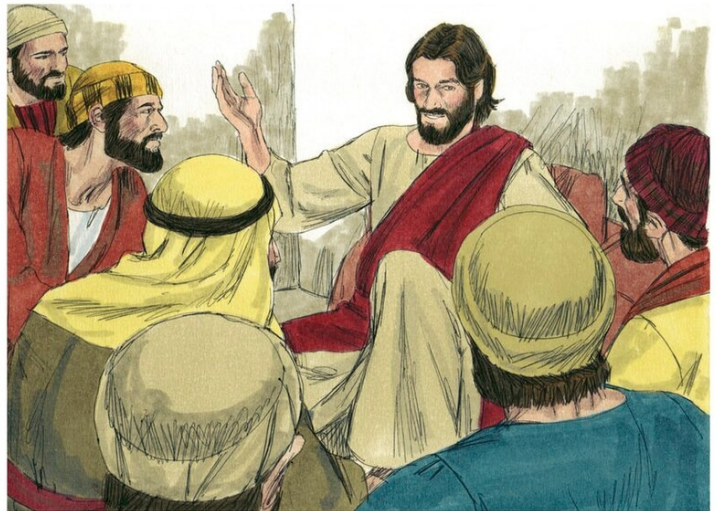


truth of Bible doctrine); and flexible in the nonessentials (which is with regards to the details of life).

And just in case there is any confusion about this, missionaries and evangelists should not be taking up offerings from the people that they are evangelizing. We do not charge for the gospel and we do not charge for the teaching and distribution of Bible doctrine.

**Jesus giving instructions to His disciples (Jim Padgett)** (a graphic); from [Wikimedia](#); accessed October 12, 2023.

Luke 9:6a **And they departed and went through the villages,...** (ESV; capitalized)



It is not clear if the Lord assigned them specific villages, or whether He pointed them in various directions. In this particular narrative, we do not have much by way of specifics beyond the few sentences found here. Did they travel in teams, did they go two-by-two, did Jesus point them towards the four compass points and send them out that way? All we know is, they went through the villages. Functioning as teams seems logical to me. In the book of Acts, the Apostles began together (at Pentecost), but they appear to have gone their separate ways. Peter and Paul are portrayed in Acts as assembling a team. However, we do not know exactly how the other ten disciples functioned, whether in teams or by assembling a team.

Luke 9:6b **...preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.** (ESV; capitalized)

The gospel (or good news) is this: the Messiah (Jesus) is here; in fact, the Messiah walks among us. A person who believed that Jesus is the Messiah or that Jesus is their Savior is saved.

**Application:** When a person hears the gospel, they only hear a small amount about Who Jesus is. After a person believes in Jesus and is saved; they are not ready to explain basic Christology to anyone else yet. Learning exactly Who Jesus is comes later in the Christian life (ideally speaking).

The disciples were to proclaim the good news, and to Israel, the good news is that, Messiah has come, and the kingdom of God is being offered to them all.

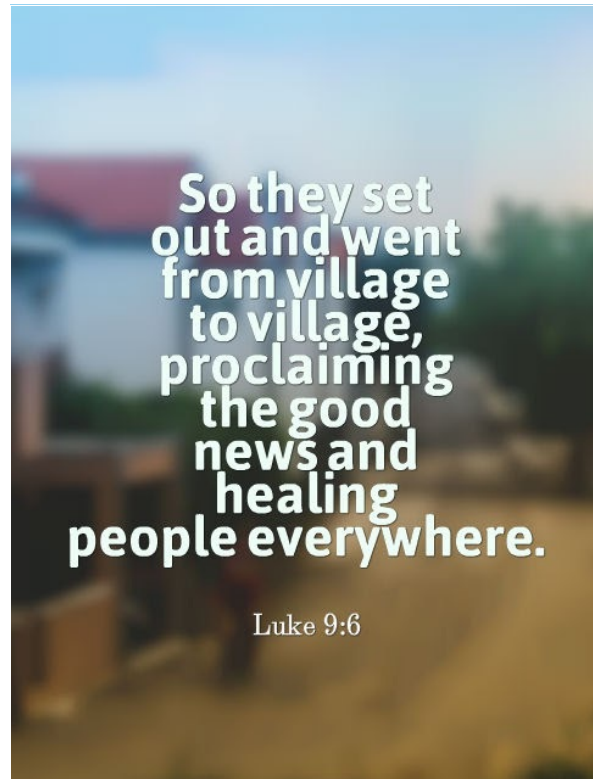
The disciples also healed. It says that they healed *everywhere* and not *everyone*. Healings were the credit card of a disciple. People saw a miraculous healing and they

would be willing to listen to the message of that disciple (as he has obviously come from God).

Why don't evangelists and missionaries have the power to heal today? Would that not bring in the large crowds? The end result would be, many people would come to be healed, but they may not be interested in the message. Secondly, today missionaries and evangelists have the Word of God; and their authority is in the Word, and not in miracles. One lesson which we should take from this is, when evangelizing today, use a great many Scriptures. The power of God is in His Word. "My word, which comes from My mouth, is like the rain and snow. It will not come back to Me without results. It will accomplish whatever I want and achieve whatever I send it to do." (Isaiah 55:11; God's Word™; capitalized)

Luke 9:6 And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples did what Jesus told them to do. They went through the villages (from wherever they happened to be), and they proclaimed the good news of Jesus Christ to all who would listen. They used healing (or the casting out of demons) as a way to gain a hearing.



**Luke 9:6 (NIV)** (a graphic); from [Bible Quotes](#); accessed October 12, 2023.

## Lessons 263–264: Luke 9:7

## Historical Background for Herod the Tetrarch

At this point in the narrative, Luke suddenly shifts gears and speaks of events taking place elsewhere, but at roughly the same time. I will supplement that information.

Luke 9:7a Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening,... (ESV; capitalized)

Herod the tetrarch was also known as Herod Antipas.

Herod was the ruler over Galilee and Perea. Galilee is where Jesus' ministry primarily took place. Herod certainly heard a great many stories about Jesus and what Jesus had been doing.

Thayer gives us some information on Herod the Tetrarch (also known as, Herod Antipas): *Herod, also known as “Antipas” or Herod Antipas, was the son of Herod the Great and Malthace, a Samaritan woman. After the death of his father he was appointed tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea by the Romans. His first wife was the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia; but he subsequently repudiated her and took to himself Herodias, the wife of his brother Herod Philip. As a result, Aretas, his father-in-law, made war against him and conquered him.*

*Herod Antipas had thrown John the Baptist into prison because John had rebuked him for this unlawful union with Herodias. Later, at the instigation of Herodias, he ordered John to be beheaded. Further induced by her, too, Antipas went to Rome to obtain from the emperor the title of king. But in consequence of the accusations brought against him by Herod Agrippa I, Caligula banished him (A.D. 39) to Lugdunum in Gaul, where he seems to have died. He was light minded, sensual and vicious.*<sup>59</sup>

Incidentally, this war between Aretas and Herod Antipas took place in the decade following the crucifixion. John had warned Antipas about his adultery; and apparently, staying married to Phasaelis of Nabataea (the daughter of Aretas) would have been the smart thing to do.

*Conforming to Jesus* (the [webpage](#) from which the following was taken) gives us a very good background of what is taking place, politically, during Jesus' public ministry. This gives us an excellent background as to what has taken place already; what is going to take place; and we get a better idea for the geographically-limited public ministry of our Lord.

I have added some additional remarks in brackets.

### **Historical and Political Background (from Conforming to Jesus)**

Israel at the time of Jesus was under Roman rule [this would be Galilee, Samaria and Judæa].

The Roman occupation of Israel, when the army of the Roman Republic conquered the Hasmonean Kingdom in 63 B.C., was the last in a long line of invasions [of Israel] starting with the Assyrians and the Babylonians, then the Persians and the Greeks with Alexander the Great.

In 63 B.C., Pompey the Great captured Jerusalem and although the ruling dynasty, the Jewish Hasmonean Kings, continued to rule, they became 'puppet kings' who relied on Rome for their power and the Hasmonean Kingdom was broken up and set up as a Roman client state.

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<sup>59</sup> Thayer's Greek English Lexicon of the Old Testament (©1889), edited version for e-sword, Strong's #2264. This is not an exact quote.

## Historical and Political Background (from Conforming to Jesus)

In 37 B.C., Herod the Great forced out the last Hasmonean rulers and married a Hasmonean princess, Mariamne, to legitimize his reign by marrying into a Jewish noble family. He was appointed "King of the Jews" by the Roman Senate while the newly formed Herodian Kingdom of Judea continued to be a client state of the Roman Republic.

So, by the time of Jesus' birth, the Romans had established in Israel a system of government consisting of Roman overseers and local leaders who held and exercised power on behalf of Rome [there were also roads built, the Temple was improved and additional measures which provided safety to the public were enacted].

At the time of the birth of Jesus, the family of Herod the Great had grown to prominence and, although Jewish by religion and tradition, he and his family were Edomites [descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob; Jacob was a Jew and Esau was not] and were hated by the people of Israel for their tyrannical rule and for not being Israelites by birth.

In an attempt to be accepted by the people as their ruler, King Herod ventured into massive building projects throughout the Kingdom of Judea, including his expansion of the Second Temple in Jerusalem originally built over 500 years before, [now] called Herod's Temple.

Herod also built impressive military marvels, such as the stronghold at Masada and the Antonia Fortress, to guard the Temple Mount. He also constructed infrastructures, such as the great port of Caesarea Maritima, a Roman-style trading port, which became a vibrant port of sea commerce.

In the Gospel of Matthew, King Herod was the ruler of Judea who met with the wise men from the East and who ordered the massacre of all male children from two years old and under at the time of the birth of Jesus [he was apparently concerned that his dynasty might be usurped by a king born in Judæa].

Matthew 2:1-3 - "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying: 'Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.' When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him."

[Although Herod was near the end of his life, he had planned to set up his sons as rulers over the kingdom that he reigned over.]

Matthew 2:16 - "Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time



## Historical and Political Background (from Conforming to Jesus)

which he had determined from the wise men."

[According to Old Testament prophecies, this King was to be born in Bethlehem. Herod believed these prophecies to be coming to pass, based upon his interaction with the wise men.]

When Herod the Great died in 4 B.C., the kingdom was divided among his sons and his sister into the Herodian Tetrarchy. In his will, Herod asked that the Kingdom of Judaea be divided mainly between his three sons: Herod Archelaus was given Judea, Idumea and Samaria, Herod Philip II was given Gaulanitis (= the Golan Heights), Batanea (= southern Syria), Trachonitis and Auranitis (= Hauran) and Herod Antipas was given Perea and Galilee. [See map.]

**Israel at the Time of Jesus** (a map); from [Conforming to Jesus](#); accessed February 1, 2023.

A small part of the kingdom, a district that included the cities of Jamnia, Jabneh, Ashdod, and Phasaelis, was given to his sister Salome I, while the ten cities, a.k.a. the Decapolis, were to become autonomous and directly administered by Rome.

His sons were also tyrannical rulers. Herod Antipas, who ruled over Perea and Galilee, was responsible for the beheading of John the Baptist. Herod Archelaus, who ruled over Judea, Idumea and Samaria, was so brutal in his exercise of power in Jerusalem, that Rome judged him as an incompetent ruler.

Matthew 2:19-22 - "Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying: 'Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead.' Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region



## Historical and Political Background (from Conforming to Jesus)

of Galilee."

In 6 A.D. the Roman Emperor Augustus deposed [Herod] Archelaus and annexed his territory, turning Judea, Idumaea, and Samaria from a client kingdom into a Roman province called Judaea. After the death of Salome I in 10 A.D., her territory was also incorporated into the new imperial province. Augustus had no choice but to place this new territory in the hands of a Roman governor.

Consequently, he sent a prefect (later called a procurator) to govern this newly acquired province. He was supported by a small Roman army of approximately 3,000 men, with soldiers from nearby Gentile cities, especially Caesarea and Sebaste and with officers from Italy.

During Jesus' public preaching, the Roman prefect was Pontius Pilate (Latin full name: Marcus Pontius Pilatus), he was the fifth procurator of the Roman province of Judaea, serving under Emperor Tiberius from 26 to 36 A.D. He was an "equestrian" (= knight) of the Samnite clan of the Pontii (hence his name Pontius).

[Emperor Augustus adopted a son, who became Tiberius Julius Caesar Augustus (Tiberius Cæsar for short). He was the Roman emperor A.D. 14–37.]

Luke 3:1-2 - "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod (= Herod Antipas) being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip (= Herod Philip II) tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness."

(As attested in the above passage of Luke 3, the sons of Herod took their father's name, just as the successors of Julius Caesar were commonly called Cæsar.)

Although formally in charge of Judaea, Samaria, and Idumaea, the Roman governor / prefect / procurator did not rule his territory directly. Instead, he relied on local leaders. Jerusalem was the capital and the center of the Jewish world, but the governor and his small army lived in the Gentile city of Caesarea Maritima.

They came to Jerusalem only to ensure peace and quench potential uprisings during the annual Jewish Festivals of Passover (Pesach), Pentecost / Feast of Weeks (Shavuot), and Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot), when large crowds would gather in the city.

Normally Jerusalem was governed by the high priest in collaboration with a local council. They were the mediators between the Roman procurator and the local people, which was hostile toward Gentiles and longed to be free of foreign domination and Roman rule [as a result, the Jews had a very skewed idea as to who the Messiah would be].



## Historical and Political Background (from Conforming to Jesus)

The political responsibility of the high priest was to maintain order and to ensure that taxes were paid. Caiaphas was high priest in Israel in the days of Jesus, he held that position between 18 A.D and 36 A.D.

Pontius Pilate was the Roman official who presided over the trial of Jesus, initially recognizing His innocence and exonerating Him, but later giving in to the will of the crowd, the chief priests and the local rulers and ultimately sentencing Him to death.

Luke 23:13-19 - "Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, said to them: 'You have brought this Man to me, as One Who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; no, neither did Herod, for he sent Him back to us; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. I will therefore chastise Him and release Him' (for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast). And they all cried out at once, saying: 'Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas' who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder."

Luke 23:20-25 - "Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. But they shouted, saying: 'Crucify Him, crucify Him!' Then he said to them the third time: 'Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go.' But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will."

The Roman province of Judaea was renamed Syria-Palaestina in the early 2nd century A.D.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, but grew up in Nazareth, a small town within the province of Galilee, close to the larger metropolitan centers of Tiberias and Sepphoris.

After the death of Herod the Great, his son Herod Antipas was the ruler of Galilee during Jesus' time, while Pontius Pilate governed the province of Judæa.

The history of Israel at the time of Jesus Christ and the history of Rome are heavily intertwined and intersected at a pivotal moment, the very moment that changed the course of world history.

You may recall that we talked a great deal about Herod the Great at the beginning of our study of the Biography of Jesus by Luke. Although much of what Herod left a clear stamp on the times that we are studying, he was out of the picture by the time Jesus was 2 or 3 years old.

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From [https://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/map\\_of\\_israel\\_at\\_the\\_time\\_of\\_jesus.htm](https://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/map_of_israel_at_the_time_of_jesus.htm)

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I found the information on this page to be excellent, and therefore include it here (I may later move it to the introduction to the book of Luke). Unfortunately, this page has a huge amount of advertising on it, which covers up much of the good information which is found here.

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It looks like they have several similar pages, and I may go back and check those out, to see where they might fit in with the studies that I have done.

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This is a nice simple breakdown of the key events as related to Herod's the Great and his descendants. Additional bracketed comments are added by me.

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### **The Herod Timeline (from Bible Study.org)**

20 B.C.

Herod the Great, desirous of gaining the favor of the Jews, begins work to restore and expand Jerusalem's temple, which had laid unfinished for about five hundred years. [This became known as Herod's Temple. Its reconstruction continued until 10 B.C., according to [Wikipedia](#); Bible Study.org will disagree with this date.]

10 B.C.

Agrippa I (known as Herod Agrippa in the New Testament) is born.

c. 4 B.C.

Herod the Great dies in Jericho and is buried in Herodium, Judea. Roman Emperor Augustus, after his death, divides his kingdom among some of his sons.

Herod Archelaus is made Ethnarch (a title of rule that is less than a king) of Samaria, Idumea (Edom) and a large part of Palestine. He rules from 4 B.C. to 6 A.D. when the Judea province is formed and put under direct Roman rule. Archelaus lives until c. 18 A.D.

Herod Antipas is made tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. He rules from 4 B.C. to 39 A.D. He not only arrested and beheaded John the Baptist but also played a part in the crucifixion of Jesus.

Philip the Tetrarch (often referred to as Herod Philip II) is given the northeast part of his father's kingdom, which includes Batanea, Auranitis and Trachonitis. He rules from 4 B.C. to 34 A.D.

27 / 28 A.D.

Agrippa II, son of Agrippa I and great-grandson to Herod the Great, is born.

39 A.D.

After Antipas' death in Gaul, Agrippa I is made ruler over Galilee and Perea as Roman tetrarch [he will be mentioned in the book of Acts].

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## The Herod Timeline (from Bible Study.org)

44 A.D.

Agrippa I beheads the apostle James and has Peter arrested. Soon after this event, God sends the angel of the Lord to kill him (Acts 12).

48 A.D.

Herod of Chalcis, brother of Agrippa I, dies. He was tetrarch of Chalcis (a kingdom north of Judea) for an unknown period. In his place, Herod Agrippa II is made tetrarch of Chalcis. Although forced to give up Chalcis in 53 A.D. he is made king of Batanea, Trachonitis and other areas by Emperor Claudius.

65 A.D.

Work on Jerusalem's second temple is finally completed. [Perhaps the difference in dates is related to Herod the Great himself. Herod finishes his work in 10 B.C., but some additional work continues on the Temple until A.D. 64 or 65. [Today's Catholic](#) writes: *The building was begun in 19 B.C. and finished in 10 years, but the work of decoration was not completely finished until A.D. 64.* See also the [Jewish Encyclopedia](#).]

70 A.D.

Roman legions, under the command of military commander Titus (later Emperor Titus), destroy Jerusalem and set fire to its temple [the Roman army will kill about a million Jews in this attack].

c. 92 A.D.

Herod Agrippa II dies. He is the last of the Herodian dynasty to rule.

From <https://www.biblestudy.org/maps/palestine-under-the-herods.html> accessed October 13, 2023.

It is remarkable to me how this great family of the Herods essentially seems to disappear from history; and, at the same time, the people of Abraham (a man whose name we should not even know) continue to this day.

**Herod the Great's Kingdom** (a map); from [Bible Study.org](#); accessed October 13, 2023.

Luke 9:7a **Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening,...** (ESV; capitalized)



This is one of Herod the Great's sons (Herod Antipas) and he is ruling over all Galilee (where is where much of Jesus' ministry was taking place); and Perea.

Herod Antipas knows what is happening as the ruler over this entire region. There are a number of shortcomings among Herod and his sons and grandsons; but most of them appeared to take their ruling authority seriously.

In this study, you have no doubt noticed a sudden change has taken place in the narration. Nearly everything we have studied has been Jesus and His disciples as they progress in His ministry. Suddenly, we find ourselves in Herod's palace and King Herod (Herod Antipas) has some questions:

*Who is this Jesus?*

The map here is quite helpful. The orangish-brownish sections are ruled by

Herod Antipas. Jesus, at this moment in time, is in the yellowish section, having traveled from Galilee. He will go along the boarder of Samaria and Perea and come into Jerusalem from the northeast (which is in Judæa).

Politics is one thing; but what is happening on the ground is something else entirely. For instance, take note of the yellowish section, ruled over by Herod Achelaus. You could not have picked three more disparate regions to cobble together. The Samaritans dislike the Judæans so much, some of them will not even listen to Jesus simply because He is eventually going to Judæa (Luke 9:51–53).

Idumæa was previous Edom, the territory of Esau (Jacob's twin brother). Even though Jacob and Esau appear to have reconciled late in life as brothers, their peoples—the Israelites and the Edomites—became further and further at odds with one another.

As an aside, this helps us to better understand God's words, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." First of all, God does not love and hate as man does. These are terms which help explain God's motivation toward these two peoples. However, what is key is, God does not simply look at the man Jacob and the man Esau when making these statements. One could easily make the argument that Esau was a better person than Jacob. Furthermore, both men appear to have believed in the Revealed God. So, what is the difference? God sees Jacob and Jacob's line. God sees this line lead all the way to Jesus. God also sees Esau and his genealogical line. He sees a people who attempt to impede God's people,

the Israelites. So God is not saying, “I like Jacob because he is a better person than Esau.” God is saying, “I know where these two lines are going. I can see the people of Israel, who will come out of Jacob; and I can see the Edomites who will come out of Esau. The Savior of mankind will come out of Jacob. Herod will come out of Edom (Esau). See the difference?

Jesus’ public ministry has been going on for about three years. Herod knows about Jesus, but does not really know Who He is. His unspoken question really is, *Is this the Messiah?*

Luke 9:7b ...and he was perplexed,... (ESV; capitalized)

Herod was confused by these stories, and the cause of his confusion appears to be that, people who brought him the information editorialized—they gave their opinions. They did not come to Herod and say, “There is this Man—we do not know Who—and He has been healing people of various ailments; and He is teaching some form of Judaism.” However, these people who heard or even saw what was going on, also took it upon themselves to say Who this Person was. *That* appears to be the perplexing aspect.

**Application:** When the news is editorialized, you are not really getting real information. Herod was just as much confused as he was informed by what he heard.

Luke 9:7a-b Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening, and he was perplexed,... (ESV; capitalized)

Now, why is this information placed here? On the one hand, there are evangelists (Jesus’ disciples) going throughout Herod’s land and giving the gospel. They were giving accurate accounts to people everywhere; and people were believing in Jesus as a result. However, men who were actually trained, to some degree, in finding out the news and making this known to Herod, were confused by Jesus and by what they knew. They did not believe in Him, and so their report was clouded with inconsistencies and false information.

There are times when I interact with people on a Facebook page which is a running debate between Christians and atheists. There is one person on that page who repeatedly sets forth a variety of weird theological opinions, most of which is in opposition to true doctrine. However, because this guy is an unbeliever, he is unable put together a cohesive, true statement about what is in the Bible.

Similarly, these men bringing Herod the news are unable to bring him accurate news. Part of what they say is true; but the other part is speculation. Therefore, Herod the tetrarch is going to be confused.

Luke 9:7c ...because it was said by some that John [the baptizer] had been raised from the dead,... (ESV; capitalized)

Here was some of the editorializing that was done. Herod Antipas had beheaded John the baptizer; so he was dead. But some of Herod’s reporters were telling him that this man



Jesus was John, raised from the dead. Obviously, that is completely wrong and confused; and even Jesus' disciples, as inexperienced as they were, were not giving out information this confused and wrong.

Some of these messengers said that this Man, about Whom they have heard so much, is John the Herald, brought back from the dead.

Luke 9:7 **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,...** (ESV; capitalized)

A portion of the Sea of Galilee is in the district ruled over by Herod the tetrarch. He is receiving reports from there about a Man named Jesus.

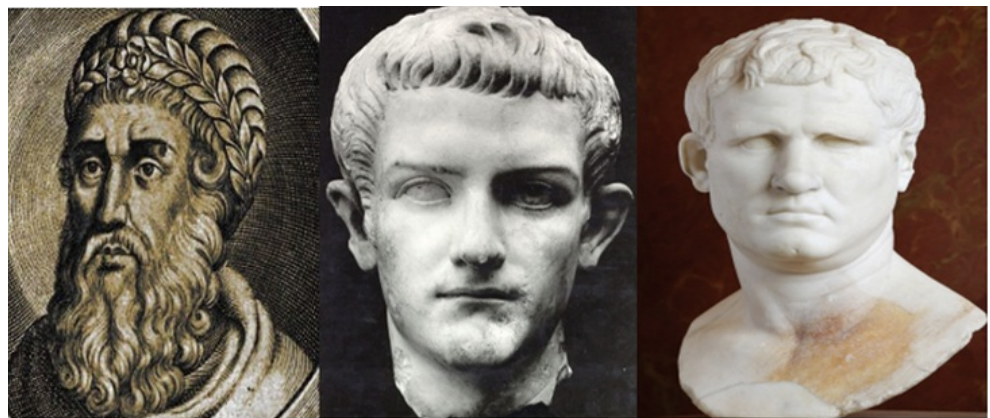
Herod the tetrarch would like to have some accurate information about Jesus, but his scouts and spies are unable to put anything together for him beyond propaganda and partially fake news.

**A Herod for each generation** (a graphic); from [Simon of Cyrene Ministries](#); accessed October 12, 2023.

Herod the Great was the one who killed many children because of the birth of the King of the Jews.

Herod Antipas murdered John the baptizer to fulfill a promise to a young girl. Herod Agrippa killed James, the brother of John; and was about to kill Peter. An angel from God helped Peter to escape; and Agrippa died within the week. See Acts 12 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Any of these men potentially could have been great rulers. A ruler can rule according to law and integrity; or according to their personal whims and politics. These men were all brilliant and attractive and they all had legitimate political power. At least one of them was a brilliant orator. All they had to do was enforce the law fairly and honestly.



King Herod (Father)

Herod Antipas (Son)

Herod Agrippa(Grandson)



Jesus has a public ministry in Galilee and Herod the tetrarch (= Herod Antipas) hears about it. He has questions and he asks his advisors about Jesus.

Luke 9:7 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,... (ESV; capitalized)

Herod Antipas was the Roman ruler over Galilee, where Jesus was primarily active. Some of Herod's men in the field have come to him and given him information about Jesus, along with some odd theories. One of those odd theories is, Jesus is John the baptizer raised up from the dead.

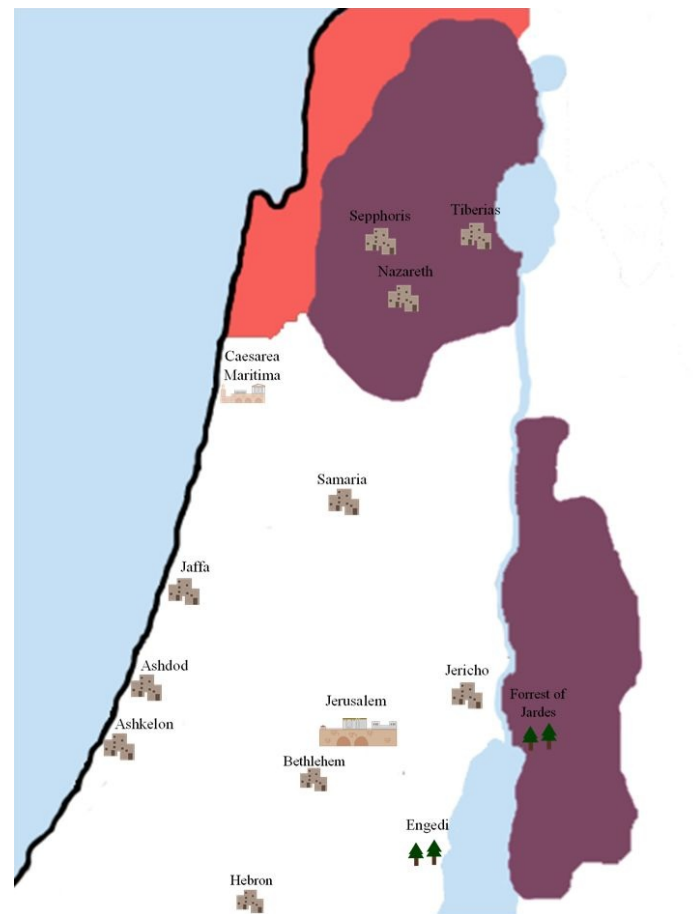
**Herod's Territory** (a graphic); from [Wikipedia](#); accessed November 9, 2023. Herod ruled over the region that is in purple.

From Wikipedia: *Territory of Herod Antipas, given to him as Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. He was given the land following the death of his father and the partitioning of Judea into separate domains. He held this land until his deposition by Caligula, with the insistence of Herod Agrippa, Antipas' nephew.*<sup>60</sup>

Luke 9:8a ...by some that Elijah had appeared,... (ESV; capitalized)

Herod's news team presents some facts and a lot of editorializing. It is difficult to distinguish between the two. "Listen, Herod, this is what I think," one of the advisors might say; "this Jesus is Elijah risen from the dead. The Jewish Scriptures tell us about Elijah coming back..."

Some of Herod's advisors had come to the conclusion that this is the ancient prophet Elijah who has returned. Now, in the end times, Elijah would return, so these people may know something about the Bible or perhaps they heard others talking, and they are simply passing along information which they have heard (that seems to me to be the most likely).



<sup>60</sup> From [Wikipedia](#); accessed November 9, 2023.

Have you ever heard a news report where much of the information was hearsay? That is, someone reports what someone else said. That is what this was.

As an aside, Elijah looms large in the New Testament, his name occurring some 30 times. At this time in history, none of the New Testament has been written; but for Elijah's name to occur so many times, he had to have penetrated the psyche of Jewish culture.

When a pastor-teacher glosses over the names and backgrounds of people like Moses, David, Abraham, and Elijah, he is doing his congregation a great disservice. Although I began writing extensively in 1995, I did not venture into the New Testament until 2018. I wanted to have some grounding of the Old Testament first.

Luke 9:8b ...and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen. (ESV; capitalized)

Others said that this Man is another of the ancient prophets, one raised up (presumably, by the God of the Jews).

That is quite an interesting proposition because, at some point, Jesus will tell some people, "Before Abraham, I am." However, I do not think that has occurred yet. However, that is a difficult thing to state, simply because that quote comes from the book of John (John 8:58), and how much of John is in chronological order would be hard to determine. I would think that such a revelation would come later in the Lord's ministry. That is, He would first provide all of the evidence for Who He is, and then He would then state it clearly.

Now, if this is the case, and Jesus has not said this yet, then how did someone come up with this idea? Let me suggest from his own imagination or someone who told him about Jesus suggested that.

There is no doubt that there were many theories about Jesus floating about; so these men brought more opinion than facts to Herod.

Luke 9:8 ...by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen. (ESV; capitalized)

So you see, there are a variety of ideas being put forth here. Some of what Herod is hearing is accurate; and some of what he hears is editorializing. All of the editorializing is incorrect.

Luke 9:7–8 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, by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen. (ESV; capitalized)

Herod is perplexed for several reasons: (1) there are no facts presented here, just peoples' opinions. (2) The opinions of these people were contradictory (as peoples' opinions tend to be). (3) Herod knows that he executed John.

Luke 9:9a **Herod said, "John I beheaded,..."** (ESV; capitalized)

So Herod seems to dismiss the idea that Jesus is John, even raised from the dead.

Luke 9:9b **...but Who is this about Whom I hear such things?"** (ESV; capitalized)

Such radical and disagreeing opinions are fascinating to Herod. The things which Jesus is reported as doing strike Herod as quite amazing.

In Mark and Matthew, Herod seems to lean in to the theory that Jesus is actually John raised from the dead (although there is no sort of proof for this). His opinion seems less certain in Luke. There is also the distinct possibility that Herod responded one way to one set of people coming in to him; but, a day or so later, after thinking about it, responds a different way to the next person or persons who brings him information. So it is very possible that even Herod changes his mind regarding Jesus.

#### **Contrasting the Different Gospel with the News Reports Brought to Pharaoh:**

Luke 9:9a-b **Herod said, "John I beheaded, but Who is this about Whom I hear such things?"** (ESV; capitalized)

Despite someone suggesting that John had been raised from the dead, Herod appears to cross that option off the list by saying, "I certainly beheaded John. So it can't be John." This is how I would have read this, but the parallel passage in Mark tells a different story.

Mark 6:14–16 **King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in Him." But others said, "He is Elijah." And others said, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."** (ESV; capitalized) So Herod said, "I beheaded John," but says this suggesting that he has risen from the dead.

This is just as clear in Matthew 14:1–2 **At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the fame of Jesus, and he said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead; that is why these miraculous powers are at work in him."**

Nevertheless, in the Luke passage, there seems to be a hint that Herod wants to meet this Man; but in Matthew and Mark, Herod, believing him to be John, seems to fear him.

Now, how exactly does it appear that Herod was told that Jesus was John the baptizer risen from the dead; but in other gospels, Herod tells this to his own people? Isn't that a clear contradiction? Not really, not when you think about it.

Herod has contacted several men and have asked them to go out and collect information about this Jesus fellow. Herod may have called in various men at various times and asked for this; or he may of called in 3 or 4 or a dozen men, and given them this order all at once.

This does not mean that all of these men would travel together as a team and that they would return together as a team, giving their report to Herod all at once.

What possibly happened was, perhaps 2 or 3 men returned first, and they told Herod what they knew *and* they told him that Jesus was John the Herald risen from the dead. As is often the case with a story, the first time you hear about it, you digest all of the information given, and you might believe it and you might not. Herod hears the report that it is John the baptizer raised from the dead. At this report, he doubts that it is true. Nevertheless, with that seed planted in his head, Herod continues considering that possibility.

The next day or even a few hours later, another *reporter* comes back to the palace and he tells Herod what he knows, and then says, "People think that this Jesus is Elijah come back from the dead." *Then* Herod says, "No, he is John the baptizer risen from the dead." Herod, having time to think this over, begins to think, "Maybe this is John the baptizer."

So, you see how these seemingly divergent records (as found in Matthew, Mark and Luke) can all be accurate?

This actually gives us an interesting contrast. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all provide accurate biographies of the Lord; and any inconsistencies can be explained (not always this easily, but in most cases, so that the explanation makes perfect sense). However, the parallel news reports, brought by Herod's men to Herod, are incompatible. Jesus cannot be John the baptizer risen from the dead *and at the same time* Elijah risen from the dead (especially since He is neither).

In this chapter of Luke, the fundamental question is presented that every person must ask himself about Jesus. Who is He? What does His life mean? What does His death mean?

The New American Bible makes an excellent observation here. Herod is asking, *who is this Jesus?* And the rest of Luke 9 answers this question. Jesus is the Great Provider in Luke 9:10–17. He is the Messiah (Christ) of God in Luke 9:18–20. Jesus is rejected by religion and legalism in Luke 9:21–22. He is the One to be followed in Luke 9:23–27. He is glorified by God as God in Luke 9:28–36. Jesus has power over sickness and over demons in Luke 9:37–42. He is the Son of Man to be delivered into the hands of men in Luke 9:43–45. So Luke, whether intentionally or not, lists one thing after another about the Lord which is foundational and fundamental regarding Who He is and what He does.

This organization may rest on the shoulders of God the Holy Spirit rather than on Luke's.

Luke 9:9c **And he sought to see Him.** (ESV; capitalized)

Herod has decided that he wants to meet this Jesus.

Recall that Herod did not kill John the Herald out of spite, jealousy or some religious fervor, but simply because his wife's daughter asked him to. He may have actually liked John (that seems to be the case), but he made promises to his step-daughter.

It is interesting that Herod may not realize it, but he himself is not a safe person to meet. That is, he may not mean harm to anyone, but that does not mean that he will not use his power and authority to execute them.



**Herod (Hérode)** (a graphic by French painter and Bible illustrator James Tissot); currently in the Brooklyn Museum; from [Wikipedia](#); accessed November 9, 2023.

Luke 9:9 **Herod said, "John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he sought to see Him.** (ESV; capitalized)

Herod is not expressing positive volition here, but simply normal curiosity.

Interestingly enough, even though Paul will interact with many important leaders (and this is under God's plan); Jesus interacts primarily with the people and with very few leaders. In the end, Jesus comes face to face with Pontius Pilate and a few others; but none of these men have enough character to do what is right (I am speaking completely from a human viewpoint approach here).

Luke 9:7–9 **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, by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen. Herod said, "John I beheaded, but Who is this about Whom I hear such things?" And he sought to see Him.** (ESV; capitalized)



What is fascinating to me is that Luke has this information and he knows where to place it in his gospel. Who did Luke know who was once an advisor to Herod Antipas?

## Lesson 266: Luke 9:10

## Logistical Grace

Jesus sent out His disciples at the beginning of this chapter. Then, briefly, we went to Herod's palace to see what he was up to. Now we return to Jesus and, at this point in the narrative, His disciples have returned to Him.

Luke 9:10a **On their return the apostles told Him all that they had done.** (ESV; capitalized)

The parallel verse in Mark reads: **The apostles returned to Jesus and told Him all that they had done and taught.** (Mark 6:30; ESV; capitalized)

The twelve disciples appear to be quite jazzed about their ability to heal and to cast out demons.

Given the things which they say on other occasions—particularly their arguing about who is the greatest—the disciples may not have fully appreciated that what they were able to do is completely a result of God giving them the power to do so.

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The disciples have been given a crash course in logistical grace. Jesus sent them out with minimal supplies, so that they might develop an understanding of what God is able to do with them, even when they have nothing.

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This is the abbreviated version of the doctrine of logistical grace.

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### The Abbreviated Doctrine of Logistical Grace

1. The principle of logistical grace is found in Matthew 6:25–33 **"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."** This is logistical grace in the temporal realm.
  2. God provides logistical grace for us in the spiritual realm as well. The principle for the spiritual provision of logistical grace is found in 2Corinthians 9:8 **And God**
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## The Abbreviated Doctrine of Logistical Grace

is able to make every [category of] grace overflow to you, so that in every way, you always have everything that you need, so that you may excel in every good work. *Good works* would be the production of divine good, which is only possible when God provides the means of growth and production for us.

3. The origin of the terminology *logistical grace*.
  - 1) Insofar as I know, R. B. Thieme, Jr. originated this term.
  - 2) Logistics is a military word which refers to the military science of supply, provision, and planning of troop movement, not only in relation to strategy and tactics, but also in relationship to being provided with logistical support (food, medical supplies, and military supplies).
  - 3) From this military nomenclature comes a Bible Doctrine based on analogy (many words in the Bible—including the New Testament—are military terms appropriated for a spiritual usage). Logistics always plays a very important and dramatic part in warfare (poor logistics can result in the loss of a war), but logistics plays an even greater part in your life as a believer. Every believer is alive today because of logistical grace.
4. Logistical grace is defined as what God has planned for us, the Divine support He gives us, His Divine provision, and His Divine blessing. The result is that we, as believers in Jesus Christ, are able to execute the plan of God just as logistical support on the battlefield allows an army to defeat its enemy. God does not give us logistical grace because we are nice people or because we are really good Christians; God gives us logistical support because we are believers and He gives this to us for a purpose.
5. Logistical grace can be broken down into two categories of Divine provision.
  - 1) Temporal provisions.
    - (1) Life support is provided for every Church Age believer. This explains how and why we are alive at any given moment. The only reason we are alive is because of logistical grace. We do not earn it and we do not deserve it. There is no set of spiritual works which we can accomplish to keep ourselves alive. For all intents and purposes, this is food, shelter and clothing. The principle was explained by Jesus in Matthew 6:25–33.
    - (2) God also supplies the [laws of divine establishment](#), which provide for an orderly and lawful society. It is quite difficult for the average believer to advance spiritually under chaotic conditions, e.g. are found today in Egypt, Greece or Tunisia (there are Christians in these counties—I originally wrote this in 2011 when there are revolutions occurring within these countries). Evangelism and spiritual growth certainly takes place during riots and war, but a society is sustained and calmed by having many believers.
    - (3) Spiritual growth is a slow and steady process, and is more easily accomplished in peace and tranquility. Therefore, God provides a certain amount of peace and tranquility in our lives so that we may grow spiritually.

## The Abbreviated Doctrine of Logistical Grace

- 2) Spiritual provisions:
  - (1) Logistical grace is provided for all Church Age believers. All believers are blessed by God. This exemplifies the justice of God, in that the justice of God sends life support and blessing to the righteousness of God, which righteousness resides in all believers, whether they are classified as winners and losers.
  - (2) That spiritual blessings are afforded to all believers emphasizes grace. You are alive only because of the grace of God, not because of anything you do. Winners utilize logistical grace, but loser's coast on it, but never utilize or fully exploit it.
  - (3) Jesus Christ provides the Word of God, which He has preserved for at least 4000 years.
  - (4) God gives His provisions to every Church Age believer so that they may execute the Plan of God. This means you have access to doctrine (the teaching of the Word of God). In most cases, this means a pastor-teacher and a local church (which is your local classroom). Although, in today's time, you can hear a variety of pastors via MP3 files, the authority of the pastor-teacher in the local church (when it comes to teaching the Word of God, not running your life), is extremely important. True positive volition toward the Word of God will solve whatever location problem you have. We recently studied the [will of God](#). If you are not in a place where there is a good local church where doctrine is being taught, then you may be in the wrong geographical location. Quite obviously, moving from point A to point B is a serious decision, and you can allow God to take the lead in this regard. Having had the experience of being moved from point A to point B, I have to say it is one of the greatest decisions God has allowed me to make. I can look at hundreds of things which have happened in my life, which happened since then, which clearly reveal the hand of God to me. There are many cities where there is no careful teaching of the Word of God and many cities where there is. There are many examples in the Bible of God moving believers from one place to another.
  - (5) God has provided the filling of the Holy Spirit, which is the restoration of fellowship through naming your sins to God. The filling of the Holy Spirit makes spiritual information something that you are able to comprehend and retain. Furthermore, God has made it possible for all IQ types to take in doctrine, through gap ([the grace apparatus for perception](#)). In addition, God provides believers with a prepared pastor-teacher who is able to teach you doctrine. 1Corinthians 2:10–16 Ephesians 3:18 2Peter 3:18 1John 1:9
  - (6) God provides, in this age, the local church, which is the proper

## The Abbreviated Doctrine of Logistical Grace

- classroom for spiritual growth.
- (7) The God-ward side of spiritual provision is, God cannot violate His own character in order to bless us with any kind of blessing, including blessing us with logistical grace. After salvation, we all continue to possess an active sin nature and we all sin. God cannot simply ignore this. God has devised a way, by which He can bless man, and yet simultaneously, maintain the perfection of His essence. This is, of course, a grace system. We name our sins to Him and we are restored to temporal fellowship.
  - (8) There are unusual circumstances where a small fraction of believers are able to advance spiritually on their own. This is rare and this is not you.
6. Why does God provide logistical grace? God has a purpose and plan for our lives. Since we live in the age of grace, God provides *everything* which is necessary in order to further His purpose for our lives. Certainly, you have bought some item where the outside of the box reads, "Some assembly required." If all the parts are not there, you are up a creek and you usually return the item. In our lives, there is certainly some assembly required, but all of the parts are guaranteed to be here. That is logistical grace.
  7. The basis of logistical grace is God's integrity. God is able to provide us with logistical grace because this does not compromise His integrity (God must always act within the confines of His character). God is able to bless us because we possess His perfect righteousness.
  8. 2Peter 3:18 reads: **Grow by means of [logistical] grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** Peter issues this as a command; this is a mandate for our lives as believers in Jesus Christ. Logistical grace is support and supply for growth, Phil 4:5 **Let your reasonableness be known to all men. The Lord is near.** The word *near* means that, God is within supporting and supplying distance. Unless logistical support is *near* to an advancing army, that army cannot survive. The Lord is *near*; that is, He is within supporting distance (i.e., He is close enough to us to bless us). Deuteronomy 33:27 Philippians 4:19 Psalm 37:25 Ephesians 1:3 2Corinthians 9:8. The key is not His physical nearness and His desire to bless us, but His ability to bless us.
  9. There are some differences between logistical grace in the Church Age (the time in which we live) and in previous dispensations. In the Church Age, all believers have a place in the plan of God. Every one of us has a life of purpose, meaning and definition. Therefore, we all must receive logistical grace and we all must utilize logistical grace in our trek toward spiritual maturity.

We covered this doctrine earlier in **Genesis 13** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

This is taken from the **Complete Doctrine of Logistical Grace** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

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References:

<http://www.gracedoctrine.org/word/082409.htm> (Pastor/Teacher: James H. Rickard teaches at Grace Fellowship Church in Plainville, MA). There was another website that I used to go to for these doctrines, but it has since been shut down.

Luke 9:10b **And He took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida.** (ESV; capitalized)

According to Pickering, the insertion of *a place, the desert-wilderness* is found in the better manuscripts. Given the context of this passage, it appears that Jesus led the disciples to a more secluded area and not into a large city. There are some problems with the construction of these words—I would have expected *a place **in the desert-wilderness near the city called Bethsaida***, but the bolded words are not found (also, the case of these words does not allow for the insertion of these words).

Where exactly they all are at this time is, apparently, a topic up for discussion. At the end of this section, we will look at the four different accounts, because there are some dramatic differences.

In v. 12, it becomes apparent that they are out in the country, away from the city. Therefore, we would be right to assume that they are on the outskirts of Bethsaida (and there may be more than one Bethsaida, which will be discussed in more detail, with a map, at the end of this section).

If many of the people take the trouble to follow Jesus, why does He withdraw from them in the first place? My opinion would be that, he had larger crowds where they were originally, but not all of them were positive towards His teaching. By moving to a more secluded area, much of the spinoff remained behind.

Luke 9:10 **On their return the apostles told him all that they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida.** (ESV; capitalized)

The Apostles return after their evangelistic tour (Jesus needs to get them ready for what they were going to do for the rest of their lives).

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## Lesson 267: Luke 9:10– 13

## The Logistical Problem of 5000+ Followers

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So far in this chapter, Jesus has sent his disciples out to evangelize the people. We have checked in with Herod to see what he is thinking about. Then the disciples return to Jesus.

Afterwards, Jesus tries to take them to a more private area.

Luke 9:11a **When the crowds learned it, they followed Him,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus did not steal away in such a manner that He could not be followed. He allowed Himself to be followed.

Even though many of us know where this narrative is going, that does not mean that Jesus knew this. From His humanity, there is no necessity for Jesus to know what happens next (except with regards to certain specific events, like the crucifixion).

By moving away from the excessively large crowds, Jesus will insure that those following Him will have the greatest positive volition.

Luke 9:11b ...and He welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God.... (ESV; capitalized)

Here we are told that Jesus received or welcomed those who followed Him and He taught them about the Kingdom of God.

Luke 9:11c ...and cured those who had need of healing. (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus continued healing those who had need of it.

Luke 9:11 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. (ESV; capitalized)

At this point in the Lord's ministry, He could not get away from the crowds. No matter where He went, they would follow Him. However, this does not mean that Jesus wanted to be rid of these people or that He was tired of teaching them.

It was important for Jesus to keep on communicating with His followers, even though He continually sidestepped the question of Who He is.

Many of the Lord's followers came to Him out of positive volition; but this is not necessarily true for all who followed Him. Obviously, some of His followers only wanted to be cured of an ailment; and some of His followers were connected to the religious class in Jerusalem, and they began to keep an eye on Jesus.

Luke 9:10–11 On their return the apostles told Him all that they had done. And He took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida. 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. (ESV; capitalized)

Although Jesus appears to be taking His disciples to a more secluded place, the people were still able to follow and find them. Jesus does not discourage them. He is simply eliminating those whose interest in Him is limited.

Luke 9:12a Now the day began to wear away,... (ESV; capitalized)

It has come to the end of the day. So, it is still daylight, but it is clear that, in an hour or so, it won't be.

Luke 9:12b ...and the twelve came and said to Him,... (ESV; capitalized)

The twelve disciples came to Jesus, as they had apparently, among themselves, decided what needed to be done. It appears that they huddled, talked things over, and they have now come to some hard decisions that Jesus needs to make.

Recall that these men just went out on their own without Jesus and proclaimed the Kingdom of God to various towns and villages, and they were quite excited about doing that (v. 10). They had also developed a greater confidence in their own abilities to observe a situation and to decide what needs to be done. (Although this is mostly conjecture, I believe that the context allows for it.) One of the things which they should have learned is, God provides that which is necessary (we studied this as *logistical grace*).

Luke 9:12c ..."Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside... (ESV; capitalized)

This is the combined opinion of the Lord's disciples.

Here they all are, in a wilderness region, and there are a bunch of people who have followed Jesus. The disciples consider the situation, the food which they have on hand, and have come to their consensus for a reasonable course of action.

Don't forget that these are the exact same disciples that Jesus had, a month or so earlier, sent out to evangelize, heal and cast out demons; and He required them to depend upon God's logistical grace. So here, they find themselves in another situation where there is no good solution, apart from God's logistical grace.

"Listen," the disciples tell Jesus, "Why don't You ask the people to disperse for the night. Suggest that they go off to one of the surrounding villages or to a field nearby and fend for themselves."

It is obvious to the disciples that they do not have enough provisions for the large number of people who are there.

Luke 9:12d ...to find lodging and get provisions,... (ESV; capitalized)

There is a verb used here which has two sets of different meanings; and one of them is, *to lodge (halt) for the night, to be a guest (somewhere)*. So the people need to spread out and find some place to sleep. Also, they need to forage for something to eat.

This may seem somewhat cruel, but bear in mind, it was the requirement of the Mosaic Law for those who had fields to leave portions of that field unharvested, so that the poor might come later and harvest some of the excess. So, even though there are no fast-food



places around, there are ways for people to find food. On the other hand, is there really enough food for so large a gathering?

Luke 9:12c-d ...**"Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions,..."** (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples have determined that, "We do not have enough to handle this large crowd; let them go out and fend for themselves."

The problem with the disciples' plan is, there are a lot of people here—a large village of people by themselves. Was there any place that they could actually go for food and lodging? All of them? His disciples should know that answer to that is, there is not enough available out there for this people.

Luke 9:12e ...**for we are here in a desolate place."** (ESV; capitalized)

When it comes to foraging food out in the wild, this is the easiest thing in the world for most suburban and city-living Americans, as long as we have a few 20s in our pocket (I write this in 2023). I live within walking distance (two miles) of dozens of restaurants and fast food places and grocery stores. Such places even existed but in a less concentrated form when I was a child (1950s). But this is not at all the world of the disciples. There are no stores, no fast food places, no restaurants. The best that they could hope for is, three or four farms within walking distance where some unharvested crops remained, according to the Mosaic Law. This means that, 90% or more of these eager disciples would not eat that day or the next. But, the disciples and Jesus would not actually have to see that, as the people would have been dismissed (if Jesus heeds the suggestion of His disciples).

Luke 9:12e ...**for we are here in a desolate place."** (ESV; capitalized)

Then the disciples state the obvious. "Look, we are standing here in the midst of a desert-wilderness region here; there are few if any fields of grain to be found in our periphery."

Again, let me remind you that the disciples had just returned from proclaiming the Kingdom of God; and that Jesus told them not to take any provisions, but to depend upon *whomever* to provide for them. Well, it wasn't *whomever*, it was God; God was providing for them and God provided for all of the disciples. Furthermore, this was fine if there were two or three of them together. And they were in the midst of a village. Finding them food and lodging would have been relatively simple (except, recall that they did not have any extra money on them).

This crowd faced the same problems as did the individual disciples most recently; but multiplied by a thousand. The disciples do not see a way to scale this, even though they are under a God Who is capable of anything. If God can handle a dozen disciples spread out in occupied villages, can He scale up His provisions to handle 5000+ people in a desert-wilderness? Jesus will answer this question.

Luke 9:12 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." (ESV; capitalized)

All the people who have come to Jesus are on positive signals. That is what they are called to do by God. They have gone to great lengths to hear the Lord; and we might assume from that, these are all believers or some of them are verging on belief in the Lord.

Jesus is going to teach His disciples their second great lesson on logistical grace. Now, what was the first lesson on logistical grace? Jesus sent these disciples out into the world (we might say, into the devil's world), armed with the gospel of Jesus Christ and nothing else. They took no money, no provisions, not even a change of clothes. Now, what happened? Did any of them starve to death? Did God abandon them to the elements? No. They are all here with the Lord. Whether they ran into positive or negative volition, they are all still here, alive, preserved by God.

Now the question before them is, "Just how far does logistical grace extend? Is it only to you, My disciples?" the Lord appears to be asking them.

Then Jesus makes a suggestion that, on the face of it, seems absurd.

Luke 9:13a But He said to them, "You give them something to eat." (ESV; capitalized)

Literally what Jesus says is curt and abrasive: "To eat, you (all)." It is as if He is saying, "I just cannot waste any more words on you all; you feed them!"

Because we have a fuller sentence in Matthew 14:16 (But Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat."—ESV; capitalized) and Mark 6:37a (But He answered them, "You give them something to eat."—ESV; capitalized), Jesus gave them a fuller command than what we read here. In reviewing the synoptic gospels, there are three possible options here: (1) Jesus repeated Himself, saying at the end, "To eat, you (all)." In other words, "Did you not hear what I said? To eat, you (all)." (2) Some words may have simply dropped out of the Lukian text. A more complete text is given in Matthew and Mark. (3) These were the words remembered by the disciple who relayed this incident to Luke, but there were more said. None of these explanations violate the inspiration of the text.

The disciples have come to Jesus and they have told Him that, the day is fast escaping them, and that Jesus needs to tell the people to look for housing and food to get them through to the next day. Jesus tells the disciples, "You will be giving them the food that they need."

The disciples already knew how much food they had on hand. When making recommendations to Jesus, they had explored the option of them feeding the 5000+.

Luke 9:13b **They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish—... (ESV; capitalized)**

The twelve disciples appear to have already conducted an inquiry. They know what they have on hand when it comes to supplies. "We have got 5 loaves and 2 fish," is what their inventory turned out to be. Even if the amount of food was larger than shown in the picture below; it was nowhere near enough.

**Five Loaves and Two Fishes** (a photograph); from [Miracle Quest](#); accessed October 12, 2023.

Luke 9:13b **They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish—... (ESV; capitalized)**

We find out in Mark 6:38 that the disciples did not have this information on hand. Jesus told them to take an inventory of what they had on hand. I suspect that the disciples simply assumed that there was not enough.



They huddled together, determined exactly what they had between themselves, and came up with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. Given that this is a young man who has this, the disciples went among the people asking who had what.

Luke 9:13c **...unless we are to go and buy food for all these people." (ESV; capitalized)**

The disciples suggest another option, that they go out and buy the food needed.

Essentially, at this point, the disciples appear to agree to try to go out and buy the food necessary for this big crowd. They begin to understand what a huge undertaking that this will be. "But, if this is what you want, Lord, we will do it," they seem to allow. The disciples understand that this is an absurd suggestion. They do not have the money and there is no such thing as a grocery store for them to go to.

Going out and buying food for this crowd is an impossible task for many reasons. They certainly do not have the money to buy this much food. There are not enough of them to carry this much food. And, one might reasonably ask, *from where are they going to get this much food?* In other words, this is an impossible situation. There is no human solution.

Taking all this into consideration, I want you to think about their original solution: **As the day was beginning to close, the twelve came closer to Jesus and said, "Given the time, You should dismiss the crowds of people so that they might have enough daylight in order to**

go out to the surrounding villages or fields in order to secure lodging for the night and to find food to eat. Obviously, they cannot do that right here, as this is a desert region.” (Luke 9:12; Kukis paraphrase) However, if the disciples cannot handle this, how could the people handle it on their own?

## Lesson 268: Luke 9:13–17a

## Feeding the 5000+

Jesus puts this problem on the disciples. “There are 5000+ followers with us right now. If you recall, I could not even ditch these people. Now, how can we get them fed?”

Luke 9:13 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." (ESV; capitalized)

Even though I made an attempt at being very literal, I think that the Riverside New Testament provides the best sense of this: He said to them, "Give them something to eat yourselves." They replied, "We have not more than five loaves and two fishes. We cannot go and buy food for all this crowd, can we?"

Obviously, there are a myriad of logistical problems here, if feeding these people falls into the hands of the disciples themselves. One of the chief problems is, *where exactly can they go to get the amount of food needed?* Now, they are certainly correct in this assessment of the problem. Yet their solution was, “We need to send this crowd away so they can find food and lodging.” Do you see how that is not really a solution? If this was physically impossible for them to do, would it be easier for the people themselves to do this?

Apart from [logistical grace](#), there are no real solutions for this problem. Logistical grace means that God must provide the means for these people to hear the gospel message and then, having believed, be able to enjoy some spiritual growth. God must provide them with food, shelter and clothing in order for them to further pursue Jesus’ teaching. That is God’s responsibility.

God’s logistical grace is fundamental to the Christian life. We are nothing without it. How do you possibly advance to spiritual maturity without having food to eat? Since we have already studied logistical grace, you know that I don’t mean, food dropped out of the sky; nor do I mean food which God has directly supplied in any way. We as believers ought to have some means of procuring food; and God should to it that we do.

Luke 9:14a For there were about five thousand men. (ESV; capitalized)

I would not be surprised that, prior to speaking to the Lord, the disciples did a headcount of all the people there (at least of all the men). They may have asked Judas what was in the treasury.

Luke 9:13–14a 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." For there were about five thousand men. (ESV; capitalized)

Only Mark reveals that Jesus told His disciples to go out and determine how much food was available on hand (Mark 6:38).

The disciples determined the numbers and realized that this is an impossible situation. There is no solution. Given the circumstances they find themselves in and given their personal resources, there is no natural way by which these people can be fed.

Luke 9:14b And He said to His disciples,... (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus does not appear to even acknowledge the suggestions of His disciples. I would guess that Jesus allowed them to speak, allowed them to finish, and then He told them what they were going to do.

Luke 9:14c ..."Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus first instructions were for the disciples to go out among the people and have them gather into groups of 50. This is going to make the distribution of food more organized.

Throughout the Bible, God is presented as organized. There are times when He organizes His people. The concept of a local church is one of organization. No one should walk into a church and think that they are in Crazytown. The distribution of spiritual gifts is organized. Bible doctrine is organized. The Bible itself is organized.

I would suggest that the organization has a purpose, for more than having people in neat little groups. Here, it is for the distribution of food. If the people are in groups, the disciples may more easily determine who has been fed and who still needs to be fed.

When it comes to the local church, organization provides the best way to learn. The congregants are quiet, respectful—their phones are off—and the pastor-teacher is teaching in an organized fashion what he has learned over a period of many years.

**Illustration:** In a national entity, organization often provides stability and order. Some national entities foster chaos in order for government to step into the chaos and seize more power while sorting out the chaos. The more evil a national entity is, the more often they will use chaos to further their ends.

The laws of divine establishment provide order in a society. Deviation from divine establishment makes a society more perverted, disorganized, and lacking in order.

**Illustration:** Right now, in the United States in 2023, we are further from divine establishment than we have ever been. We are in serious disorder throughout.



Organization often includes clear designations of authority. For instance, in a family, the father is the head of the family, with authority over the wife and children. The husband and wife both have authority over the children.

In the local church, the pastor is the highest authority. There is no provision in the Bible for denominations, where another higher organization can oversee the local church and its doctrines. The individuals who make up this local church can choose to remain at that local church or leave. The congregation ultimately chooses their pastor—if not through voting, by means of their own feet (staying or going).

**Illustration:** We had a president whose staff would periodically call people in the field in Afghanistan and Iraq. They might call directly a local commanding officer in a particular city or on a base, and start telling that person what to do. This throws a well-designed system of authorities into chaos. In the army, there are levels of authorities. That administration, on many occasions, completely ignored these levels of authorities, and attempted to bully an officer from outside the established system of authority. That introduces chaos into the system.

Let's return to the narrative:

Luke 9:14b-c **And He said to His disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus begins to organize the people and the disciples.

Luke 9:15a **And they did so,...** (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples went out among this crowd—perhaps a crowd of 10,000 total (this would be true if many families began to follow Jesus—and had them organize into groups of 50. Then they sat down among this group of 50.

Organization and clear systems of authority is God's way of doing things. Disorganization and chaos is Satan's approach. Whenever you find yourself asking, *who the hell is in charge here*, the answer is Satan (or one of his demons).

In our narrative, Jesus is clearly in charge, and the disciples are carrying out His orders.

Luke 9:15b **...and had them all sit down.** (ESV; capitalized)

The people assume the common eating position for that era, which was to recline for a meal. Obviously, this is a social construct, not a Biblical mandate.

When dealing with these groups of 50, the disciples might more easily be able to see who has been served and who has not. This makes it easier for the disciples themselves to be organized in their service.



Luke 9:15 **And they did so, and had them all sit down.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus explains how the people should be organized, and the disciples see to this. Organization and a clear line of authority. God's way.

Luke 9:16a **And taking the five loaves and the two fish,...** (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples are clearly aware of the amount of food that they are starting with. Jesus told them to take an inventory and they did.

We do not know what the disciples knew prior to them making recommendations to the Lord. I would assume that the disciples determined what they had on hand in terms of money (but maybe they did not know until Jesus asks for this information. Ideally speaking, the disciples should have known what food they had on hand and how much money they had prior to coming to Jesus with their suggestions. Mark 6:38 suggests that Jesus had to ask them to determine how much they had on hand.

Nevertheless, Jesus took the food which the disciples had provided—which consisted of 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. Jesus took what they had on hand and recognized that these are believers before Him who need to eat. Jesus will depend upon His Father to provide enough for them all to eat.

Luke 9:16b **...He looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them.** (ESV; capitalized)

Then Jesus blessed this meal, looking up into heaven.

Luke 9:16c **Then He broke the loaves...**

Part of what was done is, Jesus had His disciples gather up some baskets, or perhaps they had baskets which they each carried (I am assuming this, based upon the fact that we have baskets at the end; and the disciples have to distribute the food in some way). Jesus broke up this little bit of food and placed it into each of the twelve baskets.

Luke 9:16d **...and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus gave these baskets of food to the disciples and they disciples would set the food before the people. Each group of people probably got a basket of food, and a person would take from that basket and then pass it along to the next person.

The food had to multiply when the Lord divides it up and places it into baskets; but it seems likely that the food also multiplied as it was handed around to the different people in the groups of fifty as well.

Someone has conveyed this story to Luke, which was probably one of the disciples. We seem to be getting an up-close-and-personal view of what is taking place (including the

discussions taking place between Jesus and His disciples); which would suggest that Luke's source was a disciple (or two).

Nevertheless, somehow, the disciples did not seem to fully get what was happening until the end. The Lord gave them commands, they followed His direction, and, at the very end, they understood (to some degree) what had just happened. Somehow, God took this meager amount of food that the Lord blessed and multiplied it a thousandfold before their eyes. Somehow they saw it, but they didn't see it.

There is absolutely no discussion within this narrative of the disciple who looks down at his basket filled with food that he delivers to a group of people, and thinks to himself, "Wow, there is way more than 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish here." Somehow, they did what was required of them—organizing the people and taking baskets of food to each group—yet the end result was quite amazing. Somehow, the people are being fed, even though Jesus started such a meager amount of food to begin with.

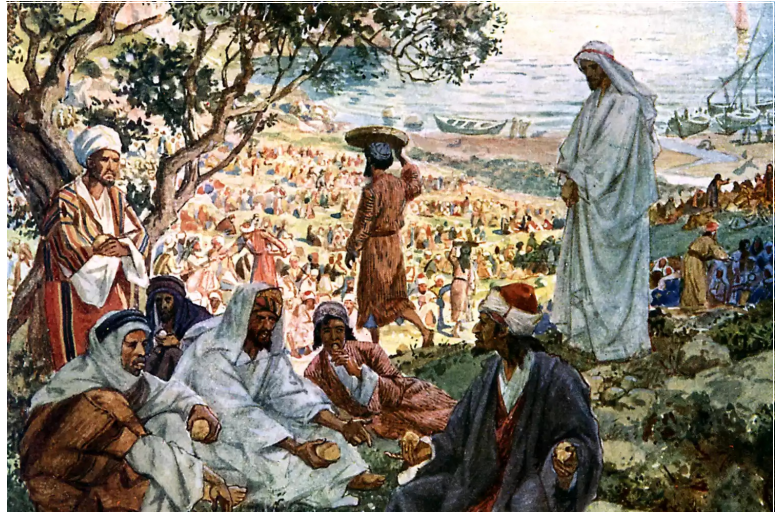
Although this is a true narrative, it also has a meaning. We have been charged by the Lord with responsibilities in this life. We discharge these responsibilities. It may not seem like we are able to do all that God has for us, but somehow we do. The end result of what does with our works (if produced in the power of the Spirit, guided by Bible doctrine) is absolutely magnificent.

Luke 9:16 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. (ESV; capitalized)

We have no idea how this looked to the disciples or what they thought about when receiving basket after basket of food to distribute. Only a few people comment on this—at what point did the fish and loaves increase in number? Was there a sleight of hand involved? Even today, reading several accounts, we do not have a clue. Bear in mind that at least two gospel writers were right there, getting their basket of food to distribute, and then coming back for their second basket and third basket. Not a single one of them gives us any idea as to how things looked to them. Somehow things seemed perfectly normal, except they knew what they started with and they knew what they ended up with at then end. That was outside the boundaries of normal. How they got to that point and what they saw is never commented upon. God somehow works a miracle here, but without the disciples seeing what happened.

**The Feeding of the Five Thousand** (by William Hole) (1846-1917); from [Learn Religions](#); accessed October 12, 2023.

Luke 9:17a **And they all ate and were satisfied.** (ESV; capitalized)



There are 5000 men there; and very likely, 10,000 people in all (men, women and children). They are divided up into about 200 groups of 50 in each group. In order for this process to be orderly and fast enough, a disciple probably carried a basket of food to each group, handed it to the first person, and then came back for another basket which he would then deliver to a different group. Perhaps he would go back to the first group, and see, they still have a basket filled with food, and it is being passed around still.

Perhaps as Peter gave a basket of food to one group, walking by a different group, he might call out, "Does anyone here have a basket I could borrow?" Then he might use that basket to be filled up and taken to the group which provided him with an empty basket.

Many of these details are left out. We know that the process was organized; and that no group got missed and no set of individuals were missed. Everyone ate.

What we know for certain is, everyone was fed and everyone was satiated. All the disciples had to do was what Jesus required of them, which was not very much. It was God who multiplied their foodstuffs a thousandfold.

#### **Lessons 269–270: Luke 9:10–17**

#### **Feeding the 5000—Comparing the gospels**

We continue with the feeding of the 5000+. At the completion of this section, we will compare the four gospels side-by-side, as this event is recorded by all gospel writers.

Luke 9:17a **And they all ate and were satisfied.** (ESV; capitalized)

We do not know at what point the disciples individually began to appreciate what was happening; but each man was responsible for about 20 groups, so each disciple would have been working quickly to get the food passed around. Did they go back to a group a second time with a second basket? We have no idea. In my estimation, there was probably a basket given to each group. When each disciple brought a new basket, he may have looked at previous groups that he already served, and he could tell that they were all

taken care of. At the end of this meal, there was a partially filled basket remaining for each group. Leftovers.

God never ran out of food to feed them.

After the Lord is resurrected, He will tell Peter, "Feed My sheep." This is not to be taken literally. The Lord's sheep are people and Peter is not going to take baskets of food and distribute them everywhere he goes; but he will have an extensive teaching ministry to the Lord's people (some of this is documented in the book of Acts). That is what he is to do. Right now, the disciples do not know diddly-squat when it comes to Bible doctrine; but they are able to follow orders, so that is what they do. When they learn more, then they will teach the Word of God.

Bearing this in mind, what multiplies greater than the Word of God? How many missionaries can go into a land where there are no believers and, after a few months, there are 5 believers or 10. And they are taught Bible doctrine; and, after a time, there might be 50. As long as there is positive volition, then this number continues to grow into hundreds and even into thousands. But it all starts with one believer (or a family of believers) fulfilling the work that God has for him. God takes that work and He multiplies it.

After feeding the 5000+ followers (which illustrates, among other things, logistical grace), Jesus and the disciples are now looking at what is remaining.

Luke 9:17b **And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.** (ESV; capitalized)

There remained one basket of leftovers for each disciple, as an object lesson to each man.

We have no idea when each disciple began to understand what was happening, but, at the very end, each disciple had a basket of leftovers which was, very likely, much larger individually than what they had collectively begun with. God is able to take our divine work (it is divine because we are in Christ) and multiply it many times. This is what would happen to the work of Peter, James, John and the others. This is even what happens to our own works.

As a believer, you need to focus on two things: naming your sins to God and growing in grace and doctrine. At some point, you will begin to understand your spiritual gift or, possibly, your spiritual gift might just begin to function without you even realizing that it is functioning. God has designed the function of at least one spiritual gift for every believer in the Church Age.

Each disciple provided food for approximately 1000 people, and the food came from the small amount which they began with. Key is, this is food which the Lord blessed. In some way or another, this will be your life, if you stay in fellowship and if you grow spiritually.

Now, the idea that you may impact 1000 people (and this is just one incident), what an incredible blessing that would be!

Maybe, somehow in your life, you preserve and protect two orphans (there are not many in the United States, but there are huge numbers in other countries). But those children will grow up, they will marry and they will have children. That in itself could account for tens, hundreds or even thousands of people. Bear in mind, what is most important is, you give them the gospel message and, where possible, you teach them Bible doctrine.

Sometimes, a husband and wife's outreach is primarily to their two or three or more children. This is the key to the preservation and blessing of the country where you reside. Every generation is raising up the next generation, who will raise up the next generation.

Sadly, in the United States, we have failed in this approach for several generations. In thinking about the many families that I have known, sadly, I can only think of one where the parents really concentrated on the spiritual life of their children. This is why the United States appears to be in full collapse (we have not yet collapsed as a nation, but we appear to be on the verge of that).

Back to the narrative:

Luke 9:17 **And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.** (ESV; capitalized)

Even though the disciples participated in this event, not one of them seemed to notice at what point the bread and fish multiplied (Matthew and John write about this incident; and Peter relayed this incident to Mark). The multiplication of the bread and fish happened, somehow, right before their eyes, but somehow, they did not see it. No one providing an account of this incident wrote, "And, it was at this point I realized that God, through Jesus, had somehow multiplied the meager amount of food that we began with." Each disciple gets it at the end, as there are twelve baskets of leftover food, one for each disciple. Each disciple knows the amount of food that they began with and they can look at their own basket of leftover food and appreciate what God has somehow done.

Luke 9:14b–17 **And He said to His disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." And they did so, and had them all sit down. 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. And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.** (ESV; capitalized)

One of the key factors in this incident is logistical grace. We may assume that most of the people there have believed in Jesus. They have gone to great lengths to seek Him out and to listen to Him. So, they believed in Him prior to this; or after hearing Him.

These people were drawn to the Son; and that must have been because God drew them.



All of these people needed to be fed, so God has provided for them. That is the requirement of logistical grace (we just had the [Doctrine of Logistical Grace](#)). This does not mean that you're sitting on the couch and you start to feel hungry, and God plops a cheeseburger down next to you (although sometimes this happens when you are married). God provides the means for you to provide the things that you need (the work, the money, whatever). Although God is able to, at any given time, work a miracle, He primarily provides miracles when there is a big program change taking place, such as, bringing the Israeli slaves out of Egypt, introducing the Messiah to Israel, beginning the Church Age. It is highly unlikely that you, as a believer in the Lord, will experience anything which is concretely miraculous in your lifetime. There may be an unlikely series of coincidental events which provides this or that for you, but there will be nothing in your life which is crazy out of the ordinary. I write these things not because I interact with a lot of people who expect to see miracles every day, but because I am aware that such believers exist.

I realize that there are many people who think that miracles or healings would be the most fantastic thing ever, do not realize that we possess the most powerful weapon that there is—the Word of God. There is nothing greater; there is nothing in our own lives which possesses more power (obviously, God does; but this is the verbal expression of Christ's thinking). Furthermore, we have the entire Word of God. I realize that most of Christendom does not appreciate that fact, but it is what we have and it is the greatest thing.

What the miracle of the feeding of the 5000 (actually, 10,000) reminds me of is the provision of manna by God to the Exodus generation in the desert. For 40 years, they were fed miraculously by a substance which we cannot even identify today. See **Exodus 16** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). Again, this is all about logistical grace. God *must* provide for His Own.

Do not think that this means, you will receive food each day by a miraculous act of God. God will see that you are provided for, and, most of that time, that involves you actually working for a living.

Luke 9:14b–17 Jesus then gave these directions to His disciples: “Make the people sit down in groups of fifty.” So His disciples did this and everyone reclined, as people do awaiting a meal. Jesus took the five loaves of bread and the two fish and He blessed them while He looked up into heaven. Then He began to break the food into pieces, and place these pieces into baskets for distribution. The disciples would pick up a basket and distribute the food. The people ate this food and they were completely satiated. Then the excess was taken up and the disciples had twelve baskets of leftovers, one basket for each disciple. (ESV; capitalized)

**Application:** Our logistical grace is going to be less miraculous than this. We are not going to buy two bananas and a box of cereal, and check our pantry tomorrow and find 10 bananas and three boxes of cereal. But God will provide us the means to make another trip to the store and another after that.





There is another problem which presents itself when we compare the gospel accounts.

**The Ports of Galilee** (a map); from [One Page Bible Summary](#); accessed February 1, 2023. Given this entire section (vv. 10–17; often subtitled *the Feeding of the Five Thousand*), we certainly have a problem (one which is not immediately apparent). When we examine all of the accounts of this feeding of the 5000, Luke writes of Jesus leading the people up to an unpopulated area outside of Bethsaida; but John records that this took place after traveling by sea to Tiberias. You can see by the map that Bethsaida and Tiberias are on opposite sides of the Sea of Galilee. Can these records be synched up? Is there a way to explain this?

I used the *Far Above All Translations* below (without including its italics). I capitalized the pronouns applying to Jesus.

John, as we would expect, provides a very different organization than the others. John is going by his memory of 60 years previous, but assisted in that regard by God the Holy Spirit. The narrative that John writes will appear to be different, but it is possible for him to remember this accurately, yet not follow the other more chronological gospel writers.

It is my opinion that, by this time, John was familiar with the other three gospels. He has probably read them all. John could see many reasons to write his own account.

### Jesus Feeds the 5000 — Four Accounts

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
	Mark 6:30 <b>And the apostles gathered to Jesus and reported everything to Him, both what they had done, and what they had taught.</b>	L u k e 9 : 1 0 a <b>Meanwhile the apostles returned and described to Him the things which They had done,...</b>	

Both Mark and Luke seem to indicate that the feeding of the 5000 takes place soon after the report of the disciples, who had been sent out to evangelize and to perform signs. This makes sense, as both incidents teach the disciples about logistical grace.

## Jesus Feeds the 5000 — Four Accounts

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
There are many specifics missing here regarding the sending out of the disciples. Where did this originate, where did they go, how long were they gone for and where did they all meet up again?			
Matthew 14:13a But when Jesus heard it, He withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place privately.	Mark 6:31a And he said to them, "You yourselves come privately to a desolate place, and rest a short while."	Luke 9:10b ...at which He took them along and withdrew privately to a deserted place in the city called Bethsaida,...	John 6:1 After these things, Jesus went away across the sea of Galilee, of Tiberias,...
The location is difficult to pinpoint, as Luke mentions Bethsaida and John talks about Tiberias. As we can see on the <a href="#">map</a> above, these are in entirely different places. However, Bethsaida means <i>house of fishing</i> , so would not be crazy to suggest that there is more than one village off the Sea of Galilee with this name. If there are additional villages with this name, then there is no textual problem.			
Based upon the Hastings NT Dictionary <sup>61</sup> , there are a great many adherents to this theory, although there does not appear to be any agreement on the location of either Bethsaida (given the name, there could be three or four villages with that name).			
Wilbur Pickering suggests another more complex theory (see his translation for Luke 9:10–11 and his footnotes). ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> )			
John seems to indicate that a very large number of people followed Jesus across the sea. The Greek of John 6:1 seems to confirm that Jesus went across the sea of Galilee.			
Although John writes this perhaps as long as 60 years after the fact, I believe that he had access to the other gospels and had some things to add, which the other writers left out. This unique approach is found throughout John's gospel.			

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<sup>61</sup> James Hastings, D.D., *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels; Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*; © 1918. By Charles Scriber's Sons; (from e-sword); topic: *Bathsaida*.

## Jesus Feeds the 5000 — Four Accounts

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Matthew 14:13–14 Then when the crowds heard about it, they followed Him on foot from the cities, and when Jesus went out, He saw a large crowd and felt compassion for them and cured their infirm.	Mark 6:31b For those who came and went were many, and they did not even have an opportunity to eat.	Luke 9:11a ...but the crowds, having come to know about it, followed Him.	John 6:2 ...and a large crowd followed Him, because they had seen His signs which He performed on the infirm.
John 6:3 Then Jesus went up into the mountain, and sat there with His disciples. John 6:4 Incidentally, the Passover was near, the Jews' festival.			
Mark 6:32 So they went to a desolate place by boat privately. Mark 6:33 And people saw them departing, and many recognized Him, and they were quick to converge there on foot from all the cities, and arrived before them and gathered round Him.			
Those who were operating on positive signals could always find Jesus.			
	Mark 6:34 Then when Jesus went out, He saw a large crowd and felt compassion for them, because they were like sheep which had no shepherd, and He began to teach them many things,...	Luke 9:11b Nevertheless He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and He cured those who needed curing.	
Although Jesus appeared to be moving away from the crowds, they have found Him, and He has compassion for them.			
Whereas, when most pastors find themselves in a crowd, they begin preaching; Jesus often moved away from the crowd. They often sought Him out afterwards. I think that this acted as somewhat of a sieve, where the curiosity seekers arriving where Jesus first is; but they were less likely to go to more effort to see Him.			

## Jesus Feeds the 5000 — Four Accounts

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
<p>Matthew 14:15 When it was evening, His disciples came to Him and said, "The place is desolate and the hour has already passed. Dismiss the crowds, so that they can go back to their villages and buy food for themselves."</p>	<p>Mark 6:35 ...and with it already being a late hour, His disciples came up to Him and said, "The place is desolate and it is already a late hour."</p> <p>Mark 6:36 Send them away so that they can go off into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves loaves of bread, for they do not have anything to eat."</p>	<p>Luke 9:12 Then the day began to decline, and the twelve came up and said to Him, "Send the crowd away, so that they can go off to the surrounding villages and fields to lodge and find provisions, because here we are in a desolate place."</p>	<p>John 6:5 Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to Him, and he said to Philip, "From where can we buy loaves of bread so that these may eat?"</p> <p>John 6:6 But He said this to test him, for He Himself knew what He was going to do.</p>
<p>The disciples realized that it was getting towards mealtime (they were probably starting to get hungry themselves), and they had to deal with all of these people who were there. No doubt that the people who came to see Jesus were hungry as well. Obviously, the disciples would have no idea how to deal with this situation.</p>			
<p>Philip seems to know what is on hand in terms of money. There was not enough to buy food with. As an aside, it is interesting that Philip is the one to say this and not Judas. Judas held the money, but he apparently did not offer this information. Judas did not apparently like parting with any money which had been given to them.</p>			
<p>Matthew 14:16 But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them food to eat."</p>	<p>Mark 6:37a But He answered and said to them, "You give them something to eat."</p>	<p>Luke 9:13a But He said to them, "You give them something to eat."</p>	
	<p>Mark 6:37b Then they said to Him, "Should we go off and buy bread for two hundred denaries and give it to them to eat?"</p>		<p>John 6:7 Philip answered him, "Two hundred denaries' worth of bread would not suffice for them, so that each of them could take a little."</p>

At least two disciples gave their opinion about going to buy bread for the crowd of people.

## Jesus Feeds the 5000 — Four Accounts

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
<p>Matthew 14:17 Then they said to him, "We haven't got anything here except five loaves and two fish."</p>	<p>Mark 6:38 At this He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." Then when they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish."</p>	<p>Luke 9:13b They then said, "We do not have more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go to buy food for all these people."</p>	<p>John 6:8–9 One of His disciples, Andrew the brother of Simon Peter, said to Him, "There is one little boy here who has five barley loaves and two cooked fish, but what is that for so many?"</p>
<p>Mark tells us that Jesus had to tell the disciples to take an inventory of what was available to them.</p>			
<p>It is only by John that we know where the fish and loaves came from originally.</p>			
<p>The disciples consider the resources available to them: 200 denaries and a small amount of food (considering how many people need to be fed).</p>			
<p>Matthew 14:18 But He said, "Bring them here to Me."</p>			
<p>Matthew 14:19a Then He commanded the crowds to recline on the grass,...</p>	<p>Mark 6:39 Then He ordered them to recline, all in groups on the green grass. Mark 6:40 And they reclined in groups of a hundred, and of fifty.</p>	<p>Luke 9:14 After all, there were about five thousand men there. Then He said to His disciples, "Seat them in groups of fifty." Luke 9:15 So they did this and they all reclined.</p>	<p>John 6:10 But Jesus said, "Have the men recline." Now there was a lot of grass in the place. So the men reclined, about five thousand in number.</p>

## Jesus Feeds the 5000 — Four Accounts

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Matthew 14:19b ...and took the five loaves and the two fish, and looked up to heaven and offered a blessing, and broke the bread, and gave it to the disciples, whilst the disciples gave it to the crowds.	Mark 6:41 Then He took the five loaves and the two fish and looked up to heaven and blessed them, and broke the bread and kept giving it to his disciples to serve them, and He shared out the two fish for everyone.	Luke 9:16 Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looked up to heaven and blessed them and broke them and gave them to the disciples to serve to the crowd.	John 6:11 And Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks, and distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples distributed them to those reclining. And they did the same with the cooked fish – as much as they wanted.

It is at this point that we do not know how things appear to the disciples, even though we have the eyewitness testimony of two or three of them. How does Jesus have this small amount of food, and yet hand a basket of food to each disciple? Somehow He did this, and they just took the basket and carried it to their groups. None of the disciples takes a basket and says, “Whoa, Jesus, how did You do this?”

Matthew 14:20a And they all ate, and were filled,...	Mark 6:42 And they all ate and were satisfied.	Luke 9:17a And they all ate and were filled,...	John 6:12 And when they were full, he said to His disciples, “Gather the pieces which are left over so that nothing goes to waste.”
Matthew 14:20b ...and they gathered up the excess pieces – twelve basketful.	Mark 6:43 Then they picked up twelve basketsful of pieces, and bits of the fish.	Luke 9:17b ...and the fragments they left over were picked up: twelve basketful.	John 6:13 So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets of pieces from the five barley loaves which those who had eaten had left over.

Each disciple had his own basket of food which would be his object lesson. He knows how they started out and he can see with his own eyes how much extra food that he has ended up with.

When God performs a miracle, it is always specific to the people who witness the miracle.



## Jesus Feeds the 5000 — Four Accounts

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Interestingly enough, it is John who appears to provide the most details, despite remembering this event from 60 years ago.

Throughout the New Testament, the disciples are given many *hands-on* lessons like this one. When they went out on their own, their needs were supplied by God. This people, who are very positive toward the Lord's teaching, must eat; and their needs were supplied by God.

A mark of Scripture is for miracles to be appropriate to the people that the miracle is performed for. This was for the benefit of the disciples. They saw what they began with; they kept on picking up more bread and fishes to distribute; and there was a massive amount left over. The disciples were not very easy to teach, so a lesson like this would have been unforgettable.

This is also inexplicable miracle. Obviously to turn two fish into thousands of fish is a miracle in itself. But how exactly does Jesus fill each basket with fish and bread and hand it to His disciples? What do they see while this is taking place?

Matthew 14:21 Now those who ate were about five thousand men, excluding women and children.	Mark 6:44 Now those who had eaten the bread amounted to five thousand men.
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The five loaves of bread and two fishes fed an amazing number of people. Luke puts the number of people near the beginning of this narrative; Matthew and Mark place it at the end.

John 6:14 Then when the men had seen the sign which Jesus had performed, they said, "This is truly the prophet who was to come into the world."

John 6:15 So Jesus, Who knew they would come and seize Him to make Him king, withdrew into the mountain alone.

This is a very odd note for John to end on. Jesus knew that this crowd of people would seize Him and make Him king. Therefore, He leaves them all there and withdraws to the mountains.

Bear in mind that Jesus is aware of the impending crucifixion (He will make mention of it twice in this chapter); so that He understands that this must be accomplished first before being made King. The cross must precede the crown.

## Jesus Feeds the 5000 — Four Accounts

**Matthew**

**Mark**

**Luke**

**John**

Even though Jesus is God, this does not mean that His omniscience is constantly at work and informing His humanity. I would suggest that Jesus, in His humanity, rarely or never accesses the attributes of His deity. Jesus knows about the cross—in part due to Psalm 22—but that does not mean He knows what is going to happen tomorrow or the day after that.

Anytime all four biographies reference the same event, it takes some work to integrate all that information. I had to go back over this chart at least a half-dozen times.

**Lessons 271–272: Luke 9:7–9, 18–19**

**Who is Jesus?**

At this point, between vv. 17 & 18 there is a great gap in the book of Luke, but Luke does not write anything himself to indicate this. This is something that we would not realize unless we place Luke's account side-by-side with the other gospels.

We have six events which track together (it is actually more than six events, but this is enough to understand what is happening).

### The Two Chapter Break (Ken Palmer/Gary Kukis)

Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Herod fears John the Baptist has risen	14:1-12	6:14-15	9:7-9	
12 return and they withdraw	14:13	6:30-32	9:10	6:1
Jesus teaches multitude	14:14	6:33-34	9:11	6:2
Jesus feeds 5,000	14:15-21	6:35-44	9:12-17	6:3-14

But then, something odd happens. Luke 9:18–62 continues to match up with Matthew and Mark, but we have jumped ahead two chapters in Matthew and two chapters in Mark.

Peter's confession	16:13-20	8:27-30	9:18–20	
Jesus foretells His death	16:21	8:31	9:21–22	

There are actually nine or so events which synch up starting at Luke 9:18 and moving forward. I only used two events to illustrate the Lukian gap (the time gap between vv. 17 and 18). These nine events, which will be covered in the next few sections, and the fact that they synch up with Matthew and Mark, are very important.

As you can see, we have the first four events all taking place in the same order in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Then we move forward in time two chapters (in Matthew and Mark), at which point, they all synch up again. (I believe that there are about nine events prior to v. 17 which match up; and nine events which match up starting in v. 18).

[http://www.onthewing.org/user/Gospel\\_Harmony.pdf](http://www.onthewing.org/user/Gospel_Harmony.pdf) accessed February 10, 2023. Although I have used this chart as a base, I have improved on it considerably.

There are nine mini-incidents which take place in Luke 9:18–56. These same nine incidents are found in the same order in the book of Mark, and also in the book of Matthew (save one). This pretty much guarantees that these things all took place in this particular order over a very short period of time (say, between 10 days and a few weeks). Furthermore, we know that this takes us nearly to the final ascent of Jesus into Jerusalem. In Matthew 16 and Mark 8, we are about to move into that final set of narratives. However, beginning at Luke 10, we are not really sure where we are with regards to chronology in Luke.

In the book of Luke, we have 8½ chapters which are placed in an unusual place (Luke 10–18.5). These 8½ chapters do not synch up with the material in Mark and Matthew.

I placed a chart of the [Nine Incidents](#) in the [chapter summary](#). One might better appreciate this after we have actually studied the nine events.

We need to consider the time element at this point. At Luke 9, we are not even halfway through the book of Luke (Luke is 24 chapters in all). However, bear in mind that Matthew is a book with 28 chapters in it. By the time that we get to the end of these nine incidents we will be in Matthew 18, which gets us much closer to the end of Matthew. Also, the parallel passages in Mark run through Mark 8 and 9; and Mark is only 16 chapters long. All of these books spend a considerable amount of time documenting the final week prior to the crucifixion (none of which is covered in Luke 10–18.5).

In Matthew 20, Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem and He is in Jerusalem in Matthew 21. Similarly, Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem in Mark 10; and He will be in Jerusalem in Mark 11. The point I am making here is, Luke 9 has us very close to Jerusalem (because it clearly matches up with Matthew 16 and Mark 8). However, with most of the book of Luke still remains after Luke 9 (Jesus enters Jerusalem in Luke 19).

When we get to the end of this chapter, I will set up some additional parallels between the books.

However, a part of what I am doing here is leading up to an overall organization for the book of Luke. Even though Luke is considered to be one of the synoptic gospels, this middle section does not match up with anything which takes place after Matthew 16 or after Mark 8.

What appears to be the case is, most of Luke, from Luke 1–9, is simply in chronological order (as is the end of the book of Luke, chapters 18b–24). In Luke 10–18a, we concentrate on the teachings of Jesus, with some additional information, but when exactly do these chapters take place? In Luke 19, Jesus enters into Jerusalem for His final week. That gives us a considerable question mark for those middle chapters. This is discussed in the Introduction to the Book of Luke ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) and in the [introduction](#) to this chapter. The table which compares Matthew, Mark and Luke will also come to some reasonable conclusions. That table will verify the location in time of the latter half of Luke 9. The second half of Luke 9 are the events which take place immediately prior to this final trek to Jerusalem.

In the second half of Luke 18, we have clear match-up with Matthew 20 and Mark 10. Because of Luke 18:31 (*And taking the twelve, He said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished.*—ESV; capitalized), we know that we are in the final weeks prior to the crucifixion (compare parallel passages Matthew 20:18 Mark 10:33).

To say this in another way, we do not know where Luke 10–18a should be placed in terms of chronology. We can match up everything before this section and everything after; but this middle section of Luke is a mystery (I will offer some very logical explanations at some point). At this point, I simply want you to be aware that something is off or odd about these middle chapters of Luke in regards to chronology.

The second thing to be aware of is, Luke 9 makes a quantum leap from v. 17 to v. 18. There may be almost two years missing between those two verses. At the same time, we maintain the theme of *Who is Jesus* despite the missing couple years (which is about to be discussed).

Luke 9:18a *Now it happened that as He was praying alone,...* (ESV; capitalized)

You will take note that there is no time-related transition here. We do not have, *and after these things* (as we had at the beginning of this chapter). We have moved ahead in time from v. 17 by perhaps a year or year and a half; maybe even two years.

Jesus is praying; and it says that he is praying alone. The adjective *alone* has a number and gender that I would not have expected (it is a feminine plural adjective). Perhaps, this does not mean that *Jesus is alone*, in the sense of no one else being near Him; but *by Himself* in the sense of no one praying with Him.

Luke 9:18b *...the disciples were with Him.* (ESV; capitalized)

Luke 1:1–9:17 are pretty much in chronological order; and the first year, year and a half of the Lord's public ministry is found in Luke 4:14–9:17. All you need to keep in the back of your mind is, at Luke 9:17, we are in the first year or two of the Lord's public ministry. But Luke 9:18 places us in the final month or two of the Lord's public ministry.

The question that Jesus poses to His disciples is more appropriate near the end of His public ministry. They have been with the Lord for two to three years, so they have a lot of information to draw from when it comes to answering the Lord's questions.

Luke 9:18c **And He asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?"** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus asks His disciples, "Who are people saying that I am?"

Thematically, Luke 9:18 is tied to Luke 9:7–9. That theme is, *Who is Jesus?* This allows us to jump through time nearly two years, because Luke continues with the same general theme (this same theme was continued from Luke 7:49 8:24–25). My point being, Luke appears to be considering a theme and allowing that theme to override chronology.

Jesus' question is not asking for the disciples to suppose or assume anything. They are out in the world and they hear things. Jesus is asking them, "What have you heard people call Me?" This would be in contrast to Jesus saying, "Who do you suppose that people *think* I am?"



Jesus is asking this question to eventually elicit from the disciples Who they think that He is. Jesus has determined that this is the correct time to give His disciples a test. Tests are not for the teacher; tests are for the students. Jesus, reviewing His students for the test, first asks, "Who do others say that I am?"

**"Who do the crowds say that I am?"** (a graphic); [Bible.com](https://www.bible.com); accessed October 12, 2023.

Luke 9:18 **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?"** (ESV; capitalized)

The transition appears to be unrelated to time. Luke chooses to allow this very important theme override chronological considerations. Between Luke 9:17 and Luke 9:18, about two years have taken place. This time is chronicled in Matthew and Mark, but it is not even referenced by Luke. I had to go through this section of Luke many times, compare it to Matthew and Mark, until it became clear to me that there is a problem with the chronology of Luke. There are actually two problems: (1) that jump in time between Luke 9:17 and 9:18; and (2) the proper chronological slot for Luke 10–18a. These are not problems, exactly. They simply indicate that chronology is not the key factor for Luke at this point.

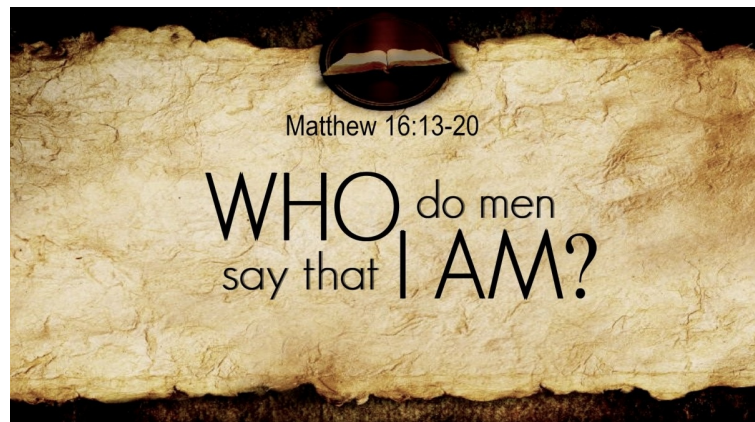
I recognize that what I have said about chronology and themes may not be perfectly clear yet. When we get to Luke 18:15, I will lay out the chronology of Luke, and it will be fairly simple and straightforward. Luke 18 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).



The reader who is aware of the other gospels ought to be jarred by this departure from strict chronology. There is something more important than chronology in this generally chronological book. That thing which is more important is, *Who is Jesus?*

Luke 9:18 **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?"** (ESV; capitalized)

What Jesus asks is strictly a factual question and the disciples will respond with factual answers. "What have you *heard* people call Me?" The disciples were out among the people in a way that the Lord was not. So they have heard people make statements or pose questions related to the Person of Jesus. Remember at the beginning of this chapter, Jesus sent the disciples out, so they have been exposed directly to the world and the people in it.



**WHO do men say that I AM** (a graphic); from [Hub Pages](#); accessed December 21, 2023.

There were several pieces of artwork with Jesus standing along with His disciples, but in the graphics I viewed, Jesus and his crew looked like a bunch of long-haired hippies. They weren't. So I chose graphics without people in them.

### **Who is Jesus?**

This question, or something very similar to it, is asked four times in this section of Luke. That is a theme which Luke choose to emphasize. It starts in Luke 7 and continue through Luke 9. That theme is: *Who is Jesus?* There is no more important question to answer. This fundamental theme reaches back to perhaps the end of the first year and continues to the end of the Lord's earthly ministry.

On many occasions Jesus was asked to go to dinner at the home of a pharisee and Jesus finally agreed to. When He arrived and assumed a position around the low table, a woman came in with a very expensive jar of oils and spices and she began to anoint the Lord's feet, washing them with her tears and wiping them with her hair. When she had completed this task, Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven you." The people in attendance were taken aback by this.

Luke 7:49 **Then those who were at table with Him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, Who even forgives sins?"** (ESV; capitalized)



Jesus forgave the sins of the woman who washed His feet with her tears. The people there could not make sense of this. Who is Jesus to forgive a person's sins? How can He even make such a brash claim?

On another occasion, Jesus had requested that His disciples take him across the lake. Jesus promptly fell asleep. A sudden storm struck their ship and it was overwhelming. The Lord's disciples could not stand it any longer. They had to wake up Jesus.

Luke 8:24 And they went and woke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And He awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they [the wind and raging waves] ceased, and there was a calm.

Luke 8:25 He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even winds and water, and they obey Him?" (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus has calmed a storm on the Sea of Galilee. The disciples, several of whom were experienced fishermen, were panicked by the storm—it was that bad. Furthermore, they asked one another, "Who can calm a storm like this?"

The third incident with this same theme is found early on in Luke 9. Herod the Tetrarch (also known as Herod Antipas) is the ruler of Galilee and Perea. He would have known about the herald John and about Jesus. In fact, this Herod imprisoned and then executed John. So, at some point, Herod begins to hear about Jesus and he asks various members of his staff just who this Jesus is.

Luke 9:7–9 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, by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen. Herod said, "John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he [Herod] sought to see Him [Jesus]. (ESV; capitalized)

Herod had heard about Jesus' ministry, which was taking place on his land (Herod was the ruler of Galilee and Perea). Herod did not know what to make of it.

Herod apparently makes these remarks to the staff around him. In fact, Herod directly asks his staff *Who is this Jesus?* His staff provides him with several bogus theories (which will match the theories of the people which the disciples will repeat to Jesus in the fourth increment of this theme).

Increment four:

Luke, as guided by God the Holy Spirit, jumps ahead in time in order to continue with this same theme.

As Luke is writing, he develops this theme. *Who is Jesus?* So, because of setting up these theme (it occurs three places so far); and then Luke includes the fourth place, which is actually very separate from the other three by time. But since it is on the same theme, it works. It is properly placed (even though we have jumped ahead in time about two years).

Remember that Luke did not experience any of these things firsthand that he wrote about, so chronology is less relevant to him than it would have been to Matthew and Mark. Luke talked to many men and women who were with Jesus and Luke arranged most of these incidents into chronological order and then wrote them down. Since Luke did not personally experience these events, it is easy to see how the stuff at the beginning of the Lord's life and ministry could be placed in a chronological order; and the things taking place at the end of His life could be easily set in order. However, we have all of these teachings and incidents taking place in the middle of the Lord's public ministry that Luke would have had more difficulty placing them.

Luke 9:18 *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?"* (ESV; capitalized)

This is the key question about Jesus; and key from the very beginning. Jesus' ministry is coming to a close, and the key question remains, *Who is Jesus?*

Speaking with the disciples, Jesus asks a setup question (the question His disciples are being set up to answer is, *Who is Jesus?*). "Who do the people think I am?"

*Who is Jesus?* is the fundamental question for every person in this world. This will be discussed in vv. 18–20.

Jesus wants His disciples to think about what is taking place. What do His teachings and miracles mean? So Jesus poses the question, "Who do others say that I am?" That will be a good start for them all.

Luke 9:19a *And they answered, "John the Baptist."* (ESV; capitalized)

Back in vv. 7–8, Herod the Tetrarch has heard about Jesus, and he asked around, to find out what people thought. "Who is this man?" One of his people suggested John the baptizer, and this is also what the disciples have heard.

Interestingly enough, this appears to be the most popular answer. This suggests that John's ministry was very well-known during this era. He may have been a lone voice

calling out in the wilderness (and for a relatively short period of time<sup>62</sup>), but many people knew about him. Also, based upon what Herod said, John is now dead (this is discussed in greater detail in Matthew 14:1–12 Mark 6:14–29).

Although John and Jesus are related (we are not sure exactly how), John had a very distinct appearance and a very distinct set of behaviors that set him apart from almost all other men. Objectively, when it comes to appearance and behavior, Jesus and John the baptizer had very little in common. Yet, saying that Jesus is John the baptizer is a popular notion at that time. How exactly would someone explain this, given that Jesus and John are about the same age? (John is six months older than Jesus). Obviously, these popular theories do not necessarily make logical sense.

A second popular theory is...

Luke 9:19b **But others say, Elijah,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Some believe Jesus is Elijah, a prophet who loomed large in the thinking of the people then. Some people thought about Jesus and John being the same and decided, “That does not make any sense.” The logical choice is someone who died long ago.

At least two of the disciples, James and John, hear this name and it sticks in their brain. Then later, Jesus will reveal His Shekinah Glory to these two men (and to Peter), and who is going to be there talking with Jesus? Moses and Elijah!

So what appears to be the case is, James and John are going to do a little personal Bible study on their own, and they are going to find out some stuff about Elijah. So, a few days or weeks later, when a Samaritan city does not want to hear from Jesus, James and John, trying to be helpful, ask, “Are we going to call for fire to come down and destroy this village?” (Luke 9:51–55).

Luke 9:19b **But others say, Elijah,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Elijah is an interesting choice. The people do not think Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah or Jeremiah, but Elijah. Elijah is certainly one of the most important prophets. Also, Elijah is the first of the grand tradition of prophets. At one time, the leaders of Israel could be depended upon for their wisdom and guidance (Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David and Solomon). However, it was getting to the point where the kings of Israel and Judah were so bereft of wisdom that God needed to regularly send prophets to them to get Israel and Judah on the right track. This tradition of prophets began with Elijah (see [Wednesday in the Word](#) for a chronological list of the prophets). There were a few prophets designated as prophets prior to Elijah, but their prophetic ministry was limited (like Nathan being sent to straighten out an adulterous King David).

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<sup>62</sup> This has been an assumption on my part, simply because the herald would be on stage for a much shorter time than the king whom he precedes.

Luke 9:19c ...and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen." (ESV; capitalized)

There is a third suggestion found among the people. It sounds as if, the people think that perhaps Jesus is an ancient but unspecified prophet Who has been raised up from the dead. The people knew that there was something very different about Jesus, although they could not come up with a reasonable theory as to what that was.

Interestingly enough, those in Nazareth, who knew Jesus growing up, could be out there and telling everyone just Who Jesus is (Jesus revealed Himself early on in Nazareth). However, that does not appear to be the case.

In any case, the answers given by the disciples are those same answers which were given to Herod the Tetrarch when he asked this same question. We just had this earlier in this chapter:

Luke 9:7–9 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, by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen. Herod said, "John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he sought to see Him. (ESV; capitalized)

So, these same three theories seem to continue throughout the Jewish regions. These theories persist over time, as what the disciples offer up is the same thing that Herod's servants said to him one or two years previous. So, for three years, these same three false theories about Jesus' identity persist.

Luke 9:18 Now it happened that as He was praying alone [apart from His disciples], the disciples were with Him. And He asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" (ESV; capitalized)

As discussed earlier, we are suddenly near the end of the Lord's public ministry (despite this being chapter 9 of a 24-chapter book). Jesus has been among the disciples for about three years, so they know the rumors and one of them has his own opinion.

Luke 9:19 And they answered, "John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen." (ESV; capitalized)

It is fascinating to me that, in both instances (Herod asks, "Who is this Jesus?" and Jesus asks, "Who do people say that I am?"), we get the same three answers. Jesus is not identified as the Messiah, even though that is Who He is. (There is actually a reason for this.) For this period of time in this limited region, Jesus is very well known. And many people have an opinion about Him. His disciples have direct contact with the people of Israel, so they all know how the people are thinking.

Jesus had a very specific reason for asking this question. He is allowing His disciples some time to think about Who Jesus really is.

Jesus questions to the disciples was very specific; and now He will give them another very specific question:

## Lesson 273: Luke 9:19–21

## Peter's Confession

Jesus has just asked the disciples to tell them what other people are saying about Him. Who do others think that He is? Then Jesus asks the more important question...

Luke 9:20a **Then He said to them, "But Who do you say that I am?"** (ESV; capitalized)

It is important to take note that we have jumped ahead in the Lord's ministry. We are now in the final few months of His public ministry (not including His post-resurrection ministry). Ideally speaking, given that time period, His disciples ought to know the answer to this. The disciples have spent three years with the Lord watching Him and listening to Him. They have heard nearly every word that He has said.

Jesus has His disciples thinking. They know what others have said, and they have told Jesus what they have heard.

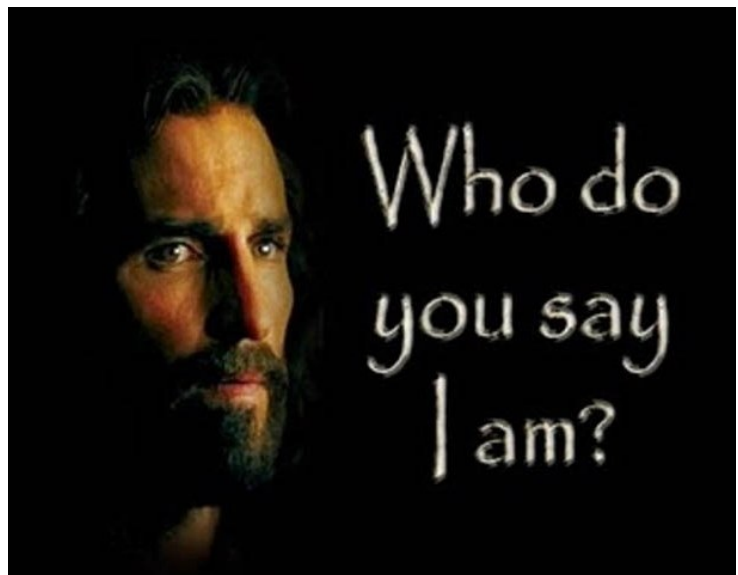
Jesus now turns to His disciples and directly engages them, using the emphatic *you [all]*. The 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural is found in the verb, but Jesus adds in the personal pronoun for emphasis. In other words, "I want you to set these other opinions aside. I want you to tell me what you all think. Who do you say I am?"

**"Who do you say that I am?"** (a graphic); from [Exceptional Christian](#); accessed October 12, 2023.

We all know that Peter is going to be the first one to jump in with his opinion.

Luke 9:20b **And Peter answered, "The Christ of God."** (ESV; capitalized)

Whereas, at least three disciples spoke to answer the Lord's previous question, Peter speaks right up, **saying, "[You are] the Messiah from God!"** The New Testament word *Christ* means *Messiah*. When you say *Jesus Christ*, you are not giving the Lord's first and last names; you are saying—probably inadvertently— "Jesus the Messiah." By using those two names together, you have identified Who Jesus is.



The Jewish unbeliever would *never* call Him, *Jesus Christ*. For most of them, these would be two words that one should never put together.

How many people have cursed using Jesus' name, not realizing that they are saying, *Jesus is the Messiah*? That is the very meaning of *Jesus Christ*. (By the way, the *H* stands for *He's*) (a little humor).

Luke 9:20 Then He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God." (ESV; capitalized)

It sounds like Peter had a ready answer. Peter knew this one, and he could not wait to blurt it out. He tells Jesus, "You are the Messiah of God." This is Who God had promised to send to Israel. Jesus is the fulfillment of that great promise.

This opinion has likely been with Peter for some time now. Interestingly enough, this was not a subject regularly discussed amongst the disciples (we have documented meetings between the disciples themselves, but I do not recall any of them discussing the identity of the Lord, which is a reasonably important topic).

Luke 9:21 And He strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one,... (ESV; capitalized)

What Jesus is telling them not to speak of is Peter's declaration that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. This is something that He did not want to be broadcasted in His ministry. Why not?

You will recall back in Luke 4, Jesus revealed that He is the Messiah of the Bible, and He was nearly stoned to death for saying that. That is, He read a passage in a synagogue and then said, "You have heard this fulfilled in your ears today!" That started an uproar. Jesus simply cannot have an uproar everywhere that He goes. Once a group of people get out of control (become a mob), there is no reasoning and no teaching which can take place. Once they are riled up, Jesus could not even give them the gospel message. They would not hear it.

Should we think that Jesus, when He announced Who He is was a misstep? That would seem to be illogical, given Who Jesus is. Jesus having done this makes it clear to us that Jesus could not go throughout the country and say, "I am the Messiah of God!" That would cause chaos; and here, He tells His disciples not to say this either.

It is fascinating that later in His ministry, He will be surrounded by religious Jews while on the Temple grounds, and they will demand of Him, "If You are the Christ [= the Messiah], tell us plainly." (John 10:24b; ESV; capitalized) Even then, Jesus will not give the simple, one-word answer which such a question calls for. However, He would often give an answer which is fairly clear: "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name bear witness about Me, but you do not believe because you are not among My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them



eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are One." (John 10:25b–30; ESV; capitalized) Immediately after, these Jews attempted to stone Him (John 10:31). Despite this very long answer, the Jews there correctly understood Jesus' answer to be, "Yes, I am the Christ." Let me suggest that the answer that Jesus gave is so lengthy that, it would have been impossible for anyone to give the testimony in court, "Jesus made Himself equal to God, because He said this..." All that Jesus said made sense, and He did claim to be the One sent by God; but no one would be able to give a full explanation as to what Jesus said and exactly what it meant. Hence, when Jesus is accused in court, His persecutors will be forced to lie, which they will do.

After Jesus is arrested and being tried in several venues, He is before the assembly of the elders of the people, and again asked this question. "If You are the Christ, tell us." (Luke 22:67a; ESV; capitalized) Even then, His answers are similarly oblique. See **Luke 22** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). We will, eventually, study this chapter in depth (that must seem like a long ways off).

Jesus had to have a public ministry of a reasonable length, yet He would pay for our sins as a young man (Jesus could only pay for our sins in His humanity, as His Deity could not have any contact with sin or with the penalty for sin).

For the simple reason of prolonging His earthly ministry, Jesus did not publically state, "I am the Messiah!" But He allowed others to, based upon their understanding of Him, to make this call (as Peter did). Such things were allowed in very limited settings with a very small audience. Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus strove to teach accurate information; He would generally avoid saying or doing things that would devolve into chaos. If He kept on saying, "I am the Messiah," everywhere that He went, a significant portion of the crowd would erupt into chaos.

After the earthly phase of His ministry was over, proclaiming Who Jesus Is was no longer masked by clever language. At the very end of the book of John, John states his reason for writing this book: **Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.** (John 10:30–31; ESV; capitalized) John gives a clear declaration of Who Jesus is. The gospel is a reasonable place to make such a statement.

Peter, at the end of his great first sermon at Pentecost, will conclude: **"Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made Him [Jesus] both Lord and Christ, this Jesus Whom you crucified."** (Acts 2:36; ESV; capitalized) This was now the time to proclaim clearly and unequivocally Who Jesus is.

Paul will state such things plainly as well. **And immediately [upon his conversion] he [Saul] proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."** (Acts 9:20; ESV; capitalized). See also Romans 1:4 Galatians 2:20 1John 4:15.

However, at this point in time—even in the final months of His public ministry—Jesus tells His disciples not to broadcast this message.

Anyway, Peter has just declared, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Accordingly, Jesus responded like this:

Luke 9:21 **And He strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one,...** (ESV; capitalized)

There would be a time to say these words plainly, but that time was not yet. Jesus required, in His earthly ministry, long periods of time where neither He nor His disciples would be in danger for their lives (that was so that Jesus could have a peaceful and uninterrupted earthly ministry). This also explains, in part, why Jesus ministry did not take place, for the most part, in Jerusalem and Judæa; but in the Galilee region. The concentrated religious nature of Jerusalem would have meant constant conflict for Jesus and His disciples. It would have been impossible for Jesus to teach in those circumstances.

Throughout the gospels, Jesus preferred for others to identify Him as the Savior, the Messiah, and the Son of God. But when He was personally asked a direct question, Jesus would answer almost in a riddle or with a very lengthy response.

I have read several theories on this, but let be specific about why Jesus did not plainly say, “I am the Messiah” out in public. There are actually two main reasons: (1) We already know that when Jesus makes a clear claim to being Messiah, some of the hearers will lose their minds and go after Him with violence (they would also go after His disciples). (2) Secondly, I believe that Jesus is keeping things so that no one can lay even a semi-legitimate offense against Him. Even though Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, if He stated either one of those truths publically, He could be immediately tried and punished, as this would be considered blasphemy (even though it is the truth). Furthermore, there would be 20 or 50 witnesses, all saying exactly the same thing, affirming the blasphemous statement. Part of the illustration of the crucifixion is, He will go to the cross based upon false information and lies. No one would be able to cite anything that Jesus has done that would be considered a punishable offense. He must go to the Roman cross without having a shred of evidence against Him. This more closely approximates the Lord taking on our sins in His Own body on the tree. This is because the crucifixion is a type (it represents God pouring our sins out upon the Lord). Obviously Jesus is undeserving of the crucifixion; and even more so of our sins.

So there is no confusion at this point, the crucifixion is a real event and Jesus actually suffered tremendous physical torment on the cross. However, this physical torment was not efficacious for our sins. During the crucifixion, God poured out the punishment for our sins upon the humanity of the Lord. It was that period of three hours when our sins were paid for.

**The Son of Man must suffer many things** (a graphic); from [Facebook](#); accessed October 12, 2023.

Luke 9:22a ...saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things...(ESV; capitalized)

Jesus did tell the disciples that the Son of Man would necessarily suffer many things. And, given the context, Jesus said this while affirming that He is the Christ.

This appears to be the first time that He says this; and it does not appear to penetrate the consciousness of the disciples.

Luke 9:22b ...and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes,...(ESV; capitalized)



Jesus would be clearly rejected by the religious class. Those people who were believed to be experts in the teaching of the Word of God would be the ones to reject Jesus, despite the fact that He is the Messiah (as just declared by Peter).

There will be more than a simple rejection. The chief priests, elders and scribes will push to have the Lord crucified on the cross (at this point in time, they cannot do this themselves).

Luke 9:22c ....and be killed,...(ESV; capitalized)

Jesus, on many occasions, warned the disciples that He would be put to death.

You may wonder, *how did the disciples not understand what was happening when Jesus was seized and taken to the cross?* Let me explain why: doctrine must be placed side-by-side with other doctrines, as doctrine is built upon doctrine. So, if there is no foundation for this or that doctrine, then it slips through the cracks. There is no place for that doctrine to be placed in the thinking of the disciples. Therefore, when Jesus spoke of His crucifixion, the disciples did not really consider it, did not really believe it, and, as a result, this doctrine disappeared from their thinking, even though they were told this particular doctrine several times. Furthermore, they had nothing else that they believed which was directly related to this suffering about which Jesus speaks. So, there is no place to put this doctrine.

In order for us to understand and retain Bible doctrine, it must be taken in and believed. We have to hear it and then we must believe it. If that does not occur, then it will not be retained.

There were several doctrinal connections to the crucifixion, but the disciples did not hold to any of them. From the Old Testament, there is Isaiah 53 (or Psalm 22). Doctrines need a place to go in your soul and interlock. If all of these related doctrines are brushed aside, there is no place for Jesus words to go.

Sometimes, when you hear an important doctrine, you may ignore it because it does not directly impact your life. Not only will you reject that doctrine (through a lack of interest) but you will reject many doctrines which would have interlocked with that doctrine.

Let's go back to what Jesus is saying to the disciples:

Luke 9:22d **...and on the third day be raised.**" (ESV; capitalized)

Despite suffering, being rejected, and killed, Jesus will rise up on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day. Jesus taught this a number to His disciples, but it apparently did not sink into their thick skulls. Surprisingly enough, this was not even believed by His female followers either (many of them went to the crucifixion, but they did not believe that He would be resurrected). All of these doctrines, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension all interlock. However, when one of them is rejected, there is no place for the related doctrines to go. So Jesus' disciples went all the way to the crucifixion, death and burial of our Lord, but without recalling that He told them all about this taking place.

**Tangent:** We read elsewhere that the resurrection is a part of the gospel, so what of these people who do not hear and believe in the resurrection of the Lord? Does that mean that they were not saved? Maybe sometime after the death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord, they believed? Let me explain: when it comes to salvation, you do not have to know it all and believe it all. All you have to do is believe in the Revealed God (who revealed Himself to be Christ Jesus). There may be a lot revealed to you all at once (maybe and maybe not), but all you need to understand are the very basics. Most of us, at gospel hearing, hear something about Jesus died for your sins or paid for them and, when you believe in Him, you are saved. For salvation, this is about all that we have to hear; and about all that we have to believe.

**Tangent:** When it comes to Christology and soteriology, there is a lot to know. The new believer understands barely a thimbleful of information. We are saved when we believe in that thimbleful of information. That's it. And we are eternally saved. Now, it is best, of course, that we learn all that we can; but we do not get more saved by that additional information. We become more oriented to the Christian life through knowing all of that additional information; we grow spiritually by learning and believing Bible doctrine.

**Tangent:** I have used myself as an example. When I believed in Jesus, I did not really know what happened after the crucifixion (despite celebrating 21 Easters up to that point).

So the gospel message I read (in John 3) did not have the resurrection in it. I still believed and I was still saved. At some point after I was saved, I found out about the resurrection, ascension and session. I believed those things as well. I was not re-saved or saved better or properly saved. That all happened when I first believed in Jesus. I simply learned more information and believed it (and I had a basic set of doctrines for those new doctrines to interlock with).

## Lessons 274–275: Luke 9:22–25

## Following Jesus

Jesus is speaking to His disciples and telling them what they should know about the immediate future (remember, at this point in Luke, Jesus is traveling toward Jerusalem for the last time—even though we are only in chapter 9).

Luke 9:22 ...[Jesus is] 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." (ESV; capitalized)

A fair question is, *how did Jesus know this?* Most people think, "Jesus is God, He is therefore omniscient; and He therefore knows the future." Jesus is clearly God. About that, there is no doubt. However, Jesus set aside his divine attributes for much of His earthly ministry (possibly all of it). This is the doctrine of Kenosis. Personally, I believe that He set aside His divine nature for His entire life. Primarily, I believe this for two reasons: (1) Jesus test-drove the spiritual life for believers in the Church Age. That is, we have what He had, in terms of spiritual assets.<sup>63</sup> (2) What Jesus did on the cross had to be accomplished in His humanity. His humanity needed to take upon our sins, as Deity cannot be confined to one place at one time. Furthermore, Deity cannot have any contact with sin. Also, there is no such thing as spiritual death for Deity. Therefore, our sins were imputed to Jesus the Man, when on the cross. Jesus as God could not have any sort of contact with our sins nor could He, as God, take upon Himself the punishment for our sins.

The imputation of our sins to Jesus is a judicial imputation, meaning that there is nothing in Jesus which attracted these sins or was a natural target for these sins. He had to, by an act of volition, accept each and every one of our sins and give the just payment for all of them (which was suffering and anguish beyond anything that we can know). Now, if Jesus, in His humanity, did the greatest thing (dying for our sins), then Jesus in His humanity can do the lesser thing, which is live a human life, apart from accessing His Deity. This is known as a *fortiori* reasoning. It is working backward in time, but the reasoning is still solid. If Jesus can do the most unimaginable thing (take upon Himself our sins) then He is able to live a life on earth as a man without calling upon His Own Deity. If Jesus can do the greater thing, then He is certain capable of doing the lesser thing.

Jesus was a prophet in His humanity, so some things were revealed to Him. I believe that this gift of prophecy was mixed in with His reading of **Genesis 22** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))

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<sup>63</sup> Jesus could perform signs and healings, but these were done so that He could reveal Himself as from God.

**Psalm 22** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) and Isaiah 53 (at some point, I need to do at least this chapter).

Luke 9:21–22 **And He strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, 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."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus ties Peter's confession (v. 20) to the crucifixion (vv. 21–22). What the disciples were not supposed to talk about is what Peter said out loud, that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah) of God. Even though this is true, this was not to be their message to the public at this point in time. This is because whenever Jesus stated this plainly, then it started a near riot. Jesus' ministry is not about starting a riot here, and then traveling to the next city to start a riot there.

There are a series of incidents which seem to follow one another (Peter proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ, Jesus telling His disciples not to reveal this to anyone else, Jesus warning the disciples what was going to happen to Him, and this discourse on how one must lose his life to save it, and the Mount of Transfiguration). We find the same nine incidents/discourses in the exact same order here and in Matthew 16:13–17:13 and Mark 8:27–9:1. This would suggest that this series of incidents all occurred in this exact chronological order. It is very possible that many of these incidents took place on the same day (except for the [Transfiguration of Jesus](#), which takes place 8 days later).

Even though these many incidents seem to be quite momentous, bear in mind that the disciples are with Jesus, so having four momentous things happen on the same day would not be out of the question.

What I find interesting in the following passage is, insofar as we know, the Lord's disciples (to whom He is speaking) do not ask Him to clarify these remarks or to explain what He means. Recall that earlier, when His disciples did not understand a parable, they took Him aside and asked Him the meaning. Do they fully appreciate the meaning here? Some of these things which Jesus is saying are rather difficult for the disciples to understand. I would posit, in fact, that none of the disciples understood what He was saying. However, they were so much at a loss that they did not even ask Him to explain.

In any case, this is one of the best passages for you to read each and every translation along with their notes, and comments. There is a lot to unpack here.

Luke 9:23a **And He said to all, "If anyone would come after Me,..."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus means here, *if anyone would choose to follow Him*.

Jesus is certainly speaking to His disciples here, because they are the ones who are following Him and who are listening to everything that He says.



Note that in the disciples' minds, they believe that they have forsaken all to follow Him. These are men, some of whom had successful businesses and reasonably good lives, and yet, they left those things behind to follow the Lord. Matthew was a tax collector and, by the brief information that we know about him, he was quite successful in this work. He was wealthy enough to organize a dinner for Jesus and, presumably, some or many of His followers. Matthew left that behind. Peter, John and James all have fishing businesses. Now, whereas, we are less certain about their businesses and their relative success, they were certainly making a living. It appears that they owned the ships that they fished from, so that would have been an indication of success. Furthermore, they apparently enjoyed the work as well, as they will return to it now and again.

When Jesus says these words, the disciples may be thinking, "Obviously, I want to follow You; I am here right now, aren't I?" But if they were thinking this, they did not say it aloud.

Jesus then adds something to *if anyone would come after Me...*

Luke 9:23b **...let him deny himself...** (ESV; capitalized)

Every man there, sitting at the Lord's feet (and women, as Luke has told us about the women who followed the Lord) had dreams and desires for their own lives. Even the aimless young man who is working has, more or less, the general idea of making enough money to afford the things that he wants; and may expect to own a home or have a family (many of these expectations are very closely related to how this boy was raised).

Although the people in the United States are moving further and further away from establishment norms, people still have some set of things which they expect in life (even if these are crazy, left-wing expectations of a society with more equal outcomes).

Jesus is saying, "The person who wants to follow Me must set these things aside. He must, in fact, deny these things to himself."

Then Jesus adds one more thing to what a follower must do.

Luke 9:23c **...and take up his cross daily...** (ESV; capitalized)

Based upon the crucifixion of the Lord, it appears that the Romans enjoyed forcing a man to carry the post upon which he would be crucified. I would assume that this is the crosspiece which would be on top of the post. It was heavy, but many strong men could manage it. Carrying the means of your final miserable death would be the final act of humiliation of a person who is about to be crucified.

Jesus speaks to His disciples about lifting up and carrying that cross (or post) every day. All of the Lord's disciples, except for John, would come to untimely martyr's deaths

(according to tradition); and at least one of them would be on a cross (Peter would apparently be crucified upside down<sup>64</sup>).

These men are marching towards their own deaths, and Jesus is telling them to pick up and carry their cross (or post or crosspiece) each and every day. Essentially, what the disciples did, by fully following the Lord, was provide the basis for their indictments by Rome. By following the Lord, they were choosing to walk towards this end.

As an aside, it is interesting that John seemed to hear and understand these warnings that Jesus issued about His Own untimely death; and John went to the crucifixion. He clearly had not put everything together (as he seems to have doubted the Lord's resurrection), but he seemed to know that he should attend the crucifixion. Tradition has it that John did not die a martyr's death (we seem to have more evidence of this, given that John testifies that he is on the Isle of Patmos in Revelation 1:9). I do believe that these things are related. That is, because he went to the Lord's crucifixion, he was allowed to live out a very full life and die in peace on the Isle of Patmos.

The final part of Jesus' mandate reads:

Luke 9:23d **...and follow Me.** (ESV; capitalized)

The person wanting to be the Lord's disciple must take up his cross each day and follow the Lord. The present tense, imperative mood, means, that they *must keep on following* Him.

Luke 9:23 **And He said to all, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is telling His followers, "You need to do more than simply follow Me. You must deny yourself and take up your cross daily and follow Me."

At that point in time, following Jesus had a tremendous price associated with it. Not all of the believers with Jesus at this time are aware of that cost. However, for several centuries, believers risked their lives to believe in Jesus and then to follow Him (by following the teachings of Paul and others).

**Tangent:** Admittedly, I was raised during a period of time in the United States when Christianity was not seen as a negative or as a problem. I have, for my entire life, been able to attend church publically and take in the Word of God daily by means of R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s legacy ministry. However, there are many places throughout the world where the believer who follows Christ is taking up his cross, and putting himself in the line of fire simply for believing in Jesus and wanting to understand the Word of God.

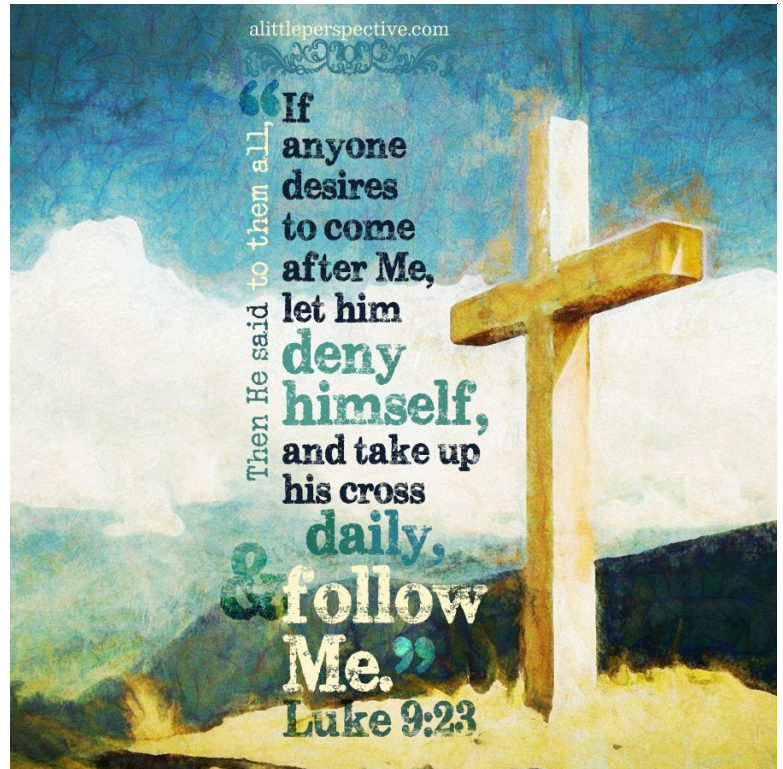
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<sup>64</sup> This is as per his request, as he did not feel worthy of being crucified like the Lord. Again, we know this by tradition, but apparently, not by historical documents of that same era.

**Application:** Under the laws of divine establishment, virtually any nation is a good place for believers to live. When these laws are rejected, every Christian organization is placed into danger, along with the human freedom of all that nation's citizens.

**Illustration:** The United States has been for much of its history a nation governed by the laws of divine establishment. Not perfectly, but reasonably close to those divine laws. The United States has also been a haven for the Jews, and this makes the United States a very safe place to live.

**Luke 9:23 (NKJV)** (a graphic); from [A Little Perspective](http://alittleperspective.com); accessed October 12, 2023.



The cross pictured in the graphic, though very popular, is not representative of the actual Roman cross upon which the Lord will be crucified. The true cross looked more like a "T" than a "†." The longer piece would up upright and in the ground, and a shorter crosspiece was placed on top of it. The modern-day † symbol is often used to represent the crucifixion and is found at virtually every Christian church in one form or another. However, there is nothing magic about that symbol, and wearing one around your neck is not going to make you safer or give you good luck or anything like that. Holding onto a miniature cross is not going to make your prayers more effective or bring you closer to Jesus. What is key in the Christian life is the information which is in your soul, not some physical accouterment that you can carry around.

Jesus continues with this lesson to His disciples:

Luke 9:24a **For whoever would save his life will lose it,...** (ESV; capitalized)

The disciple who wants to preserve his own life will end up losing it. This is illustrated by Judas, who betrayed the Lord. Near the end of the Lord's ministry, Judas may have come to the realization that this movement led by Jesus was coming to an abrupt end. We do not know all that the pharisees said to him. We do not have the full story of his motivation, apart from the bribe of 30 pieces of silver. Perhaps the pharisees said or implied to Judas, "Listen, we will find this Man and take Him and crucify Him. Do you want to die with Him or do you want to help us?"

Essentially, Judas, by betraying Jesus, was getting a little money ahead, to move on to the next phase of his life. In other words, Judas was simply looking to save or preserve his own life. However, as we will find out near the end of Luke, he will be the first disciple to lose his life (Judas will die by his own hand). So Judas very much illustrates these words of Jesus.

What Jesus is teaching is emphasis, not absolutes. It is normal for you to have a job, to work, to save, to acquire various things as life goes forward. Jesus is not saying, “You cannot do that! Leave your life and move into a monastery! Get a pair of sandals, an outfit like I am wearing, and start traveling town-to-town to spread the gospel.” The focus of the believer’s life is Jesus Christ, but, because He is not on this earth in bodily form, we follow Christ by apprehending His thinking (which is Bible doctrine—1Corinthians 2:16). There are only a few instances where a believer’s life is turned upside down by believing in Jesus. If you have been given the gift of evangelism, of pastor-teacher or missionary, what you had planned to do and what you should do can be very different. However, there are millions more believers who do not have any of those three gifts. For you, your mission field might be your job site or your family. This does not mean that you spout out the gospel message every half hour; or constantly share memorized verses with those around you. You learn Bible doctrine and when God places an opportunity in front of you, you seize it. Throughout your life, what should be foremost in your thinking is Bible doctrine. Your day-to-day life should reflect your faith.

**Application:** Christianity is not an anti-materialism movement, per se. There are several in the early Christians who appear to have been wealthy (Joseph of Arimathea, Zacchaeus, Matthew; the Roman Centurions, Lydia, Dorcas, Barnabas and Philemon). When it comes to the believer’s person choices of, *how much do I keep, how much do I give away?*; those choices are between themselves and God. Such choices also involve the circumstances of the day and the people with whom these Christians associate (if there is a need, then God will inform you of that need in one way or another).

**Application:** Let’s say you have wealth; let’s say that you are successful. What do you do? The exact same thing I would suggest to the person who is poor; or the person who finds himself somewhere in the middle—you take in Bible doctrine and you grow spiritually. You allow Bible doctrine and life to determine what you are going to do. Establish an orphanage in the Philippines, locate good missionaries and support them; support your local church, etc. Bible doctrine and life intermix, and we determine through the guidance of God the Holy Spirit what to do. In order to make any big decisions, you need to grow spiritually.

**Application:** I am not telling you to give money to any specific place or person; and you may not be in a position to give money to anyone. This all comes in time, and giving money is one of many things that the believer has the privilege of doing. Let me suggest that, at some point in your spiritual life, if you continue to grow, you will recognize your gift and your service as a privilege. Being given the opportunity to produce divine good is the most sacred thing which God allows you to do.

**Application:** If you believe that you have a communication gift (beyond personal, one-on-one evangelism), then you guide your life in that direction, preparing yourself in whatever way is possible. However, for most believers, you simply move forward spiritually by growing in grace and in Bible doctrine (truth), exactly as the humanity of Jesus did (Luke 2:40, 52).

**Application:** If you reach spiritual maturity and have any monetary reserves, then you make these decisions yourself. You determine where to give your money.

**Application:** During the time of spiritual growth, you should not make any radical decisions (if you can help it; I had to make a fairly radical decision about 5 years after I was saved). You just keep on absorbing Bible doctrine, ideally speaking, as the result of attending a local church where doctrine is taught.

**Application:** In the United States, where it is clear that we are heading toward national discipline, it would be circumspect for some believers to move to an area where Bible doctrine is taught (if you cannot find a local church where the emphasis is on the teaching of the Word of God). Even though there are means by which you can acquire Bible doctrine without going to a church, bear in mind these two things: (1) we are not to forsake the assembly of ourselves together (which can take place even if there is no doctrinal pastor in your city); and (2) when national disasters begin to occur, you want to be living in the same neighborhood as other growing believers. You do not necessarily want to be the only doctrinal believer left in your city (recall when Abraham interceded for the city of Sodom, and he got God to agree, "If there are ten righteous there, you will not destroy the city, right?" God agreed to that and then destroyed Sodom).

**Application:** When I suggested that you can assemble without there being a doctrinal pastor present, I am suggesting that you gather with people of a like mind and use the teaching of another pastor to function as your authority (through whatever electronic means you are able to use). If there are others interested in the teaching of the Bible, you meet with them and use these electronic means to provide that essential teaching for you.

Let's go back to our study. Recall, we began with:

Luke 9:24a **For whoever would save his life will lose it...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus continues this thought in v. 24b:

Luke 9:24b **...but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.** (ESV; capitalized)

On the other hand, the man who is willing to give up his life, or set his own dreams and aspirations on hold, and follow the Lord, that man will save his life. He will preserve himself from death and destruction. So, despite all Rome being against the disciples, they will both live full and joyous lives, and they will spend eternity with the Lord. Furthermore, they will have eternal rewards, despite their failures.



We should not lose sight of the fact that Jesus is speaking to His disciples, those who would evangelize the Roman Empire and further out. These believers lived during an amazing period in history where they could actually be with the Son of Man as He taught, moving from city to city. This specific privilege carried with it a great responsibility. These men to whom the Lord spoke directly, day after day, would be responsible for spreading the word about Jesus, and they would face great persecution while doing it.

Our human life on this planet is limited. We might live 60 years; we might live 100 years; but there will be a point at which we will die. No matter how much we have accumulated by way of possessions up to that point in time, we will die and wherever we go, the possessions stay behind (and, in some cases, people may fight over what is left behind for decades after<sup>65</sup>). What is far more important is, where are you in eternity? Where will your body and soul be? The time that we spend here on earth is but a moment compared to eternity. Human experience or human life on this planet in fact, is just a moment compared to where all people will be after death.

Luke 9:24 **For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.** (ESV; capitalized)

**Application:** This does not mean that, one month after you are saved, do you just *give yourself over to the Lord* in some form or fashion. You don't quit your job to work around the church; you don't necessarily do anything which is crazy-radical. However, as you grow spiritually, it becomes apparent that your life is not your own, but you have been bought with a price. You simply allow the Word of God to guide you (again, through the teaching of a well-qualified pastor-teacher as you are rarely going to gain any insight by studying the Bible for yourself).

**Application:** To be crystal clear of this point, the Bible does not say, "Read me every day and you are going to be alright." There is the spiritual gift in the Church Age of the pastor-teacher. You need to be under the teaching of a well-qualified pastor-teacher. If you are not, you are spinning your spiritual wheels.

Jesus, at this time, was referring specifically to His disciples and where they were going in their lives. They had, for all intents and purposes, given up, or set aside, their former lives, to follow Jesus.

Luke 9:25a **For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus now focuses in on the man who lives life to accumulate wealth (or to accumulate whatever). How is he profited if he gains the whole world? (That is a statement of hyperbole.) Obviously, no man gains the whole world. There are men with great wealth today, and some of them have great power and influence. But all of those men will pass

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<sup>65</sup> I just saw a special on the estate of Prince and most of those who want what he left behind had little or nothing to do with his actual life.



away, just as all wealthy and powerful men have passed away in the past. How sad if they leave this life, having only wealth in their earthly accumulation.

At the time that I write this, President Obama is no longer president, but he appears to have accumulated great wealth, to the point of being able to purchase a very large, ocean-front property. At one time, he was possibly the most powerful man in the world; and now, he is considerably wealthy, no doubt in the top 1%. Did he believe in Jesus Christ? We don't know. He claims to be a Christian, but he made a great many statements during his campaign which were clearly false. Furthermore, many people have no idea that being a Christian is not adhering to a set of principles or following the teachings of the Lord, but placing one's faith in the Person of Jesus Christ. Obama's considerable power is now behind him (although he still wields considerable influence) and his wealth is growing; but what profit is this if he loses his own soul?

At the time that I write this (I began to write this chapter in 2018), Donald Trump is president, and he is the most powerful man in the world; and one of the richest (being far more wealthy than former presidents Bush, Clinton and Obama combined). Where is his life, spiritually speaking? We have no idea. He has aligned himself with many prominent Christians, but has he clearly professed Jesus Christ? I honestly don't know. In terms of wealth and power, there will probably not be a president like Trump for a long time; but what profit is it to a man who gains the whole world and yet loses his own soul?

Now, don't misunderstand me: I am not saying that either man (Obama or Trump) is lost. I do not know what they have believed. If they have believed in Jesus Christ, then they will spend eternity with the Lord and with us as well. If they haven't, then they are enjoying their greatest success at this time. It won't get any better for either man.

**Tangent:** And, if you will allow me this brief tangent, we will discover in eternity who were the real movers and shakers in the United States, and we will probably find out that neither of these men (Trump or Obama) were the most important or powerful men in the United States. The true power and influence in this country could be in the hands of a small women's prayer group or a handful of doctrinal teachers. We may not be able to fully appreciate this today, but when you look back on ancient 1<sup>st</sup> century Rome, who were the real movers and shakers? Who determined the direction that Rome would go? Jesus and His disciples (including the women who followed Him). They had the true power and influence in the first century. Furthermore, Roman emperors came and went; but the words of Jesus and the power of Jesus still stand even today, 2100 years later.

Will Durant, a writer of ancient history (he wrote an 11-volume set known as the *Story of Civilization*), but not a believer, wrote this: *There is no greater drama in human record than the sight of a few Christians, scorned or oppressed by a succession of emperors, bearing all trials with a fiery tenacity, multiplying quietly, building order while their enemies generated chaos, fighting the sword with the word, brutality with hope, and at last*

*defeating the strongest state that history has ever known. Cæsar and Christ had met in the arena, and Christ had won.*<sup>66</sup>

**Tangent:** We know a few historical figures from that time: Nero, the various Herods, Pontius Pilate—but the person who has affected my life more than any other is Jesus, followed by the teaching of Paul. Those other men, though feared and respected by men of their era, mean little to me, apart from them being interesting footnotes in the history of mankind. At no time do I stress over the things that Nero did, and say to myself, “My life would have been so different had he zigged instead of zagged.” My life is not affected at all by what Nero did. However, my life is affected every single day because of the dying of Jesus for my sins and the Church Age doctrine provided by Paul for my daily life.

Luke 9:25a **For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world...** (ESV; capitalized)

I repeat this portion of v. 25 so that you have the context.

Luke 9:25b **...and loses or forfeits himself?** (ESV; capitalized)

The man who lives just for himself and his own appetites is the man who will destroy himself and the man who will lose himself. Many such men will never consider the Lord. They may use His name a hundred thousand times in order to express their emotions, but they will never cling to Him as their Lord and Savior. If you do not depend upon Jesus, then you will destroy your own life; you will lose yourself.

Solomon, in fact, writes about such a man—himself—in **Ecclesiastes 1** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD—zip](#)) and **Ecclesiastes 2** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD—zip](#)). Solomon is an example of a man who lived for himself, to satisfy his every want and desire. And he was not entirely inward-focused; he built great buildings for his people (with their money, of course). He decided that it was all vanity and chasing after wind. Solomon, one of the great men of history, saw his own life as vanity and chasing after wind (this is because he strayed spiritually from what he knew was right). For much of his life, he was the poster child for gaining the whole world, but losing or forfeiting himself. (Solomon was saved, but he spend a consider portion of his life in earthly pursuits.)

Luke 9:25 **For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?** (ESV; capitalized)

Let me draw an analogy at this point. Let me illustrate v. 25 using a man and a woman in a marriage. Let’s say that the man’s focus in marriage is on himself. Let’s say that he spends his life trying to meet his own needs. Every day, he tries to find a succession of things which make him happy (I am talking about within the confines of a marriage). How happy and fulfilling do you think that marriage is going to be? Now let’s say that this same man focuses at least half of his time on his wife, thinking about her, caring for her, doing

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<sup>66</sup> <https://quotepark.com/quotes/1817444-will-durant-there-is-no-greater-drama-in-human-record-than-the/> accessed December 8, 2023.

for her. Now how do you think that marriage is going to be? A married man who is focused only upon himself is like the man who gains the whole world, but loses his marriage and loses his wife.

Our lives are more fulfilled when we are focused on God. Now, this does not mean that we stand around and stare up, off into space. We focus upon God by learning His Word. That primarily happens through the work of a pastor-teacher.

Now, I was spoiled as a young and not-so-young believer by being able to attend Berachah Church during its heyday. R. B. Thieme, Jr. was teaching 8 or 9 times a week and he worked his brain to the bone, so to speak, to provide us with Bible doctrine. Admittedly, I took that for granted (as did many of us), but in retrospect, I recognize that time as being fundamental to my growth as a believer (as a very rebellious believer, I should add). Many pastor-teachers who have come out of Berachah have found out that, not every body of believers wants this much teaching; and also that teaching this much is not very easy.

In most churches, to get the most out of what they have to offer, you listen to past lessons, past studies; and you re-listen as well. Even today, I listen to Bob's teaching from 40 or 50 years ago. You would think by now that milk would have gone stale (or that the meat would have gone bad), but it hasn't! That is because he was teaching the Word of God. God's Word is timeless!

Luke 9:23–25 **Then Jesus [lit., He] said directly to them, “If one wants to follow Me, [then] he must disavow [or, deny] himself and bear up his cross [each] day and he must keep on following Me. For whoever wants to save his life, he will destroy [or, lose] it; and whoever destroys [or, loses] his life because of Me, this one will save it [or, preserve himself from destruction]. For what profit [is it] to a man [who] gains the whole world, but he destroys or loses himself?** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The person who thinks that life is all about going out there and getting for yourself will find that it is empty and chasing after the wind. Exactly as Solomon described 3000 years ago.

## **Lesson 276: Luke 9:26–27**

## **“Whoever is Ashamed of My Words”**

Jesus continues teaching His disciples. Luke 9:23–27 is some of the most powerful teaching that we will study.

Luke 9:26a **For whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus now speaks about anyone who is ashamed of Him and His words.

The verb is the aorist passive subjunctive of epaischunomai (ἐπαισχύνομαι) [pronounced *ehp-ahee-SHOO-nom-ahee*]. It means, *to feel shame for something, to be ashamed*. Strong's #1870. The aorist tense would refer to various points of time. You might not be ashamed of the teaching of Jesus all of the time, but maybe in certain circumstances you

are, maybe when interacting with friends or family, you are. So it is not always, but it is sometimes. The passive voice means that you feel that the action of the verb happens to you, even though you are the one making the decision to feel shamed. The subjunctive mood means that some who heard Jesus were like this; but others listening to Him were not.

Now, right here, Jesus is not speaking to just any crowd, but to His disciples, which would have likely included His female followers. These women would have believed in Him and followed Him and listened to His teaching. There would have been the twelve disciples chosen by Jesus; and there would have been others who traveled with Jesus at this time (these might number even in the hundreds).

It is worthy to note that, even though the Lord's female followers were the most faithful of His followers, He still chose men to be the leaders and teachers (the 12 disciples).

*Being ashamed of His words* means that this person has rejected Bible doctrine as integral to their life. Anyone who is ashamed of Bible doctrine is not going to grow spiritually in the Christian life. There will simply be too many times and circumstances where they back off on Bible doctrine because they are ashamed of the teaching.

Luke 9:26b ...of him will the Son of Man be ashamed.... (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus warns that the Son of Man (referring to Himself) would be ashamed of those who are ashamed of Him.

We should understand this to mean that Jesus would not be giving such a one a reward. Given that Jesus is speaking to His disciples here (and not just to a miscellaneous group who have gathered here), He is referring to believers who have been ashamed of Him.

When one becomes a teenager and develops some teen friends, then they are often ashamed of their parents. They don't want to be seen with them; they don't want them showing up to this or that event (although most children like their parents there to see them compete in sports).

Concerning such ashamedness, a child never fully appreciates all that his parents have done for him—the sacrifices, the sleepless nights, the worry, the changing of diapers, the hard work to provide a good environment. As a teen, few have the depth of thinking or even the slightest understanding of what their parents have done for them to that point. Therefore, being ashamed of one's parents is an easy thing for them to do.

The believer in Jesus Christ who has not grown spiritually and, therefore, is not willing to speak of the Lord. He has no appreciation for what God has done to save him, and is often unwilling to share this information with anyone else. Again, that person will not be rewarded in eternity (apart from having a resurrection body and eternal life).

Luke 9:26c ...when He comes in His glory... (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus says that the time that He will be ashamed of such men is when He comes in His glory. This will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent. The 1<sup>st</sup> advent is when Jesus walked on this earth and went to the cross to die for our sins. The 2<sup>nd</sup> advent is when He will return to earth—and in this return, the Lord will be in His glorified state.

Luke 9:26d ...and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. (ESV; capitalized)

When Jesus returns, it will be with the glory of His Father and the holy angels. The glory of God the Father and God the Son is a manifestation of the Shekinah Glory. Later in this chapter, Jesus will take some of His disciples aside and reveal this glory, to a limited degree.

Somehow, when Jesus returns, it will be in His Own glory but along with the glory of the Father. Exactly what this means would be difficult to say. Let me suggest that there is a unified action of the Father, the Son and of the elect angels. Exactly what man on earth will see is difficult to quantify. However, we are told that, when Jesus returns, every eye will be upon Him.

God has allowed the angels to manifest themselves visually to us at various times (such as at Jacob's ladder). However, there is no indication that any believer in the post-canon period will actually see angels during his life on earth (or, if we see them, we will not be able to distinguish them as such).

Luke 9:26 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. (ESV; capitalized)

Although this describes the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent, it would be difficult to have a concrete visual today of what that is going to look like. Jesus will first take us believers from the earth with Him; and then He will return seven years later to deliver the Jews, who will be surrounded by four massive armies.

The Lord's ashamedness does not mean that Jesus will reject us, saying, "You were not a faithful enough servant; so you have no part in heaven." The believer ashamed of the Lord will simply miss out on all of the rewards that other believers will receive. 2Timothy 2:12–13 ...if we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us [rewards]; if we are faithless, He remains faithful—for He cannot deny Himself. (ESV; capitalized)

With v. 27, we move into a different section; but this is still a part of what Jesus was saying to His disciples.

Luke 9:27a But I tell you truly,... (ESV; capitalized)

Many times, these words are translated *truly I say to you* or *verily I say to you*. But is not everything that the Lord says *truth*? Are there degrees of truthfulness, and He is now

saying, *okay, I know that you have been nodding off during My lecture, but I want you to get this particular point.* I don't see it that way. I see this as a truth which will impact some of these men in the very near future (specifically, eight days from now).

When teaching the uninitiated, sometimes you have to show how the doctrine affects them personally. Now, a person who has not grown spiritually might not fully appreciate things which do not affect him directly—such as, a study of the Tabernacle or of the Levitical sacrifices—but when you start to teach about love and interacting with one's mate, well, that captures their attention.

There are three men there standing before the Lord who will see something unlike anything that they have ever seen before. They will see the Lord in His Shekinah Glory. They will have a taste of what the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent will be like.

Luke 9:27b ...there are some standing here... (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is speaking to the twelve and to His female followers and perhaps there are other disciples (students) there as well. There is a subset of that group—specifically, Peter, James and John—to whom the Lord is speaking.

Incidentally, this strikes me as interesting that the Lord might be teaching, and the disciples are listening while standing up.

Luke 9:27c ...who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God." (ESV; capitalized)

With the passage of time, we in the Church Age differentiate between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> advents (appearances) of the Lord. It is a natural thing to do. However, there was no such clear differentiation at this time. Jesus fully understood and appreciated the differences; but He rarely taught anything about these two advents.

Now, these two advents can be found side-by-side throughout the Old Testament. In retrospect, we can view these passages and separate them into two separate advents, but the people of that era did not do this. Even when Jesus did this for them in Luke 4:16–30, they did not get it.

One of the great problems for Jewish unbelievers is, they may believe in the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent of their Messiah, but they have rejected the 1<sup>st</sup> advent of Jesus Christ (Who is their Messiah). They want the crown, but they reject the cross. They want the Conquering Messiah, but they reject the Suffering Servant. They have read the relevant passages, and they rejected that which they did not like or understand (the 1<sup>st</sup> advent) and only believed a portion of the prophetic material about the Messiah (the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent). They only believed what they wanted to believe.

Interestingly enough, some skeptics today who know a little about these prophecies say that Jesus should be rejected because He did not fulfill every prophecy in the Old



Testament. So they accept the 1<sup>st</sup> advent, in a limited way; but they reject the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent, thinking that Jesus should have done everything at that time (if He was truly the Messiah).

Jesus is fully apprehended when one understands His 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> advents.

The disciples had accepted Jesus as their Savior. They did not fully understand what lie ahead, but they believed in Jesus as He presented Himself in His 1<sup>st</sup> advent.

Luke 9:27 **But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.**" (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is telling these disciples that some of them would experience something akin to the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent. You see, Jesus has just described the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent to His disciples, and He looks around at glazed eyes and blank faces. "What the heck are You going on about now?" some of them might be quietly wondering. Vv. 23–27 could be understood as all related to the individual believer in the end times, prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent.

So Jesus tells them that they will see Him glorified before their very eyes, a transformation that no one has seen to this point in time. Seeing Jesus glorified will be their vision of the Kingdom of God. That is because Jesus is the King of the Kingdom of God; and therefore, seeing the King face to face is the most important aspect of the Kingdom of God.

All of this is going to take place, eight days in the future (vv. 28–36). Some translations begin this transformation narrative at v. 27 (the Niobi Study Bible) others at v. 28 (the Spoken English Bible and W. Pickering's NT).

It is alleged by some that the disciples believed that the Lord would return in their lifetime, and this is probably true—for some of them at various times. The Lord's disciples did not understand everything—and this includes the great Apostle Paul. One of the amazing things of the Church Age is, we believers can actually understand more than the Apostle Paul. God has given us every piece of the puzzle.

How much the disciples understood at any given time is a moot point. Nevertheless, there are clues here that they would die before His return (at least, some of them). If there are some disciples standing here who will not taste death until they experience the Kingdom, then there are disciples standing there who *would* taste death before experiencing the Kingdom of God (see how that logic works?).

Luke 9:27 **But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.**" (ESV; capitalized)

What three of the disciples would see is the glorified Christ. Jesus, when He rules over the earth, will do so in a glorified state. When Jesus returns for the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent, this will be Jesus in His glorified state. Therefore, seeing Him glorified is consider equivalent to seeing the Kingdom of God. What is the most important aspect of the Kingdom of God? The King!

Luke 9:26–27 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. But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God." (ESV; capitalized)

There is no crown without the cross; there is no Conquering Messiah without the Suffering Servant.

Now let's tie these two verses together. Who is ashamed of Jesus and His words? Those who reject Him in the 1<sup>st</sup> advent. Who will Jesus be ashamed of when He returns in His glory in the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent? Those who have rejected Him in His 1<sup>st</sup> advent. It is a package deal. In order to appreciate and look forward to the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent, a person must first believe in the 1<sup>st</sup> advent. The person who rejects Jesus and His words will be rejected by Jesus when He returns. There is no crown without the cross; there is no Conquering Messiah without the Suffering Servant.

R. B. Thieme, Jr. designates this as *the big blot out*. The unbelieving Jews at the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> advent rejected Jesus. They rejected their Messiah in the 1<sup>st</sup> advent. Jews then and Jews today (not all of them) blot out Jesus; they blot out the 1<sup>st</sup> advent of their Messiah. Therefore, He will reject them when He returns.

Paul will understand this and teach it in the book of Romans (which book speaks of both Jews and gentiles). Much of Romans 9–11 is about *the big blot out*.

What these disciples would see is Jesus glorified, which will be a taste of the Kingdom of God. They will see their King.

## Lesson 277: Luke 9:26–31

## Jesus is Transformed before the Three Disciples

Jesus has just taught some very important doctrines. And now it is eight days later. It is eight days after Jesus said, "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. But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:26–27; ESV; capitalized)

At this point, Jesus is going to fulfill His words, but not exactly as we might expect.

Luke 9:28a Now about eight days after these sayings.... (ESV; capitalized)

I believe that much of this chapter took place on the same day (the things which Jesus has just said in particular), and I support this by the parallel passages in Matthew and Mark, in which everything is in the same order. This phrase also suggests the same thing that, Jesus was saying all of these things on the same day (specifically vv. 18–27).

What takes place in the next few verses occurs eight days later after Jesus' promise to His disciples.

Luke 9:28b ...**He took with Him Peter and John and James....** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus splits off from the other disciples and only takes three of them with Him.

The disciples who seem to be the most squared away are the women who are with Him. They are with Him all the way to the crucifixion. Of the 12, only John will be there at the crucifixion.

Of the disciples, these three would have appeared to be the leaders—particularly Peter.

Recall that James and John are brothers, known as sons of thunder (probably a nickname from their youth). This is not the James who will write the book of James, who is the half-brother of the Lord.

Luke 9:28c ...**and went up on the mountain to pray.** (ESV; capitalized)

They go up to a mountain to pray.

This was the sort of place that Jesus liked to pray and it seems to me that He prayed many times on a mountain. My guess is the peace and quiet and solitude were contributing factors for choosing mountains as an ideal place to pray. It is also a beautiful place to appreciate the world created by God.

Luke 9:28 **Now about eight days after these sayings He took with Him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray.** (ESV; capitalized)

We do not know what these three disciples expected. Jesus said, "You, you and you, we're going on up into the mountain to pray," and so they went with Him.

Jesus has gone up a mountain to pray; and His disciples have gone with Him.

Luke 9:29a **And as He was praying,...** (ESV; capitalized)

We do not have the exact words *He was praying* in the Greek. We begin with the kai conjunction and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, aorist (deponent) middle indicative of gínomai (γίνομαι) [pronounced *GIN-oh-mī*]. This means, *And it was to become [something it was not before]; and it would to come to be [about], and it happened*. Strong's #1096.

Then we have the preposition en (ἐν) [pronounced *en*] in the dative, locative or instrumental case. It is followed by the masculine singular definite article in the same case. When connected to the previous phrase, this often takes on a temporal connotation. ***And it came about while the \_\_\_\_\_.***

Then we have the present (deponent) middle/passive infinitive of *proseúchomai* (προσεύχομαι) [pronounced *pros-YOU-khoh-mai*], which means, *to pray face to face with, to pray to God*. Strong's #4336. This gives us: *And it came about when the \_\_\_\_\_ kept on praying*. We might understand this to mean *while the Jesus* or *while the men*. Because the definite article is a masculine singular, we would naturally understand this to refer to *the Jesus* (even though *the people* could be meant<sup>67</sup>).

The ESV has not dramatically altered the translation here, but it does hide some of what is to be found here. The literal translation is: *And it happened when the [Jesus] was praying,...*

Luke 9:29b *...the appearance of His face was altered,....* (ESV; capitalized)

In reading this, we would expect to find a verb here in the Greek, but this phrase has no verb. It begins with the words *to Him* (which words you do not read in the ESV) followed by the definite article and the neuter singular noun *eidos* (εἶδος) [pronounced *ī-dos*], which means, *the external or outward appearance, form figure, shape; form, kind; sight*. Strong's #1491. This is followed by *of the face of Him* (= *of His face*). Then we have the very common correlative pronoun; the neuter singular of *héteros* (ἕτερος) [pronounced *HEH-ter-os*]. This word means, *another [of a different kind], other; different, altered*. Strong's #2087. Literally, what we have here is: *...to Him the appearance of His face [becomes] another (of a different kind)...* You will notice that I have inserted the verb. We reasonably insert the verb *to be* or *to become*. Because there is a change which takes place, *to become* is the logical choice to insert. The Lord's face becomes something different from what it was before.

The Lord's appearance becomes different; it changes. His face is altered. I would assume that it became a brilliant translucent white as well (see v. 29c). Whatever else is taking place is unclear.

Luke 9:29c *...and his clothing became dazzling white.* (ESV; capitalized)

Two words are used to describe His clothing. It is seen as *leukos* (λευκός) [pronounced *lyoo-KOSS*], an adjective which means, *white, light, bright, brilliant; brilliant from whiteness, (dazzling) white; dead white*. Strong's #3022. The second word is a present active participle of *exastraptō* (ἐξαστράπτω) [pronounced *ex-as-TRAP-toh*], and it means, *being radiant, glistening, gleaming, shining; sending forth lightning; lightning*. Strong's #1823. Perhaps the idea is, seeing Jesus was like looking at lightning, although He remained before them (whereas, lightning is very transitory).

The clothes that the Lord is wearing begin to shine white; or to gleam white.

I would suspect that the Lord is seen here as a product of light and He may be translucent.

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<sup>67</sup> The name *Jesus* is found in close proximity; *people* is not.

Luke 9:29 **And as He was praying, the appearance of His face was altered, and His clothing became dazzling white.** (ESV; capitalized)

One of the remarkable things about the gospels is, Jesus is not really described physically except here. In the book of Acts, Paul saw Jesus (he was knocked off his mount by Jesus), and yet does not describe what His appearance was. In the gospels we have two men who saw Jesus (Matthew and John) who never thought to describe Him physically.

This is how the Lord will appear when He returns to the earth in the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent. This is what the King will look like when coming to establish His kingdom.

When it comes to the Lord's physical appearance, the long-haired, bearded almost-Caucasian-looking pictures do not resemble Him in the least. Jesus would not have had long hair, He would not be Caucasian, and He likely would have been very muscular (given that His body had not been intermingled with sin). About the only thing that these pictures get right is, Jesus would have had a beard (this is because His beard is mentioned in a prophecy). These things which we might surmise about the Lord's appearance are the result of logic and His racial line and are not due to any description in the gospels.

In any case, at this point, His appearance is radically altered. He no longer appears human.

Luke 9:28–29 **Now about eight days after these sayings He took with Him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And as He [Jesus] was praying, the appearance of His face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white.** (ESV; capitalized)

It appears as though His disciples are asleep while this begins to happen. Have you been in a state where you are semi-conscious of the outside world, but you are also in somewhat a sleep state. That appears to be what is happening with the disciples right this moment (see v. 32). What is taking place is a scene or an event which would take place in the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus is fulfilling His promise to His disciples. Luke 9:27 **But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."** (ESV) Now, the disciples are not yet quite awake (it was not unusual for Jesus to take disciples out to pray with Him and they would fall asleep during the praying).

Luke 9:30a **And behold, two men were talking with Him,...** (ESV; capitalized)

While Jesus is in this glorified state, there are two men are speaking with Him.

We only know the most basic information<sup>68</sup> about the location of the believers from the Old Testament and where they are. There are three compartments in Hades, Abraham's bosom, Torments and Tartarus. Every person from the Old Testament is in one of the first

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<sup>68</sup> I say the most basic information. However, around 1989, R. B. Thieme, Jr. did a 40+ page doctrine on it (that would represent a week's worth of teaching).

two. Tartarus, the third compartment, is for the spirits of the fallen angels *who left their first estate* (that is, the angels from Genesis 6).

Luke 9:30b ...**Moses and Elijah**,... (ESV; capitalized)

They know these men as Moses and Elijah. I don't know exactly how they are recognized. This does suggest that even you or I, in our resurrection bodies, will be able to figure out who Abraham, Moses, David and Elijah all are—who will be as recognizable to us as our own parents.

The implication is, we will know everyone in heaven. No one will need name tags. In torments, no one will be hanging out together.

Luke 9:30 **And behold, two men were talking with Him, Moses and Elijah**,... (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples are apparently beginning to wake up, and they see the luminescent clothing of the Lord, and they see Moses and Elijah with Him. Moses and Elijah also appear to be glorified.

Luke 9:31a ...**who appeared in glory**... (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is in glorified form. Either Moses and Elijah have some sort of glorified state in their (temporary) resurrection bodies or they somehow share in the Lord's glorified state (or in some corresponding similar state).

Luke 9:31b ...**and spoke of His departure**,... (ESV; capitalized)

They are speaking to Jesus about His departure, which word can also mean *the close of His career*, *His final fate* or *His departure from life*. *Departure* is the Greek word *exodos* (ἐξοδος) [pronounced *EX-ohd-oss*]. It means, 1) *exit, i.e. departure*; 2) *the close of one's career, one's final fate*; 3) *departure from life, decease*; and it is transliterated *exodus*. Strong's #1841.

The use of this word is one of the many indications that we are near the end of the Lord's public ministry. The *Lord's departure* is a reference to His leaving this earth.

Luke 9:30–31b **And behold, two men were talking with Him, Moses and Elijah, Who appeared in glory and spoke of His departure**,... (ESV; capitalized)

Maybe you are wondering, *how exactly does Moses and Elijah know Jesus?* Jesus is God revealed to both men (I often use the term *the Revealed God*). Just as Moses came upon the bush that continued to burn, and he knew that this was the Revealed God; the same thing is true of Jesus in this glorified state.

Luke 9:31c ...**which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem**. (ESV; capitalized)



The Lord's public ministry would, more or less, come to an end in Jerusalem, where He would be crucified.

This verse and some others in this chapter, really sound as if Jesus is close to making His final walk into Jerusalem. This is despite the fact that we are not even halfway through the book of Luke.

Compared to the period of time when Moses lived and when Elijah lived, Jesus going to Jerusalem and being crucified is very close, in time, to what is happening.

Luke 9:31 *...Who appeared in glory and spoke of His departure, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.* (ESV; capitalized)

The people who *appeared in glory* were Moses and Elijah. The discussion seems to be about the Lord's coming departure, which I would understand to be his ascension and session.

## Lesson 278: Luke 9:28–33

## Peter's Great Idea

### A brief review of Luke 9:28–31:

Jesus has taken Peter, James and John to witness His transformation (or transfiguration). There are no other disciples there. Jesus appears to them just as He will appear for the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent.

Luke 9:28–29 *Now about eight days after these sayings He took with Him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And as He [Jesus] was praying, the appearance of His face was altered, and His clothing became dazzling white.* (ESV; capitalized)

While this is taking place, these three disciples are pretty much asleep.

Luke 9:30–31 *And behold, two men were talking with Him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His departure, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.* (ESV; capitalized)

Three disciples have been invited to go up a mountain to pray. However, Jesus allowed them to see Him in His glorified state, speaking to Moses and Elijah. This is an event that will mark the return of Jesus to the earth.

Peter, James and John had come with Jesus to a mountain to pray. Jesus is allowing them to see His glorified state, and allowing them to see what He would look like when He returned to this earth for the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent. They were seeing a sliver of the Kingdom of God.

However, at this moment, the disciples are seeing none of this, as they were unable to stay awake during the time that Jesus was praying.

Luke 9:32a **Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep...** (ESV; capitalized)

Peter is with James and John; and they are all quite sleepy. The Lord has taken them away from everyone else, but it appears that they are just naturally tired. Based upon what we have studied, most every day with Jesus was very likely a very full day. There was not a lot of free time for the disciples. So, at the end of any day, they were generally exhausted. We never read Peter commenting, “You know, Lord, I really need a nap right now.” That does not mean that he did not need one on most days.

Furthermore, even though Jesus might spend considerable time in prayer; it appears that group prayer was not the forte of the disciples. They often just fell asleep. That is what had happened here.

When the three disciples began to wake up, they saw the scene described in vv. 29–31. They had fallen asleep, Jesus continued to pray, and then He was transformed. At that point, the disciples began to wake up (v. 32).

What they woke up and saw must have seemed like a dream.

Luke 9:32b **...but when they became fully awake they saw His glory...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus has been transformed, as we are told in v. 29.

The order of events: (1) Jesus takes three disciples onto a mountain to pray; (2) the disciples fall asleep; (3) Jesus is transformed and He is speaking to Moses and Elijah; (4) the disciples begin to wake up and they see all of this taking place. They have awakened to see the Lord’s glory. They probably checked out during His prayer and, upon seeing the Lord’s glory and the two men with Him.

Now, I have fallen asleep in front of the tv. If I am awakened moments after falling asleep, I can sometimes recall what was being said in the narrative to that point. If I am asleep for five or more minutes, then when I wake up, I have no idea about anything which has been on. So, based upon this information actually being recorded in v. 31, one of those three (Peter, James or John) had some inkling of what was taking place, even while they were dozing off.

Luke 9:32c **...and the two men who stood with Him.** (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples are coming out of a sleep and they see Jesus glorified and they also see Moses and Elijah with them. This is a remarkable sight.

Luke 9:32 **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.** (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples were half-asleep before. Now they are fully awake and full realizing what they are seeing.

Vv. 30–31 tell us what is happening; and v. 32 tells us that disciples wake up to see Jesus, in a glorified state, speaking with Moses and Elijah.

We have no idea what the conversation was or how long this thing lasted. As far as Peter was concerned, it did not last long enough.

Luke 9:33a **And as the men were parting from Him,...** (ESV; capitalized)

As far as we know, the disciples just looked on without comment. Perhaps they could not believe their eyes and ears.

This is the point at which Moses and Elijah are going to leave. They have been speaking with Jesus. But there comes a point where they will depart from Him (and Jesus will remain right there).

Nevertheless, Peter has determined that, they don't have to leave. They could pitch some tents right here for Jesus, Moses and Elijah to stay in.

Quite obviously, it is not God's plan for Moses and Elijah to camp out on earth again. Nevertheless, Peter has a *brilliant* idea.

Luke 9:33b **...Peter said to Jesus,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Peter, after a few minutes of observation, has an idea about what should happen, and he shares this with Jesus. He can see that Moses and Elijah are about to leave, and he wants to keep them here.

Luke 9:33c **..."Master, it is good that we are here.** (ESV; capitalized)

First of all, Peter expresses his emotion. They are off somewhere alone—the six of them—and Peter recognizes that this is fantastic, that he likes being there. "Master, it is good for us to be here!" Obviously, this is one of the great experiences of Peter's life. He would like to perpetuate this moment in time.

Luke 9:33d **Let us make three tents,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Peter considers the situation and decides that they should make some tents—again, perhaps to give Moses and Elijah a place to stay, so that they do not have to leave.

Luke 9:33e ...one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah".... (ESV; capitalized)

Peter says that these tents will be necessary for Jesus, for Moses and for Elijah. He reasons that, if they have tents, they can stay for a bit longer.

What Peter has not picked up on yet is, their bodies are not like human bodies; therefore, they do not require the same protection from the elements which our own bodies require. If they were going to stay, having a tent would be unnecessary. Peter is seeing them, but he does not really understand what he is seeing.

Luke 9:33f ...—not knowing what he said. (ESV; capitalized)

Then comes the commentary—*Peter had no idea what he was saying*. Another way to put this is, *not realizing that this was a really dumb idea*.

Peter is having somewhat of an ecstatic experience, and he would like to perpetuate it. Furthermore, who would not like to talk face to face with Moses and Elijah? We do not know what form Moses and Elijah took. I would assume that they look like normal people to Peter, even though Jesus is in a glorified state. In any case, Peter is thinking that they need some sort of place to stay. He has figured out, if he makes the right offer, that may cause them to remain longer.

Luke 9:33 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. (ESV; capitalized)

Peter has a light-bulb-on moment, and shares this with Jesus. It is a very silly idea, but it seems brilliant at the time to Peter. (How many times have we figured out how to do great things for God, which turned out not to be so great?)

Luke 9:32–33 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. 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. (ESV; capitalized)

There are several interesting things that we pick up in this passage. First of all, Moses and Elijah are recognizable, even though none of the disciples had ever seen these men before (and, it appears that they have no reason to know anything about their appearance). You may even have a picture of Moses or Elijah in your mind, but neither man looks like you would think (well, *maybe* Moses looks a bit like Charlton Heston).

It is fascinating that Jesus is able to speak with these two great saints and that Peter, James and John can witness it. It appears that there is a topic of conversation, which topic is very meaningful to human history, to the disciples (who do not really appreciate it), to Moses and Elijah (they will be redeemed by what Jesus does), and to the angels who are observing this—both fallen and elect. This is an amazing historical event! Peter understands that much at least.



The added on commentary is somewhat striking and, we should note, somewhat humorous (I refer to *Peter, not knowing what he said*).

**The Transfiguration** (by Alexander Ivanov—1806–1858); from [wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transfiguration_of_Jesus); accessed January 26, 2024. Ivanov is a Russian painter and this painting is privately owned. It is fascinating that so many of his works hang in Russian galleries under a communist government which denies God.

## Lessons 279–280: Luke 9:28–36      The Overshadowing Cloud/Parallel Narratives

### A brief review of Luke 9:28–34:

Luke 9:28 Now about eight days after these sayings He [Jesus] took with Him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus had promised that some of the disciples would see the Kingdom of God before they died. This is the fulfillment of that promise.

Luke 9:29 And as He was praying, the appearance of His face was altered, and His clothing became dazzling white. (ESV; capitalized)

Although some very strange things begin to happen, the three disciples are asleep at this point.

Luke 9:30–31 And behold, two men were talking with Him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His departure, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. (ESV; capitalized)

If Jesus is about to depart and this is accomplished at Jerusalem, then this would either be His physical death or His ascension and session.

Luke 9:32 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. (ESV; capitalized)

Once all of this stuff is taking place, Peter begins to wake up. When he sees what is happening, he become fully awake.

Luke 9:33 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. (ESV; capitalized)

Peter is having somewhat of an ecstatic appearance here and he wants to keep it going. So he suggests that they set up three tents and hang out there.

One of the things that Peter does not get is, Moses and Elijah, in those bodies, do not need a tent. Furthermore, all of this is a peek into the future for Peter, James and John. That is all that is going to happen. They are seeing the glorified Lord (the King of the Kingdom to come); and Moses and Elijah, who will both play a part in these future events.

Luke 9:34 As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples are overshadowed and enveloped by a cloud, which shuts Peter up.

Let's see all five of the last verses placed together.

Luke 9:30–34 The three disciples observe Jesus talking with two men, Moses and Elijah, all of them appearing there in a glorified form. They are all speaking of the Lord's departure [or, *exodus*] which would take place in Jerusalem. Peter, James and John were are half asleep, but they woke up to see the Lord's glory and they also saw the two men standing with Him. When it appeared that these men were about to depart from Jesus, Peter speaks directly to Him, saying, "Master, it is good that we are gathered here like this. Let us make three tents—one for You, one for Moses and one for Elijah." Peter had no idea that he was saying such a stupid thing. (Kukis paraphrase)

If we look at all of these verses together, we get a better idea of what is taking place. Moses and Elijah have appeared and are speaking to Jesus. The disciples, at this time, were all asleep, but they began to awake to see Jesus speaking with these ancient saints. Then Peter, not thinking things through, pitches an idea of pitching some tents so that they might all stay there for awhile.



God the Father puts a sudden end to Peter sharing this idea.

Luke 9:34a **As he was saying these things,....** (ESV; capitalized)

Peter, taking in all that happened, decided the best thing to do would be to make some tents for Jesus, Moses and Elijah, and for them all to live there, in the mountains, all together. At least for a time. God did not allow Peter to get to the specifics of his proposal. He might be formulating some sort of long term resort in his mind, but God is not going to let him share these ideas.

There are a number of groups of people who go off away from the world and practice some sort of Christianity out in remote places (like monks, for instance). Having lived among people for all of my life, I can see many excellent reasons for taking such an approach to life, but that kind of life is not suggested anywhere in Scripture.

There are a few jobs and vocations which place you out in the middle of nowhere and/or with small groups of people, but that is never pushed as the preferable lifestyle in Christianity (even though you and I might like such a lifestyle).

Peter and his ideas are suddenly cut off by God the Father.

Luke 9:34b **...a cloud came and overshadowed them,...** (ESV; capitalized)

The imperfect tense can be translated, *about to*, *beginning to*. Since the cloud was not there before, and since it *came about*, that would be the correct way to translate this.

Montgomery's New Testament is one of the few translations which does this: **And while he was saying this, there came a cloud and began to overshadow them;...** (Luke 9:34a-b)

There seemed to come a cloud out of nowhere, and it first casts a shadow over them. So Peter, James and John all become suddenly aware of this cloud. The inference is, it seems to happen suddenly.

I see that cloud has casting a shadow over the disciples, but not over Jesus, Moses and Elijah.

Luke 9:34c **...and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.** (ESV; capitalized)

Obviously, this does not apply to Moses and Elijah here. The cloud comes and envelops the three disciples. That makes them afraid.

The cloud then begins to envelop them, and it was a little eerie. The disciples are frightened. This has never happened to them before, and, this afternoon (or evening) is filled with unusual events.

Luke 9:34 As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. (ESV; capitalized)

God makes His Presence known, using the cloud to envelop these three disciples.

Luke 9:35a And a voice came out of the cloud,... (ESV; capitalized)

Then they all hear a voice come out of the cloud.

This cloud is a manifestation of God. We are physically unable to see God. We are only able to see whatever manifestation of Him which He allows. Throughout most of the Old Testament, the Member of the Godhead most manifested would be the Son; but certainly any Member of the Godhead could make His Presence known.

Luke 9:35b ...saying, "This is My Son,... (ESV; capitalized)

And the voice out of the cloud, without acknowledging Peter, says, "This is My Son," referring to Jesus. The present tense in the Greek (like most of the tenses in the Greek) really refers to a type of action rather than to the time of the action. The Greek present tense is linear aktionsart, which refers to continuous action (generally in present time). "This keeps on being My Son."

God the father is recognizing God the Son in present time. Peter's dumb idea is ignored and quickly set aside.

God speaks of Jesus as His Son; God does not speak of any of the disciples or Moses or Elijah in this way. This confers Deity upon the Lord.

Luke 9:35c ...My Chosen One;... (ESV; capitalized)

The Westcott Hort text reads *the Chosen One*; and the Scrivener Textus Receptus reads, *the Beloved*. (These are different words in the Greek.) It would not be impossible for both of these words to have been said.

When we get into the New Testament epistles, Paul will speak of us, as believers, being in Christ. Jesus is the Chosen One; Jesus is elected by God in eternity past. Simply put, we are elect (or chosen) in Him, because we are *in Him*.

God has already called Jesus His Son, speaking from out of the sky, when John the herald baptized Him in Matthew 3:17.

Luke 9:35d ...listen to Him!" (ESV; capitalized)

God, in His way, said, "Don't listen to the stupid things that Peter has to say; listen to My Son!"

Luke 9:35 **And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!"** (ESV; capitalized)

From a footnote in the New American Bible: *Listen to Him, [God says, as] the two representatives of Israel of old depart.*<sup>69</sup>

Luke 9:34–35 **As he [Peter] was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud [this cloud enveloped them]. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!"** (ESV; capitalized)

God makes His Presence known first with this cloud and then with His voice.

Luke 9:36a **And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone.** (ESV; capitalized)

Recall that the disciples were in somewhat of a half-awake state, and they awoke to see Jesus speaking with Moses and Elijah. Now, at this point, after the sound of God's voice, Jesus is seen there alone.

If I were to guess—and this is not stated outright—Jesus is no longer in a glorified state.

Luke 9:36b **And they kept silent....** (ESV; capitalized)

Suddenly, all the disciples do the exact right thing. They shut up for a time.

For all intents and purposes, the voice of God came to them and shut Peter down. The disciples were absolutely quiet at this point. Peter decided now was not the time to give his take on God's voice.

Throughout the gospels, the disciples say some really silly stuff. Consider that, many of the things that we say and do as new Christians is also potentially very silly. The believer needs spiritual maturity in order to produce divine good. Peter's view here is to make some tents for Moses, Elijah and Jesus to stay here. Obviously, Peter needs some spiritual growth to take place, so that his ideas and actions have true spiritual impact. The same is true for us. It takes time for the believer to grow and to learn how to produce divine good.

The disciples fell silent then, and they remained silent about this event until after the crucifixion.

Luke 9:36c **...and told no one in those days....** (ESV; capitalized)

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<sup>69</sup> See the footnote for this <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/9?35>

Jesus, as they came down from the mountain, actually implored them not to speak of what they just saw (we do not read this here in Luke, but we do in Matthew 17:9 and Mark 9:9<sup>70</sup>). Part of the reason, I think, is that each disciple seemed to try to use something in his life to get over on the other disciples. “I am greater than you, because...” This clearly was an amazing experience, and James, John and Peter were told specifically not to speak of it until after the resurrection.

Jesus did not allow His disciples to proclaim Him as the Messiah, the Son of God, David’s Greater Son. Jesus allowed people to come to this conclusion on their own or as guided by God the Holy Spirit.

Luke 9:36d ...anything of what they had seen. (ESV; capitalized)

Because Jesus specifically addressed the three disciples and told them not to speak of what they saw, they did not talk about the glorified Christ until after His resurrection, ascension and session. Peter will reference this event in his second epistle, but it will be within the context of a greater thing. (What could be greater than seeing the glorified Jesus? Peter will tell you that.)

Luke 9:36 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. (ESV; capitalized)

As suddenly as this all began, it was over. Only Jesus was there. There was no more Voice in the cloud. As we will find out below, Jesus told these three not to speak of this incident again until after He is resurrected.

Luke 9:36 At the sound of the voice, Jesus was found to be alone, and the disciples fell silent. Jesus admonished that none of the disciples there were to tell what they had just seen. (Kukis paraphrase)

One of the most amazing things about this experience that Peter has is the way in which he recounts this many years later in 2Peter 1:12–21:

R. B. Thieme, Jr.’s corrected translation is used below.

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<sup>70</sup> These passages will be found below, as I will present the parallel passages side-by-side.

## Peter Recalls the Glorification of Jesus in 2Peter 1:12–21

Scripture	Text/Commentary
2Peter 1:12 Therefore I will always be ready to keep reminding you all concerning these things, although you have known and have become stabilized by means of resident doctrine.	As long as Peter is alive, he has some very specific points which he wants to keep on reminding his congregation. “You know these things and are stabilized by them; and I am reminding you of them again.” It is legitimate for a Bible teacher to repeat himself.
2Peter 1:13 Moreover I consider it my duty as long as I am in this tabernacle [ <i>this human body</i> ], to arouse you [to turn you on] to doctrine by means of a reminder.	<p>In fact, Peter considers this his duty to remind his non-face-to-face congregation of these things. He wants to stir up this doctrine in their souls.</p> <p>Repetition of doctrine is important. There are many things which I remember word-for-word from my church due to repetition.</p>
2Peter 1:14 Knowing that the laying aside of my body [lit., <i>tabernacle</i> ] is imminent [I am about to die], just as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. (John 21:18–19)	<p>Peter knows that he is near death, that he is about to lay aside his body.</p> <p>Our bodies go into the grave; our soul and spirit go up to the One Who gave it.</p>
2Peter 1:15 Indeed I will be diligent, in fact at any time you may have the doctrine after my death to call to remembrance these things.	Peter is going to put this in writing so that they have this doctrine at their disposal to read and reread after his death, so that they can remind themselves of these things. Now here we are studying Peter’s words 2100 years later.
2Peter 1:16 For not having followed as our source of authority cleverly concocted myths, when we had communicated to you all the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we have become spectators of his majestic magnificence [appearance of the second advent].	<p>Peter and the Apostles have been teaching the truth, based upon what God has revealed to them.</p> <p>They have communicated the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ; and Peter himself has seen the Lord’s Shekinah Glory. This is how Jesus will appear at the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent.</p>

## Peter Recalls the Glorification of Jesus in 2Peter 1:12–21

Scripture	Text/Commentary
2Peter 1:17 For when He had received from God the Father honour and glory, such a unique voice having been carried to him by His majestic glory, “This One, Christ, is My Son, My beloved One, with reference to Whom I have been well pleased.”	<p>Peter actually heard the voice of God. He, James and John were all there, and they heard God proclaim that, “This One, Christ, is My Son, My Beloved One, with reference to Whom I am well pleased!”</p> <p>The number of people who have heard God’s voice is a very small club.</p>
2Peter 1:18 And we heard this same voice, having been carried from heaven, when we were with Him on the holy mountain.	<p>When those disciples were on that holy mountain, they heard the very voice of God. This voice came out of heaven.</p>
2Peter 1:19 We keep possessing this prophetic doctrine as something more reliable, with reference to which doctrine, you perform honorably when you habitually become occupied with doctrine; doctrine as a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and a morning star [Venus] has come up.	<p>Nevertheless, these disciples keep on having a more reliable Word, which is Bible doctrine. It is this more reliable word (more reliable even than what Peter saw with his own eyes) that the believers in receipt of this letter need to pay attention to, as looking to a lamp in a dark place. Bible doctrine is more reliable even than the things which Peter saw. Peter saw the glorified Christ—and yet, the doctrine that Peter was teaching is more important and more reliable.</p>
2Peter 1:20–21 Knowing this first that all prophecy of Scripture does not originate from one’s own explanation for prophecy was never produced from human design or volition; but men (human authors) communicated from God being carried along by the Holy Spirit.	<p>Fundamental in the Bible doctrine taught by Peter and the other Apostles is, they did not originate Bible doctrine. This was not someone’s very clever design. This came about by human authors as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. Specific believers and the Holy Spirit are the authors of the Word of God.</p>

This was certainly one of Bob’s favorite passages, as he taught it on many occasions. Peter is making the point that, greater than anything that you have seen or heard is the Word of God.



The accounts of the Mount of Transfiguration were not written by men who saw the events themselves. Matthew, as a disciple, was not there. Mark was not an Apostle, but he is closely associated with Peter. His account may be the closest there is to an eyewitness account. It is unclear whether Luke had any close ties to any of the disciples apart from Paul. All of these men would have known Peter, James and John.

The ESV; capitalized is used below:

Parallel Views of the Glorification of Jesus Christ		
Matthew 17:1–9	Mark 9:2–10	Luke 9:28–36
<p>Matthew 17:1 And after six days Jesus took with Him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.</p> <p>Matthew 17:2 And He was transfigured before them, and His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became white as light.</p>	<p>Mark 9:2–3 And after six days Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them, and His clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.</p>	<p>Luke 9:28 Now about eight days after these sayings He took with Him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray.</p> <p>Luke 9:29 And as He was praying, the appearance of His face was altered, and His clothing became dazzling white.</p>
It appears that, as Jesus was praying, these three disciples fell asleep; and Jesus is transformed.		
<p>Matthew 17:3 And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with Him.</p>	<p>Mark 9:4 And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.</p>	<p>Luke 9:30–31 And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His departure, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.</p>
Luke is the one gospel writer who tells us what Jesus, Elijah and Moses were saying.		
		<p>Luke 9:32 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.</p>
Luke is the only writer who indicates that Peter, James and John were not quite awake, but, at some point, they began to open their eyes and that made the fully awake.		

## Parallel Views of the Glorification of Jesus Christ

Matthew 17:1–9	Mark 9:2–10	Luke 9:28–36
Matthew 17:4 And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If You wish, I will make three tents here, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah."	Mark 9:5 And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah."	Luke 9:33a 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"...
	Mark 9:6 For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified.	Luke 9:33b ...—not knowing what he said.
Mark, who was a disciple of Peter's, knew this information from personal testimony, that Peter was quite afraid when he became awake and saw the glorified Lord speaking to Moses and Elijah.		
Even though Peter has come up with an idea, God the Father speaks over him and shuts down his train of thought.		
Matthew 17:5 He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased; listen to Him."	Mark 9:7 And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son; listen to Him."	Luke 9:34 As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. Luke 9:35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!"
The voice, of course, is God the Father. God says, "Shut up, Peter, and listen to My Son!"		
Matthew 17:6 When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. Matthew 17:7 But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear."		
At this point, all of the disciples were afraid. Only Matthew records their actual response.		

## Parallel Views of the Glorification of Jesus Christ

Matthew 17:1–9	Mark 9:2–10	Luke 9:28–36
Matthew 17:8 And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.	Mark 9:8 And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.	Luke 9:36a And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone.
It is possible that the disciples were crouched and looking down, away from the Lord, in fear.		
Matthew 17:9 And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead."	Mark 9:9 And as they were coming down the mountain, He charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.	
Throughout His earthly ministry, the Lord said very little directly about being the Messiah or about being God. He did not allow His disciples to proclaim this publically as well.		
	Mark 9:10 So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean.	Luke 9:36b And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.
At this point, information about Jesus rising up from the dead did not compute to the disciples.		
3 people were there and these accounts are clearly from different points of view.		

The next section in Matthew and Mark is a discussion among the disciples about Elijah. A discussion about Elijah suggests that the three disciples had Elijah on their mind—having seen him with the Glorified Christ—and began to discuss him (Matthew 17:9–13 Mark 9:9–13). Luke does not record this discussion.

### Lessons 281–282: Luke 9:37–42

### A Father's Son Seized by a Spirit

After Peter, James and John have witnessed the transfiguration of Christ, then Matthew, Mark and Luke all speak of Jesus next healing a boy who was controlled by a fallen spirit.

There are quite a number of passages in the New Testament which deal with demonism, and it seems a fair question to ask, *why?* I ask that question based upon two things: today, the believer rarely comes across a case of demon possession (or possession that he recognizes as such); and there is not really enough information in the New Testament to

give us a clear path to casting out demons (and, no, Catholic priests do not have some set of rituals which are better than anyone else's, despite the movies).

Luke 9:37a **On the next day,....** (ESV; capitalized)

What appears to be the case is, Jesus and the disciples remained on the mountain that night, sleeping. They got up the next morning and came down the mountain.

We have quite a number of incidents which occur (nine), in the same order, in the biographies written by Matthew, Mark and Luke (one of the narratives is lacking in Matthew). These specific [events](#) are will be listed in the [Addendum](#) of the chapter study. These help us to figure out where we are in the overall narrative of the Lord's public ministry.

Given so many incidents found in the same order in three of the gospels, we would suspect that these things all occurred during a fairly limited time period (perhaps all taking place during the same week or month).

Even though we would consider life with Jesus to be anything but typical, we might see this portion of Scripture (vv. 18–50—the narration of these nine events) as very typical. These are the sorts of amazing incidents which took place during the ministry of our Lord.

Luke 9:37b **...when they had come down from the mountain,...** (ESV; capitalized)

The participle can be used in a temporal way, to indicate that what follows took place *while* or *when* they were coming down the mountain.

We assume that they are coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration (obviously given that name based upon what took place there).

Luke 9:37c **...a great crowd met Him.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus left nine of the disciples behind, and apparently, a large crowd of people first found them, and then searched for Jesus. Perhaps they are there with the disciples, not really getting what they needed from them, and someone looks to the mountain and sees four men coming down, and the crowd then goes in that direction. Or, his nine disciples, being somewhat ineffective, say, "Last time we saw Jesus, He was going up that mountain over there." (And one of them points in that general direction and people can see Jesus and three disciples descending.)

The disciples had already been sent out among the people, and they had cured diseases and cast out demons and spoke of the Kingdom of God. But, whatever it is that they have already done, it is apparently not enough for this crowd which came to them first.

Bear in mind that Jesus took His disciples (which likely included more than just the twelve) off into the mountains and much of what He has been teaching in the middle of this chapter was to a relatively small group of people.

Luke 9:37 *On the next day, when they had come down* [or, *while they were coming down*] *from the mountain, a great crowd met Him.* (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus and the three disciples who went to the Mount of Transfiguration with Him, were coming back from that event, and there was a large crowd waiting for Him. We might think that this is a show of positive volition, but we will find out that it isn't.

Luke 9:38a *And behold, a man from the crowd cried out,....* (ESV; capitalized)

There is a man in the crowd, and he wants to get the Lord's attention, so he calls out loudly to Jesus.

Logically, it would seem that many in that crowd believed that they needed to speak to Jesus. However, this one man calls out loudly and appears to be quite insistent.

Luke 9:38b *... "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son,....* (ESV; capitalized)

Notice that this man first addresses Jesus as *Teacher* and not as *Lord*.

The man gets out the most important thing first. *"Teacher, I ask You to look at my son..."* He is clear about Whom he is speaking to, and what he wants Jesus to do. This is a very reasonable approach. He is in the middle of a large crowd. How long will he have to address the Lord? Will he be drowned out by others? So, with all this in mind (I am assuming this man has thought this through), he makes certain his petition goes to the right Person right from the jump.

Luke 9:38c *...for he is my only child.* (ESV; capitalized)

Then he tells Jesus the important emotional attachment; this is the man's only son. What person is not moved by this?

Luke 9:38 *And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child.* (ESV; capitalized)

Two things to observe. The man calls Jesus *Teacher*; and he asks Jesus to take a look at his son—his only son.

Then he tells Jesus what has been happening.

Luke 9:39a *And behold, a spirit seizes him,....*(ESV; capitalized)

Now that the man has the Lord's attention, he explains what is happening.

His son has been taken by a demon. He uses the present tense—linear aktionsart—which suggests that the action is occurring right now and it is ongoing. Next, the man will give evidence of his statement.

Luke 9:39b ...and he suddenly cries out. (ESV; capitalized)

His son will cry out suddenly; and without apparent cause. We would understand this to be demons in control of his vocal cords.

Luke 9:39c It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth,... (ESV; capitalized)

Then the man goes into more detail. The spirit causes his son to convulse and this is accompanied by foaming at the mouth.

Luke 9:39d ...and shatters him,... (ESV; capitalized)

The verb here is the present active participle of *suntribô* (συντρίβω) [pronounced *soon-TRIEE-boh*], which means, *breaking, breaking in pieces, shivering; treading down; putting under foot (as a conqueror), trampling on him; breaking down, crushing; tearing one's body and shattering one's strength; bruising, mauling*. Strong's #4937. The addition of this phrase *bruising him* is not simply another statement of the spirit's effect upon his son; but this appears to be related to any attempt to cast the spirit out (the disciples have attempted to cast this demon out). Does the spirit cause bruises to appear, or does the spirit make the son flail about, so that he bruises himself (severely)? At the end of a seizure, it is as if his son had been in a fight with someone. He would have bruises all over his body.

Luke 9:39e ...and will hardly leave him. (ESV; capitalized)

The man recognizes that it is only with great difficulty that the spirit can be cast out (and he will justify this statement). The man seems to think that the demon can be cast out, but so far, it hasn't.

Luke 9:39 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. (ESV; capitalized)

The son is clearly seized by a fallen spirit, and it causes the boy to cry out, but he also experiences convulsions, foaming at the mouth and suffering physical harm.

**Application:** Does demon possession take place today? Given some of the insane behavior which continues to take place, I would suggest that it does. The hearing of voices, multiple personalities, the internal urging of a person to do evil. Even though these are often explained as psychological disorders (and certainly, at times, they may be); these symptoms appear to have competing spirits within the same body. Often the psychotropic drugs tend to be debilitating in order to get some control over the person. The body is sedated and the mind is clouded, reducing demon function. Also, it would not be



impossible for these drugs to allow for demon possession, as the side-effects are sometimes quite dramatic (such as causing a person to be suicidal<sup>71</sup>).

**Application:** Although some believers during the time of our Lord were given authority over demons, it seems doubtful to me that such gifts still exist. How many believers, after becoming spiritually self sustaining, seem to think that their forte is hunting down demon-possessed people and casting out their demon (or demons)? This simply does not appear to be a common spiritual gift today.

Next the man will explain why he needed to speak directly to Jesus.

Luke 9:40a **And I begged your disciples to cast it out,...** (ESV; capitalized)

This man heard that Jesus was near, so he brought his son. Jesus was gone at this moment, but nine of Jesus' disciples were there. Therefore, the man has gone through the proper channels. He went to the disciples first, who were there, and told them of the problem, so that they might cast the spirit out.

Luke 9:40b **...but they could not."** (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples were unable to cast out the spirit. It is my opinion that, when they tried to cast out the spirit, the spirit would cause the son to further convulse and to injure himself while doing so. No matter what the disciples said or did, the symptoms of demon possession kept getting worse.

Luke 9:40 **And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not."** (ESV; capitalized)

This certainly leaves us with several questions. Why couldn't the disciples cast out the demon (s)? Why did the man not address Jesus as *Lord*? Also, is there any application of this event for today?

As soon as Jesus returns to His disciples, this man with his son is there waiting for Him

Luke 9:37–40 **And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. 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. And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not."** (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples are faced with a demon which they could not cast out.

Because the father of the boy addresses Jesus as *teacher* rather than as *Lord*, we would suspect that he does not recognize the Lord's authority. He sees Jesus as a teacher but not as anything beyond that. Nevertheless, the man has his demon-possessed son there and he needs to explore every possible way to rid him of this demon.

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<sup>71</sup> I have had two friends of mine who I believe were driven by the side effects of these psychotropic drugs.

Luke 9:41a **Jesus answered,...** (ESV; capitalized)

This begins just as we would expect. A man has come to Jesus and with a very reasonable request. His son is possessed by a demon, and the man desires healing for his son. He first went to the Lord's disciples and they could not do anything to help.

What we would expect is, Jesus saying to the man, "Okay, bring the kid here." But that is not Jesus' first response. Jesus says something entirely different.

Luke 9:41b **..."O faithless and twisted generation,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus will utter three disparaging remarks about the crowd, about the generation of that era (v. 41b-d). To me, this is quite remarkable. A guy has called out to Jesus to heal his son, and Jesus appears to answer as if He is in the absolute worst mood that morning. "What the hell are you coming to Me for?" is almost what this sounds like (however, we know that Jesus was not moody or prone to angry outbursts).

There is a crowd before Jesus, and, hearing the request of this man, Jesus then appears to address the crowd, saying, "You corrupt and unbelieving generation!" This is quite the remarkable statement, is it not?

We do not really know what sets this off. We find the same thing, basically, in the parallel passages. The man calls out to Jesus with this request, and Jesus responds with, "You corrupt and unbelieving generation!"

The man does approach Jesus calling Him *Teacher*, rather than, *Lord*. This would suggest that he has not believed in the Lord, and therefore, this man is a corrupt unbeliever. There may have been many more in the crowd just like him. They brought their various ailments to the Lord, but they do not recognize Him as their Lord.

"If you can heal me or the person I brought, great; but that does not mean that I will recognize you as the Lord." might be the unexpressed feeling of this crowd.

What we may be looking at is, the guy is not sure that Jesus can do anything for him, but, what the heck, why not give Him a try? What is there to lose?

Jesus, being very perceptive, is able to look out into a crowd of people and see, in many cases, what sort of people they are. He could be the traveling medicine man with the magic elixir, and many of the same people would be there to try it. Maybe it will work; maybe not. Jesus is here; we're here; so why not find out?

So I believe that this is the way that Jesus accurately understood this multitude of people who had come to Him.

Luke 9:41c **...how long am I to be with you..."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus asks—God the Father? The people there? Philosophically?—how long must He come face to face with all of these people. I would suggest that this is a rhetorical question. “Do you not know Who I am?” is a more direct statement which Jesus could have made.

At what point would these unbelievers believe in Him?

Luke 9:41d ...and bear with you? (ESV; capitalized)

Then Jesus asks, *how long must I endure you all? How long must I put up with you?* Again, Jesus makes a pretty strong statement of disapprobation which seems to come out of nowhere, if you do not evaluate all of the clues given.

Luke 9:41a-d Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you?"

To me, that was a quite interesting response. Jesus does not ask, “Where is your son?” He does not say, “Bring him to Me.” Jesus first appears to snap at this man. But not only at him, but at his entire generation. One of the questions in my mind is, *what brought this on? Why does Jesus first say these things?*

Again, this man’s first words to Jesus are, *Teacher*. He did not even ask Jesus to heal his son or to cast out the demons. It is as if he brought this boy to Jesus, and asks, “What can you do for him? He’s my only son!”

This man is very representative of what this crowd happens to be.

After saying what He said (the people there needed to hear these words), then Jesus finally says:

Luke 9:41e Bring your son here." (ESV; capitalized)

Now Jesus says exactly what we would expect Him to say— “Bring your son to Me.” This is what we would have expected Jesus to say at the first.

Luke 9:41 Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus makes some general statements which logically would include this man who has come to Him.

Luke 9:41 Answering [this request], Jesus said, “O [you] corrupt and unbelieving generation! How long will I remain face to face with you [all]? [How long] must I endure you [all]? Bring your son here [to Me].” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Jesus makes a rather negative comment about the people who are there; and then He calls for the son to be brought to Him.

Luke 9:42a **While he was coming, the demon...convulsed him.** (ESV; capitalized)

The son is brought forward. Perhaps the father merely motioned to the boy to step forward. However, as the son moves closer to Jesus, the demon controlling his body causes the boy's body to go into spasms or to convulse right before them all.

Luke 9:42b **...[and] threw him to the ground....** (ESV; capitalized)

The demon throws the son onto the ground.

Luke 9:42a-b **While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him.** (ESV; capitalized)

The boy moves closer to Jesus, but the demon throws the boy onto the ground and causes him to go into convulsions.

Luke 9:42c **But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit....** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus rebukes (or, admonishes, or charges) the unclean spirit. We do not know how exactly; but Jesus rebukes the spirit, perhaps by saying, *come out of him*. We are not given the specific words spoken by Jesus—perhaps so that we, 2100 years later, do not think that these are the *magic words* to say.

Jesus is certainly able to cast this demon out; even though the man has a questionable amount of faith.

Luke 9:42d **...and healed the boy,...** (ESV; capitalized)

The spirit leaves the boy's body and the boy is cured. It is implied that the bruising that the boy suffered is also healed.

Luke 9:42e **...and gave him back to his father.** (ESV; capitalized)

Then Jesus returns the son to his father.

Luke 9:42 **While he [the son] was coming [toward Jesus], 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.** (ESV; capitalized)

Does the man thank Jesus? Does the man recognize that Jesus is Lord over all? Nothing like that is said or suggested here. We will have some cause for hope in Mark's gospel, with regards to this incident.

Luke 9:41–42 Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." 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. (ESV; capitalized)

The three gospel approaches contain some significant differences. The other gospels—particularly Mark's—are going to provide some important additional information.

The ESV (capitalized) is used below.

### Three Takes on Jesus Casting Out the Demon

**Matthew 17:14–20**

**Mark 9:14–29**

**Luke 9:37–42**

Mark 9:14 And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them.

Mark 9:15 And immediately all the crowd, when they saw Him, were greatly amazed and ran up to Him and greeted Him.

Mark 9:16 And He asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?"

Peter, the primary source of information for the book of Mark, gives a very detailed report of this incident. It is very likely that Peter dictated the second gospel to Mark.

Recall that Jesus and three disciples have just returned from the place where Jesus allowed His disciples to see Him transformed, to appear as He would at the second advent. However, what He returns to is an argument breaking out between His other disciples and some scribes who are there (this is left out of the gospels of Matthew and Luke).

Jesus has specifically told Peter, James and John not to speak about what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Matthew 17:14–15 And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and, kneeling before Him, said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the water.

Mark 9:17–18a And someone from the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought my son to You, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid.

Luke 9:37 On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met Him.

Luke 9:38–39 And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. 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.

## Three Takes on Jesus Casting Out the Demon

**Matthew 17:14–20**

**Mark 9:14–29**

**Luke 9:37–42**

Mark seems to indicate that Jesus asked a direct question, but this man called out to Jesus about his own personal problem instead.

Matthew, Mark and Luke appear to be describing a whole separate set of symptoms. The description given by the man is very different from case to case. None of these symptoms are contradictory. The man must have originally given a very long list of things which ailed his boy.

In none of the three accounts does this man indicate that he has faith in Jesus to heal his son. He tells Jesus what is taking place as if Jesus is a doctor of some sort. He describes the symptoms in great detail. Matthew tells us that the man kneels before Jesus.

Matthew 17:16 And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him."

Mark 9:18b So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able."

Luke 9:40 And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not."

The man's lack of faith could be based upon what the disciples were able to accomplish, which is nothing. However, for someone who believed that Jesus is the Christ, what the disciples could or could not do would be irrelevant.

Before Jesus asks for the son to approach, He has a few words to say to this man and to the crowd in general.

Matthew 17:17 And Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to Me."

Mark 9:19 And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to Me."

Luke 9:41 Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here."

What these three gospels record is almost identical here.

These are strong words from Jesus. This has to be because people are coming to Him that do not believe in Him. They just want to give Him a try since nothing else has worked. The people are called faithless because none of them actually have trusted in Jesus.

However, bear in mind that many people have come to Jesus when nothing else has worked in their lives.



## Three Takes on Jesus Casting Out the Demon

Matthew 17:14–20

Mark 9:14–29

Luke 9:37–42

Mark 9:20 And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth.

Luke 9:42a While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him.

Both Mark and Luke describe what takes place then and there.

Mark 9:21 And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood.

Mark 9:22 And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

Mark 9:23 And Jesus said to him, " 'If You can!' All things are possible for one who believes."

Mark 9:24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"

Mark features some chatting which took place between Jesus and the father. Jesus even throws this man's words back in his face. "If You can"! This man has come to the Lord of Life, and yet he says to Jesus, "If You can."

When Jesus throws the man's words back in his face, it is as if to say, "You have come to Me, and you don't even know Who I AM?"

Jesus emphasizes the importance of faith. "The key here," Jesus explains to this man, "is faith. All things are possible to the one who believes." The father admits to having some faith, but not necessarily a lot.

The problem is not really with the man's amount of faith. The problem is, *where is he directing his faith to?* Does he believe that Jesus is his Savior; or does he believe that Jesus is simply this odd fellow Who maybe can cure people of demon possession?

## Three Takes on Jesus Casting Out the Demon

**Matthew 17:14–20**

**Mark 9:14–29**

**Luke 9:37–42**

Matthew 17:18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly.

Mark 9:25 And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."

Mark 9:26 And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead."

Mark 9:27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

Luke 9:42b But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.

Again, Mark gives the most detailed view of what is taking place; which suggests that Peter had a front row seat to all of this and watched these events transpire with great interest. After Peter saw what he saw on the Mount of Transfiguration, he is now concentrating on all that is taking place (Peter remembers all of this and tells it to Mark).

Although Matthew and Luke both describe the healing as nearly instantaneous, Mark gives us a few more details. These are not contradictory accounts. Jesus rebuked the demon, it cried out and caused the boy to convulse terribly, and then it left the boy. Jesus then took the boy by his hand and handed him back to his father.

Even though Jesus casts out this demon, there are some repercussions. The demon causes the boy to cry out and thrash while in convulsions. Once the demon is gone, the boy appears to be dead. However, Jesus takes him by the hand and he rises up. Jesus then gives him to his father.

## Three Takes on Jesus Casting Out the Demon

### Matthew 17:14–20

Matthew 17:19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"  
 Matthew 17:20 He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."

### Mark 9:14–29

Mark 9:28 And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"  
 Mark 9:29 And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

### Luke 9:37–42

It appears that two explanations are given. (1) The disciples were not exercising faith (or the man was not exercising faith); and (2) that prayer is required here (some manuscripts—the Westcott Hort text and Tischendorf's Greek text) have *prayer and fasting*. Let me suggest that, in the man's case, the prayer of faith was required here. He first came to Jesus without having faith in Him.

Therefore, these are not necessarily different answers or different solutions, but complementary explanations. "You pray to God the Father and then trust that He will remove the demon."

Once this man had faith in Jesus, Jesus then agreed to cast out the demon. How do we know that the man believed? Mark tells us that he did:

Mark 9:24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"

This man does believe in Jesus; but at the same time, he is nurturing some questions and some doubts. We don't know what these are, and this is where this narrative ends.

This is one of those events which is greatly enhanced by reading what the three synoptics have to say about it.

Luke 9:41–42 Responding to this request, Jesus exclaimed, "You corrupt and unbelieving generation! How long must I remain with you? How long must I endure all of you? Now, bring your son here to Me." When the boy began to approach Jesus, the demon convulsed him, throwing him down onto the ground. But Jesus cast out the unclean spirit and cured the boy. Then Jesus presented the cured son to his father. (Kukis paraphrase)

We just studied Jesus casting out a demon and curing the son of a man who came to Him.

Luke 9:41–43a Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." 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. And all were astonished at the majesty of God. (ESV; capitalized)

There are quite a number of documented cases in the New Testament dealing with demon possession. How should we understand that?

### Why is there so much demon possession in the New Testament?

1. Let me preface this study with a few facts:
  - 1) The average believer does not come across demon possession at all. This is not to say that demon possession is not taking place (for instance, how many mass murderers or serial rapists are in full control of their own faculties?), but it does not occur with the frequency found in the New Testament gospels.
  - 2) Let's say you were faced with demon possession right in your face, would you know what to do? For me, all I would know to do is demand that the demon exit based upon the power and authority of Christ, and then stand back.
  - 3) If you have studied much of the Old Testament, you certainly noticed that there was not a lot of demon possession to deal with there (was there any like we read about in the New Testament?)
2. Many things took place during the time of Jesus, as He was provided the opportunity to reveal His power and authority. Many, many people were sick and/or troubled with demons at this time. Jesus did many things for the people that were miraculous. This revealed His close connection with God the Father.
3. Let me suggest that demon possession has some limited parallelism with our own lives.
  - 1) We are all *indwelt* by the sin nature (so to speak). Throughout our lives, to the point of salvation, our sin nature takes some part in all of our decision making, producing sin, (human) good and evil (bear in mind, generally speaking, people do not sin all of the time).
  - 2) At salvation, we are able to set the sin nature aside for a period of time and act from the power of the Holy Spirit. It is almost as if we have a demon, and sometimes that demon is in charge (whenever we choose to sin) and sometimes we are in charge (after we have named our sins to God).
  - 3) I am doing nothing more than setting up an analogy here.
  - 4) The use of rebound can take place dozens of times every single day, so,

## Why is there so much demon possession in the New Testament?

- in a way, we are casting out our own demon dozens of times each day (for the average believer, this could be more times or fewer times). To be clear, I am speaking metaphorically here of the sin nature.
- 5) We have a clear method of doing this—we rebound, which means, we name our sins to God, as per 1John 1:9.
  4. Whether we are guided by the Spirit or by the sin nature is of utmost importance in the spiritual life. This might be seen as the most basic and most important mechanic of the Christian life. The second most important thing is learning and understanding Bible doctrine.
  5. As a believer, you cannot be demon-possessed; only demon-influenced (meaning that you think with human viewpoint, or with a culture viewpoint, or with a religious—non-Christian—viewpoint). There is some overlap here, but:
    - 1) Human viewpoint means, you simply think like the unbeliever thinks.
    - 2) There are popular cultural ways to think. For instance, today we are supposed to think that there are 60 or 90 different genders when, in fact, there are only two. The others are mental disorders combined with over-sharing. In popular culture, we are to accept sexualizing our children and exposing them to sexual deviations at a very young age. With movies and television constantly pushing us in that direction, we, as believers, have to determine, are the clear standards of the Bible accurate or is our culture right?
    - 3) A legalistic religious viewpoint means that we believe that we must earn our place with God. There are a set of standards that we must meet, a set of rituals that we must perform, all of which God likes. When we do these things, God accepts us.
  6. Apart from this parallelism, understanding demon possession in the 1<sup>st</sup> century is important because this is an accurate rendition of historical events.
  7. Although the frequency of demon possession is likely lower today than it was then in Palestine, it does exist. The best that psychotropic drugs might do is sedate a person occupied by the demon; but the side effects of such drugs may be extremely damaging to the unbeliever possessed by the demon (s).
  8. Whereas, there is no call for believers today to go out demon-hunting, we must be aware that such things do exist and that we might come across a demon-possessed person at some point in our lives (I say it is possible, not probable). However, this does not mean that you should live your life by entering into a new organization or school and randomly wonder, *I wonder how many of these people are demon-possessed?* We are not the Christian version of Buffy the Vampire Slayer.
  9. God ultimately allows demon possession. That is, the person seeking demon possession, through drugs or the occult, opens himself up to demon possession or to demon-influence; and God sometimes allows this to take place. There is the volition of the individual and the volition of the demon. When they coincide, God sometimes allows the possession to take place.
  10. In 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D., God allowed much more of this to take place in Palestine

## Why is there so much demon possession in the New Testament?

because God was glorified when believers revealed God's power to cast out such demons. Even though there are only a handful of examples of demon possession in the New Testament, likely Jesus healed many dozens of people of being demon-possessed.

11. Even though demon possession takes place today, it is not nearly as widespread as it was during the 1<sup>st</sup> advent of Jesus.
12. Demon possession today may not look as much like the demon possession which we studied so far in the book of Luke.
13. Today, although demon possession occurs, for the most part, our culture is demon-influenced. So ideas and beliefs can seem ridiculous in one decade can become culturally accepted in another because that culture abandons the truth for satanic lies. This seems to be the order of the day for the United States in 2024. Even though a majority of people do not accept the weird teachings of gender confusion and gender dysphoria, a significant number of people do. When listening to a young person, you may mentally comment to yourself, "How can they possibly believe this?" That is likely demon-influence.

Our society is clearly demon-influenced.

Now, back to our narrative:

Luke 9:43a **And all were astonished at the majesty of God.** (ESV; capitalized)

One key word here is *megaleiotês* (μεγαλειότης) [pronounced *mehg-al-ĭ-OT-ace*], which means, *superbness, glory, splendor; magnificence, majesty, mighty power*. Strong's #3168. The people who are following Jesus or who have come to Jesus at this point in time viewed the casting out of this demon.

Now, although three disciples have seen the splendor and magnificence of the Lord, the others have not. Furthermore, those who saw the Shekinah Glory of Jesus were told not to tell anyone about it. In context, this majesty of God is the power of the works done through the words of Jesus. What the people and the disciples just saw was a miraculous curing of a demon-possessed child. Therefore, the people would have been marveling at the *power* which they had just witnessed.

We have the word *all* used here. So we are talking about what everyone there has just seen, the casting out of a demon. They watched this take place and they are astonished.

It is possible—likely in fact—that Jesus healed other people as well. However, that is not mentioned as being a part of the synoptic gospels.

Luke 9:41–43a **Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." 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. And all were astonished at the majesty of God. (ESV; capitalized)

Based upon the Lukian account, it is not clear whether the father believed in Jesus. However, it appears that the father did believe in the Markian account; after which, Jesus cast out the demon from the man's son.

It is not clear how the son had come to be demon-possessed. Did these things come about as a result of things that the father did? We do not know the age of the child and he does not speak (apart from the demons speaking through him). Was the father somehow involved in the demon possession? We simply do not know any of this information.

Many people had come to Jesus with their ailments (this example is in the forefront); but how many of them have believed in Jesus; how many of them have come to believe in Jesus? How many people have come to see Jesus as a means to an end—someone who can cast out demons or end their physical suffering—but who do not come to a saving faith in Him as a result? This is why Jesus speaks of the people there as being faithless and twisted. Faithless means, they have not believed in Him; twisted means, they have sought out demon possession in the first place.

When the demon is thrown out and the boy is revived, the people are astonished at God's majesty, but how many of them believed in Jesus as a result?

At this point, our narrative takes a turn. It is still the same day, the same set of circumstances which lead us to this point, but Jesus now has some important words for His disciples to hear and digest.

As mentioned on several occasions, there this series of nine events (this can be stretched into a greater number of events, depending on how they are counted). As a part of this series of events, Jesus twice speaks of His impending persecution and crucifixion. This is the second time that Jesus speaks of it.

Luke 9:43b **But while they were all marveling at everything He was doing,...** (ESV; capitalized)

While people are marveling over all that Jesus was doing (which suggests that He did more miracles than what is recorded here), something else will happen.

By marveling, I would assume that all of the people there are talking about what they have just seen done before their very eyes and how they find the Lord's power to be amazing.

It is worth mentioning that, people responded in different ways to the things which Jesus did. You will recall when Jesus cast the multiple demons out of one man, and those demons entered into the swine. At that time, the people were not marveling over that

series of events, despite them being far more familiar with the demon-possessed man there. After that took place, the people asked Jesus to leave.

However, those who are here right now, appear to be quite impressed by the power of God which Jesus has revealed.

The disciples themselves might be glorying in the reflected glory of the Lord; but Jesus needs to set them straight. He will speak to them on another topic.

Luke 9:43c ...Jesus said to His disciples,... (ESV; capitalized)

While the people there appear to be discussing what Jesus is doing, Jesus turns to His disciples and He speaks directly to them.

It is very likely that the disciples saw themselves as sitting in the middle of the greatest thing ever. People were speaking admirably about Jesus and the things that He had done; and the disciples are right there with Him, perhaps even enjoying some reflected glory.

One thing that the disciples appear to be learning and understanding is, there are times when Jesus needs to tell them something or explain something to them in particular. He might take them away to a private place and talk with them, or there might be a sign of some sort (a head tilt or a subtle movement of the Lord's hand), and they know that they need to turn to Jesus and pay attention. He is going to explain something or clarify something or give them an important doctrine.

So, in the midst of this crowd, where everyone seems to be talking about what they have just witnessed, the Lord motions to His disciples, "Okay, guys, listen up..." (There were female disciples there as well.)

Luke 9:43b-c But while they were all marveling at everything He was doing, Jesus said to his disciples,... (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is speaking to a select few. They tune out the comments and observations of the crowds there, and tune in to what Jesus is saying.

Luke 9:44a ..."Let these words sink into your ears:..."(ESV; capitalized)

Even though Jesus commands His disciples to place these words of His into their ears, this phrase simply means that He wants them to listen carefully and let this information sink into their brains. They are to hear it, think about it, and remember it. With everything they are thinking and feeling at this time, they need to also take in this bit of information.

Luke 9:44b ...The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." (ESV; capitalized)

Despite the apparent positive reaction of this crowd of people, Jesus tells His disciples, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men." He is indicating that He is going to be taken by men who want to harm Him.

Because we find this phrase here, the disciples, with the help of the Holy Spirit, remembered the many times that Jesus warned of His impending death (which involved Him being taken by evil men); but they did not really understand what he was saying at this point in time. They remember these words after the fact, and Luke and the other gospel writers record that Jesus said these things, attempting to prepare His disciples for what was to happen.

I think perhaps I should distinguish between the disciples more at this point. I believe that Jesus' female disciples heard what He was saying and remembered it better than the twelve (or the other male disciples). His female followers would go and be with Him at the cross. Of the twelve, only John would be with Him at the cross. So, for most of His disciples, what Jesus is saying here just goes over their heads, even though Jesus is telling them to listen carefully. For John and the Lord's female disciples, they are hearing what He is telling them. They will not be completely shocked and devastated by the events which are about to take place. Ten of the twelve disciples will essentially desert Jesus.

Luke 9:44 ...**"Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men."** (ESV; capitalized)

As has been discussed in Luke 8 and 9, these are words which Jesus spoke just prior to going toward Jerusalem. In the parallel passages in Matthew and Mark, we will go from this series of events into the final trek to Jerusalem. Right now, we are in Luke 9 and there are 24 chapters in the book of Luke. Luke is going to have a lot of material to cover before Jesus and His disciples actually go to Jerusalem.

In the book of Luke, we have three more incidents which match up with Matthew and Mark; and then between Luke 9:57 and 18:17, we have a whole other set of incidents which do not have, for the most part, parallels in the other gospels.

Luke 9:43b–44 **But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men."** (ESV; capitalized)

Prior to going toward Jerusalem for the final time, Jesus warned His disciples of what was to take place. However, at this time, the disciples have no frame of reference for what Jesus is saying. They should but they don't.

Jesus has cast the demon out of a young boy and people are excitedly speaking about what has taken place. However, while the crowd is talking amongst themselves, Jesus has important information for His disciples to hear.

Luke 9:43b–44 But while they were all marveling at everything He was doing, Jesus said to His disciples, "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." (ESV; capitalized)

Twice in this chapter, Jesus tells the disciples that He would be delivered into the hands of men, meaning that He would be taken and abused and crucified (see also Luke 9:21–22).

Luke 9:45a But they did not understand this saying,... (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus just told the disciples that He was going to be taken by men. Jesus made it clear that this information was extremely important. What Jesus is telling the disciples, they will actually see come to pass.

However, the disciples did not really understand what Jesus said here. It did not make sense to them. Jesus had made several statements similar to this, but it was not fitting into their theological understanding. Therefore, they would hear it and perhaps even, to some extent, understand it. But, they did not believe it so it did not stay with them.<sup>72</sup>

Let me suggest this—and this might even be applied to the scribes and priests—they understood a theology about the Messiah, which included the Messiah reigning from David's throne forever. This is a true doctrine, but they were unable to reconcile it with, "I will be seized and taken by men." The disciples had some theological information (things which I believed they learned earlier in their lives) and they could not reconcile it with what Jesus was telling them. How does David's Greater Son get taken away? What sense does it make for the Promised Messiah to be made to suffer? None of what Jesus is telling them fits with the other things which they know. The disciples resisted this information.

You have a 1000 piece puzzle before you, and there is the blue sky, and the deep blue water below, and some white clouds; and then the browns and greens of trees and bushes. Then you come across a piece of the puzzle which is a bright red. That does not appear to fit anywhere in this puzzle, so you set it aside as maybe coming from a different puzzle. This is what had happened to the disciples.

Their theology made it impossible for this new bit of information to fit in anywhere. They could not see how this piece of the puzzle made sense, given everything else that they knew. Therefore, they set this piece of the puzzle aside and forgot about it.

Luke 9:45b ...and it was concealed from them,... (ESV; capitalized)

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<sup>72</sup> However, God the Holy Spirit brought this information back into their minds. Therefore, these things are found in three of the gospels.

Therefore, because the disciples understood something about the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent (and, because of this, they assumed that they might be second or third in command under Jesus), they did not understand the very simple words that Jesus was speaking. What He said was not hard to understand, insofar as the words themselves. They just could not make this fit in with their theology, so they simply set it aside, and eventually, they lost it. That information did not fit in with what they understood (or thought that they understood), so there was no place to put it.

Bible doctrine provides a structure and we place various things into this structure, and we understand them as they relate to the other things in the structure. But if some doctrine is introduced and we see it as being contradictory to what we already believe (and it may not be contradictory to what we believe), then there is no place to put it. It is that odd red puzzle piece. There is no proper place in which to put it. There is no set of doctrines among which it easily fits. Therefore, the doctrine is mentally set aside and eventually it becomes hidden to them. They no longer think about it because it does not make sense.

I know a Christian gal who is antisemitic. She is able to understand many things about Israel's history. She knows about the many times that they failed. She knows all about their rejection of the Lord. Based upon this information, she thinks that she understands God's (supposed) rejection of them. What she cannot see or understand is the rapture of the church and that God will use nation Israel once again. She is unable to place this into her theological mosaic, because all the pieces of the puzzle which are dispensational in nature have no place to go. She is forced to reject dispensationalism because one of her fundamental assumptions—antisemitism—keeps information about dispensations at bay.

Luke 9:45b ...and it was concealed from them,... (ESV; capitalized)

This process may take very little time to occur.

In listening to the R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s teaching, I have gone back and listened to studies which I heard 30 and 40 years ago. Well, very often, I hear many things which I had never heard before (even though I had heard all of these lessons before). "Was he really teaching this?" I often ask myself. Back then, I had no place to put some of the doctrines that he was teaching, so they became hidden from me. When I developed a greater understanding of the plan of God, then all of these things which He was teaching began to find a place to be put.

Luke 9:45b ...and it was concealed from them,... (ESV; capitalized)

This concealment does not mean that Jesus pulled some voodoo magic out, told them these words and then magically took those words away from them. Their own limited understanding of Jesus and the end times allowed for this information of Jesus to be concealed from them.

Luke 9:45c ...so that they might not perceive it. (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples did not understand what Jesus was teaching them; it did not fit in with what they believed and understood to be true.

Every believer has a certain amount of doctrine in his soul. Doctrine is built upon doctrine. When I first heard R. B. Thieme, Jr. teach the Romans series, I had been a believer for about five years. Now that I am going back and listening again, it is like hearing a brand new series. I have a better background now than I did 40 some years ago.

**Application:** For those of you who have heard the entire Thieme catalogue, I strongly recommend that you go back and re-listen to these series a second and third time

The other problem for learning more doctrine is, believers believe stuff that is simply not true. So when they hear accurate doctrine being taught, they cannot understand it. Because of their incorrect beliefs, there is no place for this doctrine to go. The information does not fit into what they already think they know.

Luke 9:45a-c **But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it.** (ESV, capitalized)

Jesus told the disciples that He would be delivered into the hands of men. They did not understand this statement because they could not make it fit into the things which they understood and believed. They did not have the general category, *suffering Servant* in their human spirits. This statement was incongruous to what they knew (and to what they thought they knew).

Luke 9:45d **And they were afraid to ask Him about this saying.** (ESV; capitalized)

For whatever reason, the disciples were afraid to ask Jesus for clarification or for more information. Maybe they did not want to appear foolish in front of the other disciples, or maybe they were not interested in this sort of revelation. Or, it is possible that they have more pressing issues at hand, such as, which disciple is the greatest? (Vv. 46–48)

Luke 9:45 **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.** (ESV; capitalized)

One of the reasons that this statement could not seem to find a place in their brain is, three of the disciples had just seen the Lord glorified. This would be a very difficult image for them to lose. So, how could this Jesus, Whom they had just seen glorified, find Himself subject to anything? How would it be possible for mere men to grab Him? What the three had seen did not square with what Jesus had just told them.

Luke 9:45 **However, the disciples did not really understand what Jesus had said to them, as the meaning was hidden from them. Also, they simply feared to ask the Lord for more information about this statement.** (Kukis paraphrase)



Let's now put more of this passage together:

Luke 9:43b–44 But, while they were marveling over all that Jesus [lit., *He*] was doing, He spoke directly to His disciples: “Put these words into your ears, that the Son of Man is about to be delivered over to the hands of men.”

Luke 9:45 But the disciples did not understand the statement [that Jesus had made] and it was being hidden from them, for they did not understand it. Also, they feared to ask the Lord [lit., *Him*] about what He said [lit., *the word, the statement*]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Luke gives us the actual context. Jesus has just cured the boy with the evil spirit; and has probably performed other healings and miracles. The people there and the disciples were simply being amazed by all that Jesus was able to do.

Jesus then tells them, “Let this thought sink into your brains: the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men!”

They do not understand how that could possibly happen because they know what Jesus is capable of and they know that the Messiah will deliver Israel. How can this Man, Who can even control the winds and the seas, the spirits and man's illnesses, be taken by other men? It did not compute. This information did not fit into what they knew and understood.

Today, young believers have difficulties with the hypostatic union of Jesus. How can He be a man? Or how can He be God? Two cults—the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons—build their peculiar doctrines upon a misapprehension of Who Jesus is. The JW's do not believe that Jesus can be God, and they will point out every single thing which He stated, spoken from His humanity, in order to *prove* their point. The Mormons can accept Jesus as God, but the rest of the Godhead must also have bodies (like Jesus does); and man himself (the really good ones) will become some sort of god as well.

The ESV (capitalized) will be used below. There are far fewer problems in this short passage.

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## Jesus Will Be Taken by Evil Men (Parallel Accounts)

**Matthew 17:22–23**

**Mark 9:30–32**

**Luke 9:43–45**

Matthew 17:22–23a As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day."

Mark 9:30–31 They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And He did not want anyone to know, for He was teaching His disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And when He is killed, after three days He will rise."

Luke 9:43–44 And all were astonished at the majesty of God. But while they were all marveling at everything He was doing, Jesus said to His disciples, "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men."

Earlier in this chapter (so, roughly a week or two ago), Jesus told His disciples something along these same lines. He expresses the same thing here, but in a different way.

At this point, Jesus and His disciples are still in Galilee. However, they are very close to walking toward Jerusalem for the last time. To do so, they will have to walk through Samaria (Luke 9:51–56).

Mark 9:32 But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

Luke 9:45 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.

There are actually two emotional responses to what Jesus taught them. Some of the disciples were simply confused and wanted to know more, but were afraid to ask.

Matthew 17:23b And they were greatly distressed.

Some of the other disciples had a different response. The fact that Matthew tells us that they were distressed indicates to us that, the disciples understood what Jesus was telling them. These words bothered them considerably. However, since they did not believe this, it did not become a part of their human spirits. They were unable to retain this information. When Jesus was seized by soldiers, the disciples were upset and confused.

Jesus will soon lead the disciples to Jerusalem. At that time, He will speak of His death a third time. Matthew 20:17–19 Mark 10:32–34 Luke 18:31–34. Also note, that is nine chapters away in the book of Luke.

Twice, in this set of 9–13 events, Jesus speaks of His death. Jesus will speak of His death again prior to entering into Jerusalem. Matthew 20:17–19 Mark 10:32–34 Luke 18:31–34

At the first, Jesus speaks about suffering. He would be rejected by the religious class and then He would be put to death. But He also adds that He would rise up on the third day.

Luke 9:21–22 Admonishing them sternly, Jesus enjoined the disciples not to speak of this thing that Peter said. He told them, “It will be necessary that the Son of Man suffer many things and He will be rejected by the elders, chief priests and the scribes. He will be put to death; but then, on the third day, He will rise up again.” (Kukis paraphrase)

Jesus again warns that He would be handed over to the hands of evil men.

Luke 9:43b–44 However, while they were talking amongst themselves about what they had seen Jesus do, He solemnly told His disciples, “Remember what I am telling you right now: the Son of Man is about to be delivered over to the hands of evil men.” (Kukis paraphrase)

Unfortunately, the disciples did not fully understand what was going to happen, despite Jesus telling them. In fact, He has told them twice, and they are not getting it.

Luke 9:45 However, the disciples did not really understand what Jesus had said to them, as the meaning was hidden from them. Also, they simply feared to ask the Lord for more information about this statement. (Kukis paraphrase)

The third warning will take place in Luke 18:

Luke 18:31–33 And taking the twelve, he said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For He will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging Him, they will kill Him, and on the third day He will rise." (ESV; capitalized)

Luke 18:34 But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said. (ESV; capitalized)

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At least three times, Jesus told His disciples about the cross. The ESV (capitalized) will be used below:

Jesus Warns His Disciples About the Cross			
	Matthew	Mark	Luke

1 <sup>st</sup> Warning	Matthew 16:21 From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.	Mark 8:31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.	Luke 9:21–22 And He strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, 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."
2 <sup>nd</sup> Warning	Matthew 17:22–23	Mark 9:30–32	Luke 9:43–45
3 <sup>rd</sup> Warning	Matthew 20:17–19	Mark 10:32–34	Luke 18:31–34

Recall that the first warning came when Peter recognized and said that Jesus is the Messiah of God. Jesus told them not to tell anyone that; and then warned them what was about to take place.

Matthew, Mark and Luke are known as the synoptic gospels. They are more or less in agreement with one another and they are more or less in chronological order. Now look at the chapter numbers above: Matthew: 16, 17, 20 Mark 8, 9, 10 Luke 9, 9, 18. That's a little odd, don't you think?

## Lesson 285: Luke 9:46–47a

## Trivial Arguments Among the Disciples

Despite hearing some very solemn warnings from Jesus, the disciples start arguing amongst themselves.

Luke 9:46a **An argument arose among them....** (ESV; capitalized)

Some of the disciples indeed wondered just exactly what Jesus meant by being taken by men, but they were afraid to ask. However, suddenly, a more important discussion (to their way of thinking) arose.

So, when they devoted their thought and emotion to this new thing, whatever questions and thoughts they might have had about the things that Jesus said, just faded away.

The real and the important was set aside for the trivial.

The real and the important was set aside for the trivial.

**Application:** How many times does this happen in the life of the believer? Right at this time, as I write these words, I find my mind being consumed by what I recognize to be a trivial thing—and what is important, the Word of God—is not receiving my full mental attention. I recognize in myself such weakness and lack of faith.

Luke 9:46b ...as to which of them was the greatest. (ESV; capitalized)

Believers are to have their eyes on the Lord throughout life. This does not mean that we wander about looking straight up into the air, but that our minds continue thinking divine truth (Bible doctrine). We know that we are off track when we have our minds on things, on one another or on cosmic system thinking.

Remember that three of these disciples have just seen the glorified Christ; they have seen the Shekinah Glory. And yet, if they are not the perpetrators of this argument, then they have allowed themselves to be drawn into it.

This discussion which sucked all of the air out of the room was, *which of them was the greatest disciple?* Whatever lingering thoughts they may have had about what Jesus had just told them, disappeared when faced with this very important controversy (important in their own eyes).

I have to admit that, in my life, I get sidetracked by a great many things, and I sometimes devote time, and energy and resources to these things, and, quite frankly, they are not anywhere near as important as Bible doctrine.

**Application:** This does not mean that you, as a believer, cannot do anything else but study Bible doctrine. No pastor has ever said that; and I only know one pastor who virtually devoted his life to that (R. B. Thieme, Jr.). People with the gift of pastor-teacher who have been raised up in his church have found that it is doggone tough to spend hours every day preparing food (Bible doctrine) for the congregation. I am further cognizant that some (all?) of these pastors did not experience the same kind of enthusiasm and large numbers that Bob enjoyed for a significant portion of his ministry. That makes one's dedication to Bible doctrine, even if that is your job, particularly difficult.

**Application:** Outside of the pastorate (and other specific positions), most people have lives to lead. God does not say, "You cannot live your life." You have a job, you have a wife (or a husband), you are attending school, you have children, you are in the armed forces; and, quite frankly, you are pressed for time as it is. God expects you to grow; and just as you set time aside every day to eat food, you, as a growing believer, need to set time aside every day to masticate Bible doctrine. I believe that 30 minutes in a day is the barest of minimums; and 45 min to an hour and a quarter is better for one's daily intake of Bible doctrine.

**Application:** So that there is no misunderstanding, this does not mean that you devote 30+ minutes a day to reading your Bible. God designed a gift for the Church Age called the pastor-teacher. If God expected you to dig the information out of the Bible for yourself, then this is what Paul would have instructed every believer in every epistle. But he did not. Paul spoke of his own teaching; he spoke of the teaching of the local pastor-teacher; and throughout the book of Acts, we have both the Apostles and pastor-teachers teaching the Word of God to various congregations and gatherings.

**Application:** Today, with all of the electronic availability, there is no excuse for anyone not to take in 45+ minutes of Bible doctrine every day. R. B. Thieme, Jr. left thousands upon thousands of hours behind of solid Bible teaching, and R. B. Thieme, Jr. Ministries makes his teaching available to any person who is interested, regardless of financial wherewithal.

**Application:** I can just about guarantee you that you will experience the same thing that I did. You will listen and take notes on a study; and then, 30+ years later, you might go back and re-listen to that study, and it is as if you had never heard that particular hour of teaching before. The reason for this is, you develop a greater understanding for the Word of God, and therefore, all of the many points that Bob (or whomever) makes has more places to go in your soul.

This is what is happening with the disciples. Jesus has just given them doctrinal teaching which ought to reach them, but it doesn't. And then they get away from it by discussing the trivial things of this world (who is the greatest?). After some time passes, the important information, having no place to land in the human spirit, disappears.

What Jesus attempted to teach them seems to be gone from their consciousness at this point. Nevertheless, after the crucifixion, God the Holy Spirit will help them to remember these things which Jesus actually taught them. As a result, the disciples leaving a written record behind clearly understands what Jesus was talking about, even though it is in retrospect.

Now for their argument:

Luke 9:46 **An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest.**

God will bring this information back into their minds, as this incident is found in three of the four gospels.

Luke 9:46 **A more important discussion (to their way of thinking) arose among the disciples, namely which of them might be the greatest disciple? (Kukis paraphrase)**

We do not find out in this account of Luke's that this discussion of the disciples actually



takes place out of earshot from the Lord (see [Parallel Views of Jesus on Children](#)). (This link will work in the chapter study of Luke 9 or in the online posting of lessons 201–300)

Mark brings to us a very different point of view, one which we miss in Matthew and Luke. And they came to Capernaum. **And when he was in the house He asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.** (Mark 9:33–34; ESV; capitalized) Jesus saw this very animated discussion taking place among His disciples; and He had just allowed three of them to see Him glorified (and to hear the voice of God). There are so many things happening in the Christian life. Yet their minds are focused on the most trivial thing possible. However, the disciples appear to grasp the unimportance of this disagreement among them, because not one of the three stands up and says, “We were having an argument, Lord, over who among us is the greatest. Now You took us off for that thing, so doesn’t that mean that we are Your greatest disciples?” But neither Peter, John nor James asks for the Lord to settle this dispute, because they know that they are in the wrong here.

Again, their problem here is focus. Our minds should be focused on the Lord and His thinking—not on the world, ourselves or upon other persons.

However, Jesus is able to look at the disciples and figure out what they have been discussing, and why they are so closed mouthed all of a sudden when He approaches them.

Luke 9:47a **But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts,...** (ESV; capitalized)

This discussion among the disciples was all about, *who among them is the greatest?* It may seem ridiculous to us today, but the disciples were serious about this. The disciple who was the greatest presumably reigned with the Lord, second-in-command. They were still expecting Jesus to take over Israel as Israel’s King. Like power works, #2 man also has a pretty sweet spot. So whoever was the greatest disciple was an important discussion to them.

As an aside, whereas we may find such an argument foolish, that reveals something about us. There are people who desire power; and, at the same time, are natural leaders. We talked about the Lord’s choice of His disciples previously in **Luke 5** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). If you recall, I took a very naturalistic approach to this. Jesus had many disciples with Him (dozens, perhaps over 100); and He needed to choose a core set of disciples. One of the things that Jesus would be looking for is natural leadership ability. He saw Peter and James and John on their ships, barking out orders, making sure everything was done right. We did not see this, because it was not recorded in the Word of God. But Jesus was the most perceptive Observer of people in human history. Whereas, as a prophet, the Holy Spirit may have informed the Lord and caused Him to alert on certain individuals; I would think that most of all of the Apostles were chosen on the basis of informed observation.

**Illustration:** If you have ever watched any Sherlock Holmes movie or series, some stranger walks before the detective and Sherlock quickly tells that person five or six things that he knows about him, simply by observation. Now that is, of course, fictional literature; but Jesus was capable of looking at a person, and within a few seconds, able to tell us a considerable amount information about that person.

One thing that is true about natural leaders is, they gravitate toward leadership positions and many of them crave leadership positions. Throughout my life, I have known a number of natural leaders; and when it comes to playing sports in PE at school, the natural leaders always stood out. There might be 20 kids who are going to make up some impromptu teams, and Kevin and Robert almost automatically stand out in front as the team captains, ready to draft their choices for that day (there was a time when this occurred every single day in virtually every physical education class in America). Natural leaders do not want to be relegated to second and third place.

So, most or all of the twelve disciples are natural leaders. This is why Jesus chose them as He did. And this is why they would enter into conversations that we might consider a little weird (“Listen, it is clear that I am greater than you are”); but these are twelve natural leaders who are not interested in being #3 or #4.

**Illustration:** I write this in 2023, and candidates are beginning to come forward in the Republican party. Even though some of these folks are really running for vice president or secretary of state, there are quite a number of them who have no interest in a vice presidential position, even if offered. I can think of two probable candidates who very likely would not consider the VP position. It is just not in their DNA. This is what is going on with the disciples and many of us don’t relate to it because we are not natural leaders. Since we are not natural leaders, what is taking place here is not relatable to us.

**Illustration:** The twelve disciples is like a football team made up of leaders. That simply does not work. A team needs a leader.

**Tangent:** Now, as an aside, I am not indicating that the twelve are great leaders; I am just trying to explain their predilections, so that their arguments make more sense.

## **Lesson 286: Luke 9:47–48**

## **Jesus uses a child as a training aid**

The disciples have been arguing about who among them is the greatest. Jesus notices this and brings before them another perspective.

Luke 9:47a **Jesus, observing the discussion of the heart [going on] among them,...** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Although it appears that Jesus heard what they were saying and understood what was happening here; another account by Mark seems to indicate that this discussion occurred out of the Lord's earshot. However, when Jesus sees the disciples and examines them, He is able to discern what has taken place. Again, Jesus is a shrewd observer of people.

We know from the parallel passage in Mark that Jesus can see what is happening between His disciples, but He cannot hear them. However, knowing His disciples as He does and picking up on their body language, Jesus knows what they are talking about.

This was a discussion of the heart, meaning that the disciples were thinking hard and deep about this question. This coveted #2 position right behind Jesus was important to them.

Luke 9:47b ...took a child and put him by His side... (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus needs to bring these disciples back down to earth; and there are more important concerns for them to be considering.

Jesus then uses a visual aid to help these disciples. He takes a young child and brings him near; He places the child next to Himself. This child would become a teaching aid.

In this circumstance, a child is an ideal teaching aid, because the disciples were acting like children. They would be able to relate.

There is another reason the Lord chose a child as a teaching aid. Who did the disciples perceive as the least important person around? Probably this child, whom they had not even noticed until this very moment.

Luke 9:47 But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by His side... (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus knows what His disciples are thinking. This does not mean that He has entered into their minds, but He has been hearing them and their arguments.

Jesus is going to help the disciples settle the argument, "Who among us is the greatest?"

Luke 9:48a ...and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me,... (ESV; capitalized)

The most important person among them is this young child. He was far more important than the bickering of the disciples. *Receives* is the aorist middle subjunctive of *dechomai* (δέχομαι) [pronounced *DEKH-om-ahee*], which means *to receive, to accept; to take*.

Strong's #1209. It is clear with the Thayer definitions above, this the meanings are more complex than that.

This child is, in part, the focus of the gospel. While the disciples are arguing like children, they are neglecting a most important part of their ministry, young children. The disciples would easily not even notice this young child, and yet presenting him with the gospel of Jesus Christ and teaching him is of the utmost importance.

The focus of these arguing disciples should not be upon one another, but upon their mission to evangelize all whom God brings to them. That mission includes evangelizing young children.

**Illustration:** If I am recalling correctly, Bobby Thieme's mother used to have daily vacation Bible school in their home and would invite the neighborhood children to participate. This was, no doubt, a great blessing to the children of their neighborhood; and who knows how many were saved as a result? Who knows how many had their lives turned around by hearing a clear, accurate presentation of the gospel? There are so many ministries which may seem small and inconsequential, but are dramatically important.

Jesus is saying, "When you receive/accept a new believer in My Name..." indicating that this new believer is accepted into the fold, as argumentative as it was. Taking in this child—this clearly innocent child who is *not* arguing about being the greatest—accepting this child is the same as receiving Jesus into their midst.

What does that mean? *Every* believer will have Jesus indwelling them. Every new believer has great potential. In fact, such a believer might even end up being greater than any of these disciples.

**Tangent:** Let me add something here—it is spiritually possible for you to be a greater believer than Paul or Peter. You have the completed canon of Scripture and you have every advantage of the spiritual life. Let me further suggest to you that there will be believers throughout human history who will be rewarded as much and possibly more than Peter or Paul. Our spiritual potential is unlimited. The spiritual potential of this child is unlimited.

Now, accepting this child into the inner circle of the disciples would be just like accepting Jesus—and they would all do that in an instant.

Luke 9:48b ...and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. (ESV; capitalized)

Furthermore, receiving Jesus is the same as receiving the One Who sent Him, which is God the Father. The Lord is guided throughout His human life by God's plan and by the

guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord's free will is an amazing thing to ponder—He completely made Himself subservient to the plan of God. He had a very straight path and He stayed on that path.

Some of you may be confused when you consider that Jesus, God in the flesh, is following God's plan. Doesn't that mean He is following His Own plan? No. Jesus, in His humanity, is following God's plan for Him. Jesus in His humanity has a limited knowledge of the future and is subject to all things that we are subjected to (apart from having a sin nature). From the Lord's perspective as a man, He is following the plan of His Father.

Luke 9:48c **For he who is least among you all is the one who is great.**" (ESV; capitalized)

Although this final maxim can be interpreted as, "The least of you will be the greatest," I think Jesus is actually saying, "The least one of you disciples will be great. You have been carefully chosen. You might be a collection of knuckleheads right now, but you will grow spiritually and you will glorify God.

After saying that Jesus is operating from His humanity, how does He know this about His disciples? Jesus knows the men He has chosen. He has evaluated their character and their interaction and their positive volition toward His teaching. Although there are times when it appears that Jesus walks by some random stranger and says, "Hey, you; follow Me and be My disciple." There is more to it than that. Jesus observed His disciples carefully before choosing the *Twelve*. Jesus is easily the most insightful Person in human history when it comes to human behavior and potential. I have used the illustration of the fictional character of Sherlock Holmes before, who, upon meeting someone for the first time, could tell you six things about that person. Jesus actually had people-smarts similar to this, so He had faith in the future of His disciples (except for one of them).

Luke 9:48 **...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."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is both indicating to the disciples that their dispute is meaningless; and He also stresses the importance of child evangelization.

Luke 9:48 **Then He said to them, "Whoever receives this one, the young boy, in My name, he receives Me. And whoever receives Me, he receives the One Who sent Me forth. For the least among you here [lit., *being, existing*], he keeps on being great."** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Jesus brings the child into their midst to refocus the attention of the disciples.

Luke 9:47–48 But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by His side 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." (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus' intention is to get the disciples to stop having this ridiculous argument and to focus upon this child and what they can learn about themselves and their mission by considering the child.

The ESV (capitalized) is used below:

Parallel Views of Jesus on Children		
Matthew 18:1–6	Mark 9:33–37	Luke 9:46–48
Matthew 18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"	Mark 9:33 And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house He asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" Mark 9:34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.	Luke 9:46 An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest.
It appears that the disciples had an argument, out of the Lord's earshot, about which of them is the greatest. Jesus, seeing this animated display of emotions presses them to tell Him what they were doing. At first, they said nothing. Finally one of them asks the Lord directly, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Several of the disciples are right there with him, wanting to hear the Lord's answer.		
	Mark 9:35 And He sat down and called the twelve. And He said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."	
Only Mark speaks about the greatest being the servant of all. This would be another statement that they did not understand.		



## Parallel Views of Jesus on Children

Matthew 18:1–6	Mark 9:33–37	Luke 9:46–48
<p>Matthew 18:2–4 And calling to Him a child, He put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.</p> <p>Matthew 18:5 "Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me,...</p>	<p>Mark 9:36–37 And He took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, "Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."</p>	<p>Luke 9:47–48 But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by His side 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."</p>

Jesus uses this child to teach His disciples several object lessons. Matthew records Jesus' point of operating under the perception of a child. Faith is the most typical system of perception used by children. A person enters the Kingdom of Heaven by faith in Jesus Christ. Even a child is able to do this.

Possibly the most important aspect of the ministry of a church is to the young people. This is so often done as an afterthought, but this is key to the growth of that church (I am not talking about numbers here but spiritual growth).

<p>Matthew 18:6 ...but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.</p>		
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Matthew records some information not preserved by Mark or Luke. Matthew records the terrible end for the person who causes a child to stumble. There are many ways to do that. Children are, by nature, trusting, and listen carefully to what adults tell them. They can be led far, far astray from the truth, and we see that happening in public education today.

## Parallel Views of Jesus on Children

**Matthew 18:1–6**

**Mark 9:33–37**

**Luke 9:46–48**

I write this in 2023–2024. We have children being sexualized today, exposed to all manner of filth even by their teachers. In some classes in some school, children are made to think that one of the important decisions in their lives is to figure out their gender (and they are often told to be guided by gender stereotypical behavior). All of this is wrong, and those people who are doing these things—Jesus describes what will happen to them. **“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”**

At this point, in the Matthew narrative, Jesus does a lot of teaching (Matthew 18:7–19:15). The three narratives appear to synch up again with Matthew 19:16 Mark 10:17 Luke 18:18 or possibly a few verses ahead of that. Note that we are now in Luke 9:48, but that the synoptic gospels do not synch up again until Luke 18:18! However, Mark and Luke will continue marching in tandem for one more incident.

(There will be some parallel passages of Matthew and Luke, but that is going to fall outside of a chronological study.)

See the Harmony of the Gospel Chart in the **Luke introduction** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

### Lesson 287: Luke 9:49–50

### Another casts out demons in the Lord's Name

Although Matthew, Mark and Luke will not all synch up for awhile, there is one more incident which both Mark and Luke record. This is found in Mark 9:38–41 and Luke 9:49–50.

Luke 9:49a **John answered**,... (ESV; capitalized)

Luke mentions John six other times in the book of Luke, but always in connection with the other disciples. This is the only time Luke reports to us that John said something.

Interestingly enough, the participle verb here is *apokrinomai* (ἀποκρίνομαι) [pronounced *ahp-oh-KREE-noh-mai*], which means, *to answer, to reply; to speak [after someone else]; to continue [speaking, a discourse]*. Strong's #611. When we see what John has to say, it is going to seem quite odd, because he is not really addressing what Jesus just taught them, even though it says, *answering Him, John said...* However, in a sense, John is answering Jesus, which I will explain.

What happens is, John heard 3 words from what Jesus said, and that reminded him of

something.

Luke 9:49b ...**"Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name,..."** (ESV; capitalized)

Now, how does John see this as relevant? This person that they were talking about was casting out demons in the Lord's name. Jesus was just talking about that, but that was awhile ago. John apparently did not get much out of what Jesus taught him, but what Jesus said did remind him of something else that happened to them.

We do not know when exactly this occurred, as John has been with Jesus the entire time for the past day or so. Jesus did seem to go off alone a lot and pray, and this incident may have taken place then. Or, this may have happened when John and the other disciples were out on their practice missionary tour (that seems more likely and John suddenly remembered that).

The disciples had come across someone who was casting out demons, but he was using the name of Jesus. Knowing nothing else, I would conclude that this man is a believer in Jesus Christ, and, in that way, was a follower of Him, even though he did not physically follow Jesus (or the disciples).

The key is, this unnamed disciple is doing this in the name of Jesus and he was apparently having success by using Jesus' name.

Luke 9:49c ...**and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us."** (ESV; capitalized)

Have you ever known a person to have a great desire for authority, but was unable to properly wield such authority when given it. He simply was not yet trained. That is what we have here with John.

John and the other disciples forbid this man from doing this. Again, we do not know when this incident took place, but there were a number of times when the disciples were not right there with Jesus. Sometimes the Lord sent a pair of them out on an errand, sometimes Jesus went off and prayed, and Jesus did send the disciples out to try their hand at curing illnesses and casting out demons. Also, Jesus recently sent many of His disciples out on their own to evangelize.

Luke 9:49 **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."** (ESV; capitalized)

This is quite an interesting thing—at this point, after about 2–3 years or so public

ministry—Jesus had followers who were not actually following Him directly, as the disciples did. Who this man was, how he came to be someone who cast out demons, and when he believed in Jesus (perhaps after casting out a demon in Jesus' name for the first time)—these things are all open to speculation. None of this information is given to us.

Throughout the Bible, when we are just reading it, sometimes, narratives seem fine; but then when we look at them closer, it becomes apparent that there is a lot of missing information. However, we can rest assured that, even though some information is missing, that information is not completely relevant to what is being taught.

Also, it is very easy for a pastor to accidentally fill in the gaps in a narrative—sometimes without realizing it. No doubt there has been a pastor who said, “Jesus recently sent these men out to teach, heal and cast out demons, and while doing so, they apparently came upon a man who also was casting out demons in the Lord’s name.” Filling in gaps is something that our brain often does—and many times, we do not even realize that it is doing that. And that, I would think, in most cases, is not really a cause for concern except in 2 places: (1) the pastor-teacher cannot build a doctrine based upon what he inserts into a narrative and (2) we are not to consider it a contradiction within the Bible if we come across the parallel passage and it is clear that this pastor incorrectly filled in the gaps of a narrative. For the most part, filling in the gaps is innocuous, as long as nothing is built upon that fill.

Earlier, I was considering inserting the phrase, “Perhaps Jesus sent the disciples out to pick up coffee at the local woke Starbucks, and they came across this guy.” Obviously, I would have inserted a phrase thinking that I was being humorous, figuring that 99% of those who read that phrase would take it in that way.

Luke 9:49 **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."** (ESV; capitalized)

John and the other disciples attempted to use their authority over this other person, telling him to stop casting out demons.

Luke 9:50a **But Jesus said to him,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is going to speak directly to John, but He will take in the other disciples as well, as they were a part of this thing.

Luke 9:50b **..."Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you."** (ESV; capitalized)

Because Jesus uses the negative plus the present active imperative, He is telling the disciples to stop immediately what they were doing (the verb is in a 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural).

They were hindering others who acted in the Lord's name, and Jesus said, "**Stop hindering them**" or "**Stop preventing them.**" So, even though Jesus looked at John, He was speaking to all of the disciples, and what they had done, they were not to do anymore.

Then Jesus explains. "**If someone is not against us, then he is for us.**" By this time, the Lord had many enemies in Jerusalem and further out from there. The religious class of the Jews despised Jesus because He was teaching things that contradicted what they were teaching (they taught the traditions and commandments of men rather than of God). Furthermore, He sometimes did this in the synagogues. Their solution was to kill Him; to lie about Him in court and then watch Him get executed.

This man that John spoke of was, based upon the information that we are given, a believer. Not every believer needed to be right there with Jesus listening to Him. As we will find out in the book of Acts, one of the things which the disciples did was, travel about, find those who have believed in the Lord (many of whom did not specifically follow Him during His short public ministry), and teach them Church Age doctrine (and give them the Holy Spirit, something which believers from the Age of Israel did not have).

We know nearly nothing about this man. Obviously he had heard of Jesus and, at some point when attempting to cast out a demon, used the Lord's name. Now was this the first time he encountered an indwelling demon? We don't know when it happened, but at some point, this man realized that using the name of Jesus was powerful enough to throw demons out of a person. I even suggested that this man became a believer *after* he used the Lord's name (that was me filling in the gaps of that narrative).

Jesus' point is: *This man is on our side; he is a fellow believer.*

The Niobi Study Bible and the NKJV suggest that Jesus is forbidding sectarianism here (that is the subheading that they give to this section of Luke 9).

Luke 9:50 **But Jesus said to him, "Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you."** (ESV; capitalized)

Believers are on the same team, despite the differences between various churches (and between various denominations).

Here, and in the passage which follows, Jesus is giving the disciples some boundaries within which they should remain.

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The ESV (capitalized) is used below:

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## Parallel Accounts of Another Casting Out Demons in Jesus' Name

Matthew	Mark 9:38–41	Luke 9:49–50
Matthew does not record this incident.	Mark 9:38 John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us."	Luke 9:49 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."
	Mark 9:39–40 But Jesus said, "Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in My name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me. For the one who is not against us is for us."	Luke 9:50 But Jesus said to him, "Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you."
Mark adds that, when someone does a work in the name of the Lord, that person will not speak evil of the Lord.		
	Mark 9:41 For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.	

The person who does divine good to any of the disciples will receive a reward.

Superficially, there appears to be a parallel with Matthew 10:40–42:

Matthew 10:40–41 "Whoever receives you receives Me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent Me. The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward."

Matthew 10:42 And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."

Given the location (Matthew 10 as opposed to Matthew 18), and given the two different objects (*little ones*; *you*), this appears to be Jesus teaching similar material, but under different circumstances. As we have seen, Jesus did not teach brand new material every time that He opened His mouth.

As mentioned previously, the synoptic gospels will appear to synch up again here Matthew 19:16 Mark 10:17, Luke 18:18 or possibly slightly sooner (the Matthew and Mark narratives begin to synch up with Matthew 19:1 and Mark 10:1). These passages place us leaving Galilee and entering into Judæa (Matthew 19:1 Mark 10:1). This will begin the final ascent into Jerusalem.



With Luke 9:50, we had the final touch point where the synoptic gospels intersected. It appears that we were in the first year or two of the Lord's ministry up to about Luke 8 (recall that Jesus' public ministry began in Luke 4 and He was calling His first disciples in Luke 5). After Luke 8, you may recall that Matthew 16–18, Mark 8–9 and Luke 9:1–50 were all matching up (throughout these studies, I have taken a few passages from each and shown the parallels). The overall chart for this is found in The Introduction to Luke ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) (it is called *Harmony of the Gospel Chart*; it is a chart which I took from Ken Palmer, and then made a few improvements on—I still have a ways to go before I am satisfied with it).

What remains of Luke 9 is vv. 51–62. Jerusalem is mentioned twice in vv. 51–56. For this and other reasons, it will become clear that Luke continues writing chronologically through the middle or end of Luke 10.

As I keep pointing out, we can place most of Luke 9 into the series of events taking place right before Jesus going to Jerusalem. There are many clues which suggest that this chronological approach might continue into Luke 10, possibly to the end (although we have no parallels to the other synoptic gospels. From about Luke 11 to midway through Luke 18, there is little or no guidance as to where we should chronologically place 7½ chapters.

Since we are at the end of Luke 9, we will need to discuss vv. 57–62, three case histories of reluctant disciples. The first two are possibly recorded back in Matthew 8:18–22. Although it is possible that these two incidents were repeated, it is possible that they match up in time and place. Moments ago, Luke 9 paralleled Matthew 18. But now we are paralleling a passage in Matthew 8? This ought to set off alarms. We should be wondering, *what happened?* This is not some glaring contradiction; it simply means that either Matthew or Luke is not in chronological order at this point (and that is *if* the final six verses of Luke 9 actually match up with Matthew 18:18–22; as the other option is, these are similar incidents, but not the same incidents).

Matthew and Mark appear to simply move forward chronologically from this same point in their narratives. However, the book of Luke, beginning with Luke 9:51 and going through Luke 18:14, seems completely out of whack with Matthew and Mark. What is taking place is somewhat difficult to figure out, but I have one main theory (and maybe some alternate theories).

We are currently in Luke 9; it will be mid-Luke 18 when we clearly synch up again with the other two synoptic gospels. Most of what we study in Luke 9:51–18:14 is going to be teaching by Jesus which has few parallels to the other gospels. Part of what we should decide in order to understand the logical order of Luke is, what is happening with these 8½

chapters? Is this the concentrated teaching done by Jesus on the way to Judæa; or is this simply a non-chronological collection of His teachings all put into one place? Given that Luke 9:57–62 matches up Matthew 8:18–29 and the almost all of what follows in Luke is unique, it is reasonable to ask, what exactly is taking place, with regards to chronology in Luke 9:51–18:14?

At this point, there are 8½ chapters of Luke which have few parallels with the other synoptics. Now, I can account for the end of Luke 9 and possibly all of Luke 10 as being a continuation of the chronological events that we have been studying. However, there remain 7½ chapters which do not appear easily fit into the chronology that we are currently in. From Luke 11:1 through Luke 18:14, we simply have a collection of Jesus's teachings which Luke's sources remember but are unable to give any more particulars—that is, they do not have enough information for Luke to place this teachings chronologically (nor would they need to; when exactly Jesus taught the next 7½ chapters is pretty much irrelevant to their content). Recall that Luke did not personally witness any of the things that he wrote about. He talked to perhaps a dozen people (maybe more), and they told him these stories, perhaps decades after these incidents took place, describing what they remember.

Matthew observed most of what he wrote. Mark was guided by Peter in Mark's gospel, and Peter also observed what Mark wrote. Therefore, putting things into a mostly chronological timeline was easy for Mark and Matthew. This happened, then that happened, and then the next thing happened. Matthew was there and he saw it; Peter was there and he saw it.

Much of Luke is in chronological order, but if anyone was to have information that could not be placed correctly onto a timeline, that would be Luke. How many followers of Jesus did Luke talk to who remembered two or three incidents, or several lectures, but when Luke went to put this information into his gospel, he did not know where exactly to place it? Obviously, this is unknown, as Luke never writes, *this is something that Jesus said, but I do not remember when He said it.*

Even though there are problems with matching up this final section of Luke 9, let me suggest that we seem to be continuing the Luke narrative chronologically.

### **Luke 9:51–62 Continues the Narrative of Luke 9**

1. Luke 9:51 reads: **When the days drew near for Him to be taken up, He set His face to go to Jerusalem.** (ESV; capitalized)
2. Therefore, v. 51 tells us that we are very near the time that Jesus will be taken up. Therefore, this chronologically continues the narrative of Luke 9.
3. Jesus was in Galilee (Matthew 17:22 Mark 9:30), He therefore must go through Samaria in order to get to Jerusalem (refer to any ancient map). Luke 9:52 has Jesus and His disciples moving toward Samaria. Therefore, vv. 52–53 continue with the narrative.

## Luke 9:51–62 Continues the Narrative of Luke 9

4. Jesus came to the Jews first, but He spoke to the Samaritan woman earlier; and this period of time would have been His last opportunity during His public ministry to go to their cities and villages.
5. Luke 9:52 **And He sent messengers ahead of Him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for Him.** Chronologically, theologically and geographically, all of this makes sense for Jesus to go through Samaria and to give the gospel there right at this point in time.
6. Although portions of Luke 9:57–62 appear to match up with a much earlier passage in Matthew (Matthew 8:20), this incident could have happened more than once.
7. The concept of a few undecided disciples at this point in time was particularly poignant, because this was during the final months of Jesus' public ministry.
8. For this reason, I lean toward Luke 9:51–62 taking place right after Luke 9:50.
9. When we come to Luke 10, there are clues which indicate that most or all of this chapter continues the current narrative.
10. Therefore, it is actually Luke 11:1–18:14 which appears to be untethered to time.

In a similar fashion, I will later show that at least Luke 10:1–24 also appear to continue this narrative.

So Luke has many chapters of Jesus' teachings which do not fit neatly into a timeline. Jesus taught these things, but we do not know exactly when. Furthermore, apart from this one section, Luke 9:57–60, Ken Palmer shows no matches with the other gospels.

I would suggest two basic propositions: (1) Luke had access to both Matthew and Mark and he may have used those gospels to order his own book. He may have used those gospels to place portions of his book into the right place in time. However, (2) Luke had a lot of additional material that he could not match up with Matthew or Mark. So he just has this middle section (Luke 10:25–18:14), which *is not* arranged chronologically. It is here where Luke places all of this unique material. For the most part, there are few if any clues in these 8 chapters as to where these teachings belong chronologically speaking.

V. 51 tells us where we are in relation to time. Jesus is at the end of His public ministry and He is going to Jerusalem to be crucified. Also, three times in this passage, we speak of Jesus' face. This tells us that Jesus is going in a specific direction (that is, where His face is turned). Twice, Jesus is said to be going to Jerusalem (although, it will be obvious by the tenor of this passage that He will not arrive in Jerusalem until the middle of Luke 18).

Although Matthew and Mark both mark the time when Jesus sets His face towards Jerusalem; neither of them record this incident of the Samaritan village.

Luke 9:51a **When the days drew near for Him to be taken up,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Luke words this in such a way so that we understand that he is seeing this from an overall perspective that he knows what is going to happen, and so Luke speaks of this as the ascension approaching. Jesus would be taken up to God. This particular verb occurs only here.

This is very logical for Luke to see things this way as, he did not witness the crucifixion, he did not travel with the original disciples; and all that He learned was after the fact, after the Lord had ascended to heaven. A person who witnessed the crucifixion or was intimately involved with it (like Peter or the other disciples), would have used the word *crucifixion* rather than *ascension*. For all of Luke's spiritual life, Jesus has been ascended into heaven.

This also tells us that we are very near the end, which is an odd place to be, considering that we are only in the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of Luke (a book that is 24 chapters long). We have previously discussed this prior to the first of nine incidents; and in the introduction for this chapter. Luke is talking about the end of the Lord's public ministry, but this will be followed by 8½ chapters. In Luke 9:51, Jesus is at the end of His public ministry; in Luke 18, it will again be clear that we are at the end of the Lord's public ministry. However, in between, there are 7½ chapters which appear to be untethered to a specific time (we can account for a single chapter, Luke 10).

Luke 9:51b **...He set His face to go to Jerusalem.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus had been speaking to His disciples about His crucifixion; about Him being delivered into the hands of (evil) men (Luke 9:44). The disciples have not really considered these words of Jesus; as they did not really fit into their theology. However, Jesus knows what is going to happen. Nevertheless, He sets His face towards Jerusalem. This means that He will guide His disciples toward Jerusalem and they will arrive there in time for the Passover observance. On that Passover, Jesus will offer Himself up as the Lamb of God on the cross.

This is the first time that the Lord's face is mentioned in this way. Here, it simply means that will be the clear direction of His ministry, from where He is (which appears to be the Galilee region, not far from Samaria). His face is set toward Jerusalem.

What is being emphasized is the human volition of Jesus. The verb used here is the aorist active indicative of *stêrizô* (στηρίζω) [pronounced *stay-RIHD-zoh*], which means, *to turn resolutely in [a certain direction]; to make stable, place firmly, set fast, fix; to strengthen, make firm; to render constant, confirm, one's mind*. Strong's #4741. This is all about making a firm decision and staying with it. In this instance, this is a very difficult decision that Jesus is making. He knows that He will be the Lamb offered up to God.

What is in Jesus' immediate future is being associated with our sins and being punished for them. His pain and suffering has never been known by any man or woman (or even by all men and women combined).

Twice in this chapter, Jesus has spoken about being arrested and going to the cross. He even spoke of His true disciples picking up their crosses and following Him. So there is no doubt that this coming month or so is laying heavily on His mind.

Luke 9:51 **When the days drew near for Him to be taken up, He set His face to go to Jerusalem.** (ESV; capitalized)

These words clearly place Jesus at the end of His public ministry. This will be His final trek to Jerusalem.

Vv. 52–56 are exclusive to the book of Luke. However, they appear to be right in line with the timeframe of v. 51.

Luke 9:52a **And He sent messengers ahead of Him,....** (ESV; capitalized)

As Jesus often did, He would send messengers ahead (very likely, a small contingent of disciples) and they will line up accommodations in the next town (or the next few towns). Although this is not really discussed much, this would help to explain some of the Lord's movements and how some things got taken care of.

When we read the gospels, it often appears as if Jesus travels to this town, then to this village, and then to the next village. However, what we read here suggests that some of his disciples would travel into the next few towns or villages and make preparations for Jesus. They will even test the waters for positive or negative volition.

**Ancient Palestine** (Map); from [Christianity.com](https://www.christianity.com); accessed April 19, 2024.



Most of Jesus' public ministry took place up north in the Galilee region. Although Jesus did come into Samaria, this did not really occur until near the end of His third year (which is what we are presently studying). Jesus went down further south into Judæa for at least three Passovers (I think that they are all recounted in the book of John), but this is where the religious Jews were located in greater numbers and these were the ones who gave

Jesus the most trouble.

Luke 9:52b ...who went and entered a village of the Samaritans,... (ESV; capitalized)

From Galilee, where the disciples and Jesus are, the road going toward Jerusalem goes through a village of Samaritans. In fact, in order for Jesus to go from the Galilee region to Jerusalem, He must travel through Samaria.

We have earlier noted that, in northern Israel, there was a considerable Jewish population, even though it was not considered a Jewish state (like Judah). And, more interesting, the positive volition seemed to be there in Galilee (more so than in Judah). Israel (the northern kingdom) was known for its negative volition throughout much of the Old Testament. It was the northern kingdom which first fell under the fifth stage of national discipline (this means, not only were they conquered, but they were removed from their land).

But the Jewish people were not the only ones living there in what was once known as Israel (as opposed to Judah, which was the southern kingdom). There were also Samaritans, who had segregated themselves off, apparently, into their own villages. The land where they settled (currently under Roman control) was considerable.

The short explanation is, these are half Jewish.

### **The Samaritans (by Easton)**

The name given to the new and mixed inhabitants whom Esarhaddon (677 B.C.), the king of Assyria, brought from Babylon and other places and settled in the cities of Samaria, instead of the original inhabitants whom Sargon (721 B.C.) had removed into captivity (2Kings 17:24; compare Ezra 4:2, Ezra 4:9, Ezra 4:10). These strangers (compare Luke 17:18) amalgamated with the Jews still remaining in the land, and gradually abandoned their old idolatry and adopted partly the Jewish religion.

After the return from the Captivity, the Jews in Jerusalem refused to allow them to take part with them in rebuilding the temple, and hence sprang up an open enmity between them. They erected a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, which was, however, destroyed by a Jewish king (130 B.C.). They then built another at Shechem. The bitter enmity between the Jews and Samaritans continued in the time of our Lord: the Jews had "no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9; compare Luke 9:52, Luke 9:53). Our Lord was in contempt called "a Samaritan" (John 8:48). Many of the Samaritans early embraced the gospel (John 4:5–42; Acts 8:25; Acts 9:31; Acts 15:3). Of these Samaritans there still remains a small population of about one hundred and sixty, who all reside in Shechem, where they carefully observe the religious customs of their fathers. They are the "smallest and oldest sect in the world."

M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*; 1897; from e-Sword, topic: Samaritans.



Essentially, these are half-breeds. They adhered to much of the Hebrew faith; they believed in the holy Scriptures, but they were not fully accepted by the Jews. Similarly, they did not fully accept the Jews either.

For Jesus, this made no difference. He was going to teach and proclaim the gospel and heal wherever He was wanted. However, the message was to go to the Jew first and then to the non-Jews (which would more or less include the Samaritans).

Luke 9:52c ...to make preparations for Him. (ESV; capitalized)

This contingent of disciples would go into the next town and make things ready for the Lord. Lodging would have to be secured; food and provisions; and the people needed to be questioned to determine where the Lord might speak (and, of course, the disciples needed to know how much interest the local population had in Jesus).

Luke 9:52 *Therefore, He sent messengers before Him [lit., before His face]. Going forth, they came to a village of Samaritans, so as to make [things] ready for Him.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

**Israel in the Time of Jesus** (a map); from [Pinterest](#); accessed February 7, 2023.

As you can see on this map, there was quite a distance between Galilee and Judæa; and Samaria was between them. Jesus and His disciples had to travel through Samaria in order to get to Judæa.

There were hard feelings between the Jews and the Samaritans (who were half Jewish).

Someone in Samaria, apparently, had contacts in Judæa; and could set the Lord up with a temporary rental property for a week or so (which might simply be a field to stay in).

Although Luke does not appear to record this, Jesus is recorded to have gone to Jerusalem at least twice before this (I believe that John documented those



visits).

Jesus also went with His family to Jerusalem probably once a year.

Luke 9:52 **And He sent messengers ahead of Him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for Him.** (ESV; capitalized)

## Lesson 289: Luke 9:51–56

## Questionable Text

V. 51 clearly places Jesus on a path to Jerusalem for His final journey to there.

Luke 9:51 **When the days drew near for Him to be taken up, He set His face to go to Jerusalem.** (ESV; capitalized)

Luke 9:52 **And He sent messengers ahead of Him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for Him.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is sending His disciples ahead to make preparations and to test the waters.

Luke 9:53a **But the people did not receive Him,...** (ESV; capitalized)

Sadly, the Samaritans in this particular village did not want Jesus there. They were not willing to receive Him. “You want us to provide Him a place of stay? You want us to provide meals for Him?” Usually, there just needed to be one person who was willing to do that. But, it appears that no one was willing. Or, if a person was willing, there was so much negativity that he could not perform the services required.

Luke 9:53b **...because His face was set toward Jerusalem.** (ESV; capitalized)

The excuse they gave—and I assume that this was the excuse for most of them—is that Jesus was going towards Jerusalem for the Passover. This village was—and I am guessing here—not made to feel welcome in Jerusalem for the Passover, and, if Jesus was going there, then they wanted no part of Him.

There has been some intermarriage which has taken place over the centuries along with groups of people who turned to Judaism. At times this was accepted and even celebrated (see the books of Ruth and Jonah). Some of these groups apparently corrupted the worship system of the Jews. There were times when the Jews themselves also rejected those they did not view as pure. So the Samaritans—who were part-Jewish—were looked down upon and even given some trouble if they came to Jerusalem for the important

celebrations.

Samaria is a large piece of land and there were many villages there. Certainly people had completely contradictory views throughout Samaria. So this is a very negative response to Jesus, but it is a single village; it is not all of Samaria.

Luke 9:53 But the people did not receive Him, because His face was set toward Jerusalem. (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is exercising His human volition to move His many disciples to Jerusalem; which is where He will pay for our sins. No matter what problem or barrier there is, Jesus is going to go through it.

Apparently, there was discussion between various Samaritan city leaders and the disciples, and in this discussion, it was made clear to the Samaritans that Jesus was going toward Jerusalem. This village of Samaritans did not like this. However, this nonacceptance was not for all of Samaria, but for one of the first villages in Samaria that they had come to.

Luke 9:51–53 When the days drew near for Him to be taken up, He set His face to go to Jerusalem. And He sent messengers ahead of Him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for Him. But the people did not receive Him, because His face was set toward Jerusalem. (ESV; capitalized)

A small delegation had been sent ahead to a Samaritan village to handle the logistics for the Lord arriving there, and the Samaritans essentially said, “No, we’re not interested.”

The fact that the Samaritans of this village had no interest in Jesus caused a bit of a stir among some of the disciples.

Luke 9:54a And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said,... (ESV; capitalized)

When the Samaritans decided not to accommodate the Lord and His disciples, James and John blew a gasket. James and John a part of this delegation, as it says here, *seeing [this]*. In fact, I would not be surprised if James and John, while returning to the Lord, are fuming and talking this situation up. “What is wrong with them?” John may have asked. James then responded with, “Those sons of bitches.” So they may have been the ones to try to set up the logistics there, but now, they are simply working each other up.

Luke 9:54b ..."Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven... (ESV; capitalized)

This narrative has both men (James and John) speaking, so that would suggest to me that

there was more to this conversation than what is recorded (which is likely true for most conversations recorded in Scripture). Perhaps their conversation went like this: “We talked to several townspeople,” John might begin, and James quickly chimed in, “And those sons of bitches wanted no part of us.” “Yeah,” John added, “They said, go on by, don’t stop.” “So,” says James, “should we command fire down from the heavens to destroy them?”

So both disciples are talking, adding to what the other has said (remember, these are brothers).

Luke 9:54c *...and consume them?"* (ESV; capitalized)

The end result of fire from heaven would be to consume or destroy that village.

Luke 9:54 *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?"* (ESV; capitalized)

James and John believe that they know what should be done when negative volition is displayed. They should call upon fire from the heavens to destroy these people. They knew that this had taken place in the past.

I would suggest that there are underlying prejudices against the Samaritans which motivate James and John.

There are some textual problems as to the complete text of vv. 54–56. I primarily work to the Westcott Hort text (I think this is the general approach of the ESV).

At the end of v. 54, Scrivener Textus Receptus adds the words, *as also Elijah did*.

It seems logical that these men would have included the phrase, *just as Elijah did*. No doubt, the Lord has been teaching His disciples from the Old Testament; and there are occasions when they went into the local synagogue. Furthermore, the two disciples who have approached Jesus with this question actually saw Elijah at the transfiguration, so they would have been interested in what he did. In some way, these disciples had studied for themselves (we can only speculate as to how they did this, as copies of the Scriptures were both rare and expensive in that era<sup>73</sup>). In any case, they came across the passage 2Kings 1:10–14 where Elijah calls for fire to come out from the heavens. The problem is, they were hyper-focused and Elijah bringing fire down from the heavens, and they did not understand the full context of 2Kings 1. They observed the negative volition of the

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<sup>73</sup> Jesus carried the entire Old Testament around in His soul. That is, He knew all of it. He not only memorized the words, in His humanity, but He understood what all (or most) of it meant. As an aside, would there have been anything in the Old Testament that Jesus did not fully understand?

Samaritans and figured fire from heavens would be appropriate (it would not be).

Luke 9:55 **But He turned and rebuked them.** (ESV; capitalized)

Having heard what James and John suggested (“Wipe these people out with hell fire!”), Jesus suggests a different approach. First He rebukes them.

Now the Scrivener Textus Receptus adds: *...and said, “Do you not know what manner of spirit you [all] are?”* The disciples want vengeance based upon the negative volition expressed in this village. Jesus says no. Perhaps He adds, “Just think about what you are saying right now.”

I agree with the added text, at least in spirit. Jesus did not simply rebuke them, but He would have explained why. “Do you understand the type of spirit (or attitude) that you are exhibiting here?” the Lord asks the brothers. They are not showing grace; and for those who do not believe in Jesus, they will meet their final end soon enough.

There are many classifications of textual problems. One of those might be a place where some text dropped out, and the scribe could choose just to leave the text gone or he could choose to try to reconstruct the text from the context and from memory. If this kind of textual problem has a name, that could be what is happening right here. That is, Jesus did have more to say to these disciples. Maybe it was this text from the Scrivener Textus Receptus and maybe it was similar.

Luke 9:55 **But He turned and rebuked them.** (ESV; capitalized)

Luke 9:55 **But he turned and rebuked them, and said, You do not know of what spirit you are.** (MLV 2020)

It seems logical to me that Jesus would give more of an explanation to the disciples at this point. This passage is very different if you study it in the ESV as opposed to the Modern Literal Version 2020 (or Green’s Literal Translation, Webster’s translation, the World English Bible, etc.). In the chapter study of **Luke 9** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)), I will also include a brief exegetical study of **2Kings 1**.

As an aside, the chapter studies have the complete Greek exegesis of every verse along with three original translations, a theological dictionary and other additional materials. Links to the chapters, which are all individual documents, are found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) ([Folder](#)).

Luke 9:56 **And they went on to another village.** (ESV; capitalized)

The Scrivener Textus Receptus has this additional text on the front-end of v. 56: **For the Son of Man came to save the souls of men, not to destroy (them).** Although that would be better placed as an extension of v. 55, this additional text makes sense. It seems unlikely that Jesus would have said no to the hellfire thing without giving more of an explanation. Whether it was included in the Luke text or not, we do not know. Whether the Scrivener Textus Receptus is accurate here or not, we do not know.

The International Standard Bible has this additional text included with it:

Luke 9:55–56 **But he turned and rebuked them,** [Other mss. read *them, saying, “You don’t know what kind of spirit you are! For the son of man did not come to destroy the souls of men, but to save them.”*] **and they all** [The Gk. lacks *all*] **went on to another village.** (ISV)

The bracket text is probably legitimate (see the Greek exegesis for v. 55, which is found in Luke 9 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))). It would make sense that (1) the Lord gives more explanation to the disciples than simply, “No, you’re wrong here!” (2) It also makes sense that God the Holy Spirit would include this information in Scripture for our own edification.

Jesus has not come to destroy man or to take revenge against mankind; His purpose is to save all mankind, especially those who will come to Him. This should have been clear to the disciples by the teaching of the Lord.

Luke 9:56 **And they went on to another village.** (ESV; capitalized)

From there, the disciples and Jesus go on to another village. Jesus and His disciples are going toward Jerusalem, but they would stop at various villages along the way.

This is the same passage without the additional text:

Luke 9:54–56 **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?" But He turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village.** (ESV; capitalized)

This is the same passage with the additional text.

Luke 9:54–56 (with the additional text): **Now after his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, do you will that we should tell the fire to descend from heaven and consume them as Elijah also did\*? But he turned and rebuked them, and said, You° do not know of what spirit you° are. For\* the Son of man came, not to destroy the lives of men, but to save them. And they traveled to a different village.** (MLV 2020)

As is nearly always the case, even in passages like there where the text can be very



different, it is really not a problem, even if we cannot decide which text is inspired.

## Lesson 290: Luke 9:57–58

## The Reluctant Disciples

What follows are three incidents regarding those who would follow Jesus and the interaction between the potential follower and Jesus. It appears that this continues the previous narrative (Luke 9:56–57a **And they went on to another village. As they were going along the road,...**).

Jesus and His disciples are traveling toward Jerusalem. They were not received in one Samaritan city, so they travel on to another village.

However, this final section of Luke 9 is possibly parallel in Matthew 8:19–22 (this concerns two reluctant disciples). Are these the same set of incidents? Are they just very similar incidents? When we complete this final section, we will examine the narratives side-by-side).

The biggest problem when comparing these two passages is their locations, both chronologically and geographically. In Matthew, this appears to occur right before they go across the Galilee Sea (where they will find a demon-possessed man; a herd of swine are taken by the demons indwelling this man and the swine rush into the water). This would be taking place early in the Lord's ministry (during the first year or so).

In Luke, Jesus is speaking to these reluctant disciples right after He had been rejected by an entire Samaritan town. This is taking place a month or a few months prior to the crucifixion (as Jesus has set His face toward Jerusalem). My point is, despite the strong similarity between the subject matter of these two passages, the surrounding events are quite different.

What follows in this section are three separate incidents where potential disciples consider following Jesus, but there is something which they must do first (or there is some sort of excuse offered). The verse which follows is the Lord evaluating what they have said.

It would not be out of the question for these three incidents to follow one after another. There are three men, perhaps in a line to speak with Jesus. They hear what the guy right before them has to say, and decide to offer their own excuses as well.

Let's begin the actual narrative:

Luke 9:57a **As they were going along the road,...** (ESV; capitalized)

*They* is a reference to Jesus and His disciples. They are in Samaria walking along a road there, walking toward Jerusalem for the Passover season. They may be on a road between Galilee and Samaria and they may be right in the middle of Samaria.

Luke 9:57b ...*someone said to Him*,... (ESV; capitalized)

Some unnamed man comes up and speaks directly to Jesus. So, they have not stopped at a city or village, but are en route to the next village.

This man makes a rather bold statement:

Luke 9:57c ...*"I will follow You wherever You go."* (ESV; capitalized)

The person speaking to Jesus uses the future active indicative of the verb *to follow*. It is unclear if this man is joining up with them right here and now; or if he is talking about some unspecified point of time in the future.

Luke 9:57 *As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go."* (ESV; capitalized)

One of the things to keep in mind, when we have an exchange between Jesus and anyone else, is the fact that Jesus is excellent at reading people. He can look a person over, hear his voice, notice his micro expressions, and have a good idea what is motivating that person. Sometimes we are given insight into what Jesus observes; and sometimes we are exposed to their interaction.

Luke 9:57 *As they traveled down the road, someone came up to Jesus and said, "I will follow You, Lord, wherever You go."* (Kukis paraphrase)

There will be three exchanges between Jesus and three potential followers. This is the first of the three exchanges.

An additional note needs to be considered. Disciples and followers of Jesus then were not necessarily exactly the same as we are today. Even though they did not fully appreciate it, Jesus was on this earth for a very brief moment in time (a three-year public ministry), and when that was over, it was over. Anyone who wanted to be a part of this, needed to get on the train, right then and there, whenever they became aware. There was no dawdling to be done. Once Jesus left town, there were no guarantees that He would ever return. In fact, given that this is taking place in the final few months of the Lord's ministry insures that He is not coming through this town again.

Although one can certainly make the argument that the believer in this period of time

should also be fully invested. Well, sure; but not all of us are. And, much of the time, this takes a prolonged period of growth. Five or ten years after being saved, the believer might be devoting more of his time and resources to the Lord.

Although many people just followed Jesus after hearing Him speak, how many people heard Him, saw Him, but were not ready to follow Him? When it came right down to it, only a small minority of those hearing Jesus actually followed Him for some portion of His public ministry.

These interactions with potential disciples probably happened often, and some of them may have seemed to be exactly the same. This first example may have taken place twice (or more), with the same opening line and the same answer by Jesus. I will later place this passage from Luke side-by-side with the Matthew passage so that we can compare them.

In any case, a man has come up to Jesus and told Him, "**Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.**" (ESV; capitalized).

How many of us would have said, "Come right along; the more the merrier"? But this was not Jesus' response. If anything, what Jesus said would have been discouraging.

As an aside, this is not the only time when Jesus appeared to discourage a potential disciple from following Him. Let me suggest that Jesus, more than any other person alive, could read people. He was aware of micro expressions; He understood tone of voice; He knew when someone was saying one thing, but they did not mean it; etc. Therefore, Jesus could read a person well enough to decide if that person should follow Him or not. People are not all made the exact same way. Leaving everything and following Jesus might be right for Charley Brown, but not for Linus.

Luke 9:58a **And Jesus said to him...** (ESV; capitalized)

One would think that Jesus would be encouraging, but He speaks to the man in such a way that he is not encouraging at all.

Jesus, being able to read people (and I do not mean supernaturally), often knew exactly the right thing to tell a person, which might cause him to reevaluate or reconsider his thinking or whatever statement which he made.

Luke 9:58b **...Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests,...** (ESV; capitalized)

The lowly fox and the flying birds have places to stay—this is a simple fact of nature.

Although this is not a parable, it seems to begin like a parable. It certainly catches the

attention of the person who has approached Jesus.

Luke 9:58c **...but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.**" (ESV; capitalized)

There is clearly a downside in following Jesus. He tells the man that, the Son of Man does not have a place where He might lay His head. Jesus does not have a house; therefore, He does not have a bed. For His public ministry, Jesus lives the life of a nomad. There is no indication in the gospels that Jesus *went on the road* for 8 months or 9 months, but then came back home to rest and recuperate. Once He began His public ministry, there was no vacation time; there was no returning home.

Luke 9:58 **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."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus appears to be discouraging this man; but, perhaps Jesus was simply reading this man, and Jesus speaks to him about the reality of this man's proposal. "Are you ready to endure the hardships that I endure?" Jesus asks him.

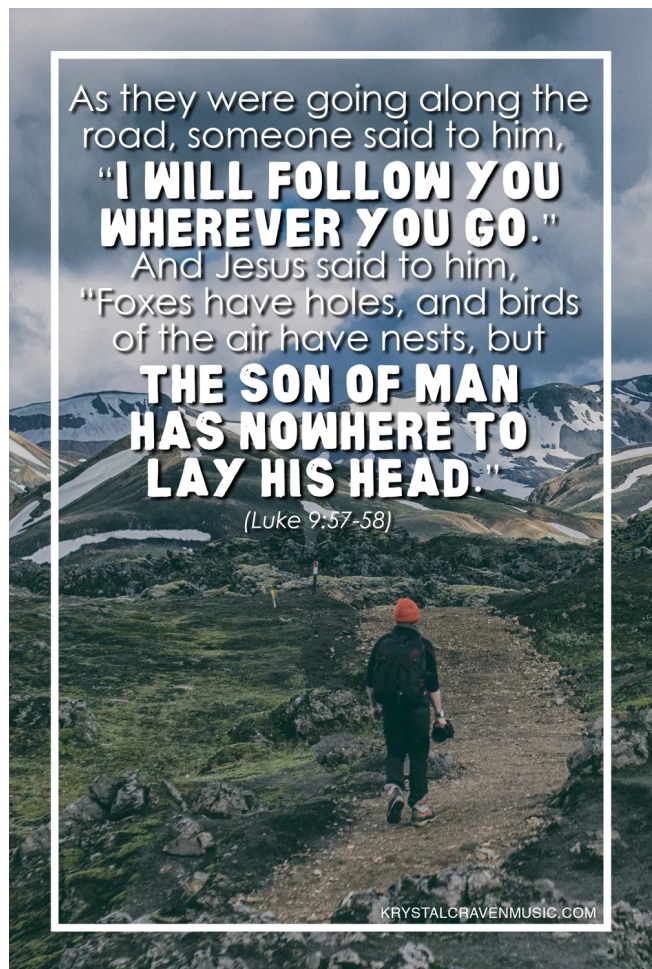
**Luke 9:57–58** (ESV) (a graphic); from [Krystal Craven Music](https://www.krystalcravenmusic.com/); accessed May 3, 2024.

Luke 9:58 **Jesus then said to him, "The foxes have burrows and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man does not have a place where He might lay His head."** (Kukis paraphrase)

We leave this incident right here. We do not know if the man followed Jesus or not. I think not.

There are two general interpretations here. If we are continuing the previous narrative, then Jesus is suddenly fending off/entertaining potential disciples—and three of them right at the point of going to Jerusalem for the last time.

Now, what is very possible is, there were two men behind that previous person, whom



Jesus discouraged, informing him of the true conditions of His life and travels (without even telling the man about the worst aspect of His ministry). I think that it is very possible that these next two men heard the Lord's answer, and started to rethink their own positions. I think that they wanted to follow the Lord, but hearing what He just said seemed to dissuade them.

## Lesson 291: Luke 9:59–62

## The Reluctant Disciples Part II

Jesus will interact with three potential disciples. In the previous passage, He interacted with the first one.

Luke 9:59a **To another He said, "Follow Me."** (ESV; capitalized)

Interestingly enough, where Jesus appears to discourage the previous potential disciple, He says to another man, "Follow Me." Could there have been a greater honor in that era?

The direct request/command made by Jesus was quite a thing. However, Jesus did not say this with the idea, "I bet this guy will be a great disciple!" There may have been a discussion, with the Lord's nearly last remark being, "Come, follow Me." Sometimes such a proposal was done in order to make a point.

Luke 9:59b **But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."** (ESV; capitalized)

The man to whom the Lord speaks appears to have a legitimate excuse. "Let me first bury my father." However, you will note that this man does not address Jesus as *Lord*. There is the vocative *Lord* in a similar or possibly parallel passage (Matthew 8:21–22). However, these two incidents should be considered different, unless Luke simply put this one here with the other two. In any case, this man does not choose to do what Jesus is asking him to do.

Now, is he in the middle of a funeral procession? That seems unlikely. What seems far more likely is, his father is simply old, and he either wants to remain with his father until he dies or he is simply using his father as an excuse. Had he heard what Jesus told the previous disciple?

Many Christians think, *wow, wouldn't it be great if I could be alive during the time of Jesus Christ?* However, people during this era both received the Lord's calling and rejected it, this man being such an example. Do you attend Bible class or listen to the teaching of a [well-qualified pastor-teacher](#) every day? If you are not doing that, then why do you think you would have responded to the direct call of Jesus Christ? He was not asking this man to simply listen to an hour of teaching each day; He was saying, "Come along; follow Me!" Traveling with Jesus meant setting everything else aside and no longer having any normal

human assets (his disciples lacked homes and beds).

Luke 9:59 **To another He said, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."** (ESV; capitalized)

Was this merely a quick excuse offered up by this potential disciple? Did he start considering the cost and decide against it?

Luke 9:60a **And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead."** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is saying, "Let the spiritually dead remain behind to bury the physically dead." Jesus was offering life; did this man not want to be a part of that?

As I have suggested earlier, Jesus was very good at reading people, and He knew that this man was not going to follow him. Therefore, Jesus offers him a second option.

Luke 9:60b **But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."** (ESV; capitalized)

There is little that is accomplished for this man to return home to bury his father. He should instead dedicate himself to the message of Jesus Christ, the promise of the future kingdom, that many might enter into eternal life. This man could proclaim this message anywhere.

But now, let's consider these words again:

Luke 9:60 **And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."** (ESV; capitalized)

How exactly would this man proclaim the kingdom of God? Well, he would proclaim Jesus as the King. Consider this man's testimony for a moment.

"The kingdom of God is here and I have met the King, Jesus."

"Where is this Jesus."

"Last I say, he went that way," and the man points.

"So, that was the King, He offers the Kingdom, and yet, you are here and not following Him?"



When proclaiming the Kingdom of God, this man will need to be careful how he does it. How do you explain that you met the Messiah face to face—the King of this new kingdom—and yet, you are here and not following the King?

Luke 9:60 **Jesus then commanded him, “Let the dead bury their own dead. But you must proclaim the Kingdom of God everywhere, even after going away from Me.”** (Kukis paraphrase)

Let's think about this man's father for a moment. There are a few interpretations here, any of which fits with the context. (1) It is possible that this man's father just died and he should return to bury him and be a part of the funeral services. This is how most readers interpret this passage, giving it little thought. I believe this to be the least likely alternative. (2) The father is alive, at home, and either well or sick. The son does not want to leave until his father passes. This is probably the actual circumstance. (3) The father has already been buried, but it is time to dig up his bones to preserve them (the flesh having rotted away in the ground) (I know that option seems really weird). The NET Bible has suggested that this is a custom of this region among some of the heathen. According to the NET Bible: *At that point the son would have placed his father's bones in a special box known as an ossuary to be set into the wall of the tomb.*<sup>74</sup> Since this is a weird custom and weird custom I am not familiar with, it seems unlikely to me. But people do some awfully weird things.

Nonetheless, it really makes no difference which of these three things is actually taking place. The Lord's instructions still apply: “You follow Me. Let the (spiritually) dead bury their own dead.” This was the first option; this is what the man should have done.

**Application:** We tend to get weird when it comes to the remains of anyone (Indian remains in sacred burial places; the remains of our loved ones, exhuming a grave for evidence in a police investigation, etc.) After death, a person's soul has left his body. It is no longer there; it is not hanging around. And, when the rapture takes place, all deceased people will be raised in a resurrection body which appears to be related to their old body—but what has happened to it is not ever an issue raised in the Scriptures. So, no matter what has happened to the remains of a person, God is able to provide a resurrection body for every soul.

Now for potential disciple #3:

Luke 9:61a **Yet another said, “I will follow You, Lord,...”** (ESV; capitalized)

Maybe Jesus invited this man to follow Him; and maby this man assumed that he needed to say something to Jesus. Whatever the case, this man has decided that he must say

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<sup>74</sup> Footnote for v. 60 at this page <https://bible.org/netbible/luk9.htm> (accessed February 23, 2023).

something to Jesus. He cannot just walk off. Therefore, he speaks up, promising that he would follow the Lord, but he needs to do something else first.

Luke 9:61b *...but let me first say farewell to those at my home.*" (ESV; capitalized)

He does not ask the Lord to stop and wait; but he says that he must say goodbye to family members first. He needs to tell his family what he is doing.

Jesus correctly reads this as a false promise. Jesus knows that this man may even think that he is going to follow Jesus, but, once he gets home, he will decide to stay.

Again, I believe that Jesus could read men and sometimes He knew them better than they knew themselves.

Luke 9:61 *Yet another said, "I will follow You, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home."* (ESV; capitalized)

This is the third potential disciple. Maybe Luke placed these three incidents together because they belonged together topically speaking. And maybe these were three potential disciples who did not follow Jesus; yet they came up to him almost at the same time.

Luke 9:62a *Jesus said to him,...*(ESV; capitalized)

There seem to be some minor problems with the text here. *Face to face with him* or *directly with him* seem to be appropriate here.

Jesus looks this man right in the eye and speaks to him. I think that we may reasonably assume that what Jesus says is effective and sticks with this man for a very long time.

Luke 9:62b *..."No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back..."* (ESV; capitalized)

A man cannot begin plowing a field if he keeps looking back (no matter what the reason). The end result is, he cannot plow a straight furrow. Sometimes such a man might fix his eyes forward on something in front of him; but most often, he looks at the furrow next to him and plows evenly according to that furrow. He cannot accomplish either if he is looking back.

Jesus is making an analogy here so let's understand the analogy. He realizes that he is unable to separate himself from his family and, as someone has suggested, the man might be easily convinced to stay behind.

Now, we have to be careful with verses like this and not make them to be the be-all and end-all. There may be some separation involved when a person becomes a believer in Jesus Christ *and then* begins to grow spiritually. In modern life, this may involve attending church more often; and, in some cases, it may involve changing cities in order to attend a doctrinal church. The latter is what brought me to Texas (however, lest you think I was some kind of a spiritual giant coming out of the starting gate, I had 3 places to move to, and Houston was way, way down on my list as #3<sup>75</sup>).

We have to be careful. When a church or a religious group encourages complete and total separation from your family; or tells you, "We are your family now," that is usually the sign of a cult. If things are said right up front in order to separate you from your former friends and family, that could be a sign of you being involved with a cult. First of all, God will sometimes use you to witness for former friends and family members. If you have cut off all contact with them, how exactly do you go back and give them the gospel? Furthermore, let's say you did cut off almost all contact, but then you go back 10 years later (or, whatever), just exactly what is your witness to them? Become like me and be a religious zealot? That dog won't hunt.

There are extreme cases when separating from family and friends is the only thing to do. If there is considerable drug or alcohol abuse, one might be better off by separating from such activity (depending upon you and how much you can be influenced by that). If there are things going on which impede your spiritual growth, then this may be a reason to separate more fully from friends and family. However, for the most part, a new believer has believed in Jesus Christ, they will attend church where they will grow, and many other things will remain the same. Personally, I was saved and learning Bible doctrine for about 6 years before I moved away from family and friends. There were a number of things which caused that to happen, the chief of which was, my need for a job, which I could not find where I was. Although in retrospect, I see this as a necessary step, I did not move because my church encouraged me to leave family and friends behind (Berachah Church would never have done that).

Sometimes you, as a new or growing believer, will face circumstances which cause you to consider a move. When you consider such a move, then also consider areas where Bible doctrine is being taught regularly by a well-qualified and faithful pastor-teacher. So far, I am not aware of anyone who keeps to R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s schedule of 9 classes a week; but 4 classes a week is a good starting point (these can be supplemented with electronic means).

Let's return to the narrative:

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<sup>75</sup> My support for President Trump (current president as I write this) was quite similar. I did not get what other people saw in him and put him way low on my list of good candidates. In retrospect, I cannot imagine a better president; similarly, my move to Texas could not have been a better thing, even though I did not see it at the time.

Luke 9:62a-b **Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back...** (ESV; capitalized)

The new believer needs to be looking ahead, not looking backwards.

Luke 9:62c **...is fit for the kingdom of God."** (ESV; capitalized)

The kind of man who is always looking back is not the right sort of man to become closely involved with the Lord's ministry. His public ministry was quite short and intense. Furthermore, those He trained went out into all the world to evangelize and to teach Bible doctrine.

Luke 9:62 **Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."** (ESV; capitalized)

One must be careful at this point, as there appears some sort of merit attached to entering into the kingdom of God. "Unless you are willing to walk away from family and friends, you cannot proclaim the kingdom of God." That is certainly what this passage seems to be saying. I think the best way to understand this is with regards to focus. Where is this man's focus? It is certainly difficult—especially for the new believer—to have a focus on God for his spiritual life. It is so easy for him to be scattered as to his affections.

We will complete Luke 9 in the next lesson.

## **Lesson 292: Luke 9:56–62**

## **Reconciling Passages in Matthew and Luke**

Jesus is speaking to the third reluctant disciple.

Luke 9:61 **Yet another said, "I will follow You, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home."** (ESV; capitalized)

Luke 9:62 **Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."** (ESV; capitalized)

In fact, I will take up for this person in a limited way. He was imply unable to discern the signs. Maybe he recognized that Jesus is the Messiah, but he did not recognize what a rare opportunity this was to follow Him.

On the other hand, let me suggest that, if you are positive toward the Word of God, you likely would have followed Jesus; and if you are not, you probably would not have followed

Jesus. After all, Jesus taught the Word of God every single day.

If this is taking place during this concentrated portion of the Lord's public ministry, it may be too intense for this particular person, if his mind is constantly returning to family and friends.

What is also implied here is a maturity level necessary for Christian service. This disciple is nowhere near that. He is too scattered at this point to accompany the Lord, unless he is able to put his family and friends behind him. (Bear in mind that we cannot make this passage the *end-all, be-all* of separation passages.)

Keep bearing in mind that the Lord's public ministry was very intense. Most non-Biblical religious figures teach their falsehoods over a period of decades and decades to establish a religion based upon their thinking (which develops over time). The Lord allowed Himself, in accordance with the will of God, only a 3 or 4 year public ministry. His very short public ministry would have been pretty intense.

Also, we should take note that following the Lord was not for every believer. Jesus had a very large entourage upon entering into Jerusalem. Although it is hard to determine numbers, as very few clues are provided, my guess has been his actual followers—those who were actually with Him going to Jerusalem—probably numbered in the hundreds, and possibly exceeding a thousand. We know that because a person right off the street often could not approach Jesus directly because He was surrounded by so many believers.

We also know that, because Jesus told some who would follow Him, "Stay right here where you are," which indicates that He was not out to amass as many followers as possible (by *followers*, I mean those who literally followed Him in His ministry). A person could be saved simply by believing in Him. That believer was not required to drop everything and follow Jesus at that point (although, quite obviously, Jesus did directly invite many to do exactly that).

Therefore, in this situation, I believe that Jesus is saying, "If you have divided loyalties at this time, you are not ready to leave your life to follow Me."

Luke 9:62 Jesus said to him directly, "No man who puts his hand on the plow but keeps looking back, is fit to proclaim the kingdom of God." (Kukis paraphrase)

How many of us would be willing to follow the Lord, knowing Who He is? We have to bear in mind that many of us have responsibilities. For instance, is there any reason we should think that Jesus wanted anyone to leave his wife and children behind with no means of support behind? Based upon a few clues, it appears that Peter has a wife and that he leads her along—now was she among the Lord's disciples or was she provided for? It appears that she was provided for to some degree; but there is no indication that she was

deserted or that she was with Peter at all times after Peter was saved. Her situation when Peter followed the Lord is simply an unknown.

Let's consider the first disciple who came up to Jesus, promising to follow Him anywhere. This first exchange is very similar to a passage in Matthew, which took place early in the Lord's ministry. If this is the same incident and if this is placed in chronological order, then there is a logical problem.

The passage in Matthew reads:

Matthew 8:19 **And a scribe came up and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."** (ESV; capitalized)

The context of this verse is before the Lord calms a storm on the Mediterranean (Matthew 8:23–27 Mark 4:35–41). Even though these are similar incidents, they are not necessarily the same incident.

The Lord's response is almost identical, however (that will be the next verse). It seems reasonable to me that interested parties and potential disciples said things like this to Jesus all the time (at least twice that we know of).

Too often, we picture Jesus traveling with twelve disciples and three women, but the numbers of people who followed Jesus were much larger than that. By the time that He is just outside of Jerusalem, it will be very difficult for a person standing on the sidelines to get close enough to Jesus to speak with Him. By that point in time, there are hundreds of people traveling along side Jesus.

Now, before moving forward, here are some preliminary concerns of mine. Even though this passage before us is very similar in many ways to Matthew 8:19–22, there are going to be two problems: (1) The Matthew and the Luke passages are in very different places in the narratives (assuming that both fall into a chronological order). (2) There is one very glaring detail difference which will stand out. In Matthew, they all get into a boat; and in Luke, given what we have just studied, we are southwest of the Sea of Galilee going south-southeast toward Jerusalem (they will enter from the eastern side). No reason for anyone to be getting into a boat. Similar incidents; but not the same incident.

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If these are different incidents, then they both probably happened roughly in the narrative in which they are found. If these are the same narrative, then Luke was reminded of these three incidents and he decided to place them altogether right here. He placed them together on the basis of topic rather than on the basis of chronology (up to this point in Luke chronology appears to guide Luke).

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One important observation is, much of Matthew 14–18, Mark 6–9 and Luke 9 tend to match up fairly well, chronologically speaking. Same incidents in the same order, for the most part. This short section is glaringly out of order when compared to Matthew 8.

The ESV; capitalized will be used below:

### Comparing Matthew 8:18–23 and Luke 9:56–62

#### Matthew 8:18–23

Matthew 8:18 Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to go over to the other side [of the Sea of Galilee].

#### Luke 9:56–62

Luke 9:56 And they went on to another village.

The location and chronology of these two incidents is entirely different.

Matthew 8:19 And a scribe came up and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."

Luke 9:57 As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go."

Although these are similar enough to be the same incident, these occurred at entirely different times in entirely different places.

Matthew 8:20 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."

Luke 9:58 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."

Jesus response appears to be identical.

It is likely that these are similar but separate incidents. There would have been innumerable men who would have come up to Jesus and talked to Him about following Him. Similarly, Jesus would have addressed many men under various conditions concerning discipleship. Since we have numerous examples of Jesus teaching the same thing several times (the sermon on the mount as compared to the sermon on the plain), it is not impossible that He would have heard the exact same statement more than once and responded in a similar fashion.

This seems very likely with the situation at hand, as much of Matthew, Mark and Luke line up almost exactly (remember the nine incidents). The exception is this passage, where we go backward 10 chapters in Matthew.

Even though much of the language is similar, it is my assumption that these passages describe the different incidents, one taking place early on in the Lord's ministry and the other near the very end of His public ministry.

## Comparing Matthew 8:18–23 and Luke 9:56–62

### Matthew 8:18–23

Matthew 8:21–23 Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead." And when He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him.

This narrative begins and ends with a boat in the Sea of Galilee.

### Luke 9:56–62

Luke 9:59–60 To another he said, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

It appears that Jesus is telling this man to proclaim the kingdom of God even if he chooses not to follow Jesus.

You will notice that there are some very big differences above. Jesus and His disciples get into boats in the Sea of Galilee. In Luke, they are in Samaria heading south toward Jerusalem (the Sea of Galilee would be north of them—see [map](#)).

Again, these two interactions are in very different places in Matthew and Luke. For this second pair of statements, it is possible that Matthew or Luke remembered this exchange and simply tacked it onto Matthew 8 and Luke 9, respectively. It was a good place to put the exchange. Either or both authors could have done this.

It is just as possible for these to be similar but different incidents.

If we assume these two incidents to be identical, then the passage from Luke belongs elsewhere, chronologically. Both the chronology and the geography do not match up.

No parallel in Matthew (or anywhere else).

Luke 9:61–62 Yet another said, "I will follow You, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

We do not have to have an incident occur more than once in any gospel. So there is no contradiction here.

Matthew presents two exchanges; Luke presents three. Matthew's two exchanges are very similar to the first two exchanges in Luke. Maybe these exchanges were similar but different exchanges. Certainly, people following Jesus and talking about it would have been a common thing.

It is possible that Luke, remembering the second incident (having heard about it) added it into the narrative because it was of a similar nature.

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We should bear in mind that, in both instances, Jesus and His disciples are going off in a particular direction, and the people there with them would be faced with a decision: "Do I hop into the boat with Jesus and His disciples or do I stay here?" In the book of Luke, "Do I continue moving along with the disciples down the road in the direction of Jerusalem, or do I remain here?"

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In my opinion, this particular question had to come up in the minds of people there listening to Jesus, almost every time He is about to move on. "Do I stay or do I go?" In some cases, we might understand these men to be either thinking out loud or offering up excuses directly to Jesus.

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If we understand this to have occurred many times, then it is not impossible for Jesus to have heard these same questions/statements more than once.

Quite frankly, when I began to examine these two passages side-by-side, two things became clear to me: (1) The first pair of encounters is very similar in Matthew and Luke, when it comes to the proposal of the disciple and Jesus' response. (2) However, the surrounding information for the two incidents is very different.

In any case, these three incidents describe three classes of negative believers. Someone can believe in Jesus, but after that, not advance at all in the spiritual life. This describes three kinds of believers who do not go any further in the spiritual life beyond salvation.

Luke 9:56–58 *And they went on to another village. As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow you wherever You go." 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."*

This disciple (or potential disciple) sounds very enthusiastic about Jesus, but Jesus is able to read him. Jesus is able to determine, after a short conversation, that this man is not ready for the life of a disciple. "Listen, we move from town to town; we do not have beds or rooms or any place to call home. Are you ready for that kind of inconvenience?" Jesus makes this statement because He is able to tell that this man is not ready for that lifestyle.

Luke 9:59–60 *To another he said, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." (ESV)*

Jesus calls for another man to follow Him, but this man is quick to come up with an excuse as to why he can't. "I need to stay and bury my father." Jesus answer is pertinent, no matter what kind of condition his father is in. "Let the spiritually dead bury their own dead."

Luke 9:61–62 *Yet another said, "I will follow You, Lord, but let me first say farewell to*

those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (ESV)

The third potential disciple here cannot separate himself from his former life. Now, I say this with the understanding that this is what many cults are selling. What Jesus required and what the early spiritual life would require in that day is great dedication. This man cannot give that dedication. His mind is with his family.

With Jesus, this was a once in a lifetime option (a one time option in all of human history). Messiah came once in the 1<sup>st</sup> advent and He taught in person the things of God. This was not going to be a lifelong tour. Jesus was doing this for a relatively short time. The man needed to join up or not; but this could not be done half-heartedly.

This completes a very long chapter 9.

#### **Lessons 293–295: Luke 9:1–62**

#### **Luke 9 in review**

I have used the translation of the Niobi Study Bible below, and have included the section headings of e-sword. The Niobi Study Bible is very close to the NKJV, having exactly the same subheadings but the actual translation is not the same. This is also called the Patchwork Bible and is available through e-sword and Bible Support (which provides many additional resources for e-sword).

Luke 9, like many chapters of Luke, is made up of a number of incidents, many of which appear to be topically unrelated to what comes before and after.

Interestingly enough, most of Luke 9 matches up with the content and order of a very specific set of incidents recorded in Matthew and Mark. The final two sections of Luke 9 may or may not be chronological. However, the language used between these incidents suggest that they continue forward in time.

Starting in Luke 10 and going halfway through Luke 18, we have a section of Luke which, for the most part, does not match up with Matthew or Mark at all.

Here is my theory: Matthew and Peter both lived the incidents found in their gospels (Peter was the source for Mark's gospel); therefore, their gospels are pretty much in chronological order. Luke did not live any of these experiences; he did not witness any of them taking place. He talked to a number of believers who were there and then stitched that into his gospel, which is mostly in chronological order. However, he ended up with some incidents—most of which are teachings—which he did not necessarily have an historical context for. They were things which Jesus taught and said, but not clearly tied to a particular point in His ministry. Luke took all of those teachings and placed them together

in Luke 11–18.5. He did not want to this teaching out, but he did not know exactly where to place them, so he placed them in this middle section of Luke. Anyway, that is a theory which I have come up with.

Most of what we read in this middle section (chapters 11–18.5) are extended teachings of the Lord. This can be someone jarring because most of Luke 9 marks the point at which Jesus decides to travel toward Jerusalem and Luke 18 has Jesus on the outskirts of Jerusalem. There is certainly a question, when did these other chapters actually take place in reference to time?

However, there are two problems with this theory: (1) the language of chapter 10 appears to continue from chapter 9 chronologically. (2) There are things which take place between Luke 10 and 18 which appear to be chronologically attached to Luke 9–10. Therefore, I have left my mind open as to these middle chapters.

At this point, however, we will focus in on Luke 9.

#### **Chapter sections for Luke 9:**

[Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Apostles](#)

[Herod Is Perplexed by Jesus](#)

[Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand](#)

[Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ](#)

[Jesus Foretells His Death](#)

[Take Up Your Cross and Follow Jesus](#)

[The Transfiguration](#)

[Jesus Heals a Boy with an Unclean Spirit](#)

[Jesus Again Foretells His Death](#)

[Who Is the Greatest?](#)

[Anyone Not Against Us Is For Us](#)

[A Samaritan Village Rejects Jesus](#)

[The Cost of Following Jesus](#)

I believe that it is a good idea to read a chapter through all at once with limited commentary, so that one can appreciate the greater scope of narrative.

#### **Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Apostles**

Luke 9:1 Sending Out the Twelve **Then He [Jesus] called His twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases.** (Niobi Study Bible; subtitles included)

At some point in time, Jesus will leave this earth and expect His trained disciples to carry on. One might consider this the practical application portion of their education.

Luke 9:2 **And He sent them to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick.** (Niobi Study Bible)

The twelve were to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick. They would have this ability to heal those coming to them.

Luke 9:3 **And He said unto them, "Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor pack, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.** (Niobi Study Bible)

This time, the disciples were simply to go out and do this. They were to make no preparations for this evangelical mission.

Luke 9:4 **And whatsoever house you enter into, there abide and thence depart.** (Niobi Study Bible)

They were to depend upon the kindness of strangers and upon God's predetermined plan when it came to food and shelter.

Luke 9:5 **And whosoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them."** (Niobi Study Bible)

They would come to cities which would reject them and their message. They were to go to the outskirts of that city (or village) and shake the dust from their feet as their testimony against that city (or village). The Jewish people were very demonstrative, and this was a testimony which could be seen by some.

Luke 9:6 **And they departed and went through the towns, preaching the Gospel and healing everywhere.** (Niobi Study Bible)

The disciples did as they were told. There is a lot of missing information, such as, how were they paired up (did they travel as one group, did they split up, did they go off individually?). What was the time frame for all of this? Did they split up into six or twelve different directions? So there is a great deal of missing information.



This seems to parallel the recollection of Matthew, but Matthew's narrative is much longer (Matthew 10:1–20).

### **Herod Is Perplexed by Jesus**

We abruptly change scenes, and we go to the palace of Herod and learn about his thoughts concerning Jesus.

Luke 9:7–8 \* Herod Seeks to See Jesus **Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that had been done by Him [that is, by Jesus]. And he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John was risen from the dead; and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets was risen again.** (Niobi Study Bible with subtitles included)

This is the Herod who ruled over the region of Galilee and Perea. He knew what was taking place in his kingdom and he was very curious about this Jesus fellow. He had talked to his subordinates and they brought back a variety of different reports, some called him John risen from the dead; others Elijah, others thought Him to be one of the other ancient Jewish prophets.

None of these things were true of course.

Luke 9:9 **And Herod said, "John have I beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?" And he desired to see Him.** (Niobi Study Bible)

Herod seems to dismiss the first option here, because he personally saw to the death of John the Herald. How could these two men be the same? That made no sense to Herod.

Remember that all of this came from the pen of Luke, so, at some point, he interviewed someone from the palace of Herod. That is how he would know about this incident.

### **Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand**

Luke 9:10 \* Jesus Feeds Five Thousand **And the apostles, when they had returned, told Him all that they had done. And He took them and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.** (Niobi Study Bible with subtitles included)

We switch scenes again. The Apostles return and they tell Jesus all that they had done.

Jesus then takes His disciples aside and they go to an uninhabited region called Bethsaida (there may have been several villages with this name).

Luke 9:11 And the people, when they learned of it, followed Him. And He received them and spoke unto them of the Kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing. (Niobi Study Bible)

As was often the case, there was a large number of people who were following Jesus. When they became aware of Him going to this place, they followed Him there. There was a large crowd there. Jesus healed the sick and He spoke to them about the Kingdom of God.

Luke 9:12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve and said unto Him, "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about and lodge and get victuals, for we are here in a desert place. (Niobi Study Bible)

As the day was coming to a close, the disciples suggested that Jesus send this multitude of followers away. "They will need to find shelter and eat," His disciples said. Given that they were in a relatively uninhabited place, it would have been difficult for any of them to find food. However, the disciples had taken an inventory and they knew that they did not have enough by way of food to feed this large group; and they had determined that going out to buy food for the people would have simply been impractical.

Nevertheless, Jesus says this to them.

Luke 9:13 But He said unto them, "Give you them to eat." And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fishes, unless we should go and buy meat for all these people." (Niobi Study Bible)

"You feed them," Jesus said. But the disciples had already taken inventory. They knew that they did not have enough fish and bread. They talk about going out to buy meat for them, but that was also not doable.

Luke 9:14 For they were about five thousand (5,000) men. And He said to His disciples, "Make them sit down by fifties in a company." (Niobi Study Bible)

In all, there were 5000 men, meaning that there were also women and children there. So, there were probably 7000–10,000 people there in all.

Jesus tells His disciples to organize the people into groups of fifties.

Luke 9:15 And they did so, and made them all sit down. (Niobi Study Bible)

The twelve disciples worked out how to do this, and had all of the people sitting in groups of fifties.

Apparently, the disciples had gathered together some baskets from the crowds. They would use this to bring each group fish and bread.

Luke 9:16 **Then He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to Heaven, He blessed them and broke, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.** (Niobi Study Bible)

Jesus blessed the food that they had and then began to fill up the baskets. Perhaps a disciple would be assigned ten groups to feed and he would take a basket of food to each group.

We have no idea how this took place or what the disciples saw. In the beginning, they saw two fishes and five loaves of bread. Somehow, Jesus would fill up a basket; this basket would be taken to a group of fifty, and then it would be passed around, each person or family taking out what they needed.

Even though the disciples were carrying these baskets to their various groups, we do not know exactly what they saw. Did they each walk off with a basket of 20 fish and 10 loaves of bread? What did this look like to them? We have no idea.

Luke 9:17 **And they ate and were all filled, and there were taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.** (Niobi Study Bible)

There were leftovers, and these leftovers filled up twelve baskets (one basket per disciple). Perhaps this allowed each disciple to meditate on this event.

### **Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ**

Luke 9:18 \* Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ **And it came to pass as He was alone praying, His disciples were with Him, and He asked them, saying, "Who say the people that I am?"** (Niobi Study Bible with subtitles included)

Jesus is alone praying and His disciples are there with Him. Even though that sounds like a contradiction in terms, perhaps Jesus was standing or sitting some 30' away by Himself praying.

Jesus apparently then approaches the disciples and asks, **"Who do the people say that I am?"** This, by the way, appears to be the overall theme of this chapter of Luke.

Luke 9:19 **They answering said, "John the Baptist; but some say Elijah, and others say that one of the old prophets has risen again."** (Niobi Study Bible)

The disciples give the exact same three responses as Herod was given by his underlings.

Luke 9:20 He said to them, "But who say you that I am?" Peter answering said, "The Christ of God !" (Niobi Study Bible)

Jesus asks the disciples directly: "Who do you say I am?" Peter knows Who Jesus is. He is the Messiah (Christ) of God. This is what Peter answers, clearly and without equivocation.

### **Jesus Foretells His Death**

Luke 9:21–22 Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection And He strictly charged them and commanded them to tell no man this thing, saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and scribes, and be slain and be raised the third day." (Niobi Study Bible with subtitles included)

Jesus tells His disciples not to tell anyone else what Peter said.

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

Luke 9:23 \* Take Up the Cross and Follow Him And He said to them all, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. (Niobi Study Bible with subtitles included)

Jesus teaches His disciples that there will be some personal sacrifices involved by following Him. In fact, at that point in time, Jesus might be warning all of His disciples that they are risking their lives (according to tradition, ten of the disciples were martyred, Judas killed himself and John died in exile (but he lived long enough to die of natural causes).

Luke 9:24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it. (Niobi Study Bible)

If a person separates from Jesus in order to preserve his life, he will lose it; and if one gives his life over to Jesus, the same will save his own life.

Since salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone, we must not understand this as another way of gaining salvation. Perhaps the one separating from Christ did not believe in Him in the first place; and the disciple not concerned for his own life, is simply following his faith out to its logical conclusion. This certainly does not mean that all believers will live a life of self-sacrifice; and that those who deny Jesus never really believed in the first place. Our salvation and then what we do after being saved are separate things.

In any case, Jesus continues with this train of thought:

Luke 9:25 **For what is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world, and lose himself or be cast away?** (Niobi Study Bible)

There is no advantage to the person who gains all there he could gain in life, but he loses his own life in the process. That is, he enjoys every material benefit that he could imagine; and yet somehow misses out on believing in the Lord. We do not take our possessions with us into death; but we do take our salvation and our Bible doctrine into the next life.

Luke 9:26 **For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He shall come in His Own glory and in His Father's and of the holy angels.** (Niobi Study Bible)

Jesus continues His warning. If His disciples are ashamed of Jesus and His teaching, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when He returns in glory with the elect angels.

If a person believes in Jesus, then they are saved. None of what Jesus says here contradicts that. However, if any of those who follow Jesus decide that they are ashamed of Him, that person will be denied reward in the end.

Luke 9:27 Jesus Transfigured on the Mount **But I tell you in truth, there are some standing here that shall not taste of death till they see the Kingdom of God ."** (Niobi Study Bible with subtitles included)

Jesus then says that there are some standing before Him (some of His disciples) who will see the Kingdom of God before dying. Jesus means this in a very specific way. They will see the glorified King of the kingdom; which is seeing the Kingdom of God.

## **The Transfiguration**

Luke 9:28 **\* And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up onto a mountain to pray.** (Niobi Study Bible)

In this chapter, this is one of the few times where we are given a time frame. What takes place here happened eight days after Jesus said these things.

Jesus takes Peter, John and James off to a mountain to pray.

Luke 9:29 **And as He prayed, the appearance of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening.** (Niobi Study Bible)

As Jesus prayed, His appearance changed dramatically. His clothing became white and glistening.

Luke 9:30–31 **And behold, there talked with Him two men, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.** (Niobi Study Bible)

Moses and Elijah appeared in glory with Him (meaning that they appeared to look similar to Jesus). The disciples could hear them speaking and they spoke of Jesus' imminent death which would take place in Jerusalem.

Earlier, I had mentioned the placement of this chapter and how there was not a normal connection to chronology. We will not talk about Jesus being in Jerusalem until Luke 19:28, and there are many chapters between now and then. As discussed earlier, there are at least 7½ chapters of Luke which are not clearly tethered to any time frame (they do not fall into the general chronology of Luke's writing). Those chapters fall between Luke 11 and Luke 19.

Luke 9:32 **But Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep. And when they were awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him.** (Niobi Study Bible)

Peter, James and John had fallen asleep and they wake up to see all of this taking place. So they do not know exactly how this started, but they see Jesus glorified and they see Moses and Elijah also in a glorified state talking with Him.

Luke 9:33 **And it came to pass as they departed from Him, Peter said unto Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah" -- not knowing what he was saying.** (Niobi Study Bible)

Peter is very enthusiastic about seeing all of this. He thinks that this is a good place to stay, and that three tents should be set up, one each for Jesus, Moses and Elijah.

It does not occur to Peter that what he is saying is ridiculous.

Luke 9:34 **While he thus spoke, there came a cloud and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered into the cloud.** (Niobi Study Bible)

God the Father, manifesting His Presence with a cloud, comes over and envelops this small group.

Luke 9:35 **And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON. HEAR HIM!"** (Niobi Study Bible)



From the cloud comes the voice of God telling these three disciples to listen to Jesus. One might understand this to mean, "Listen to My Beloved Son; and not to this idiot Peter."

Luke 9:36 **And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.** (Niobi Study Bible)

Then the three disciples find themselves alone with Jesus and Jesus tells them, "Do not tell anyone about what you just experienced."

### **Jesus Heals a Boy with an Unclean Spirit**

Luke 9:37 \* A Boy Is Healed **And it came to pass that on the next day, when they had come down from the hill, many people met Him.** (Niobi Study Bible with subtitles included)

The next day, after Jesus and His three disciples come down the hill, a number of people are there to speak with Him.

Luke 9:38 **And behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, "Master, I beseech You, look upon my son, for he is mine only child.** (Niobi Study Bible)

One man calls out for Jesus to see his son, his only child. He apparently has his son there with him.

Luke 9:39 **And lo, a spirit takes him, and he suddenly cries out; and it tears him so that he foams again, and bruising him, hardly departs from him.** (Niobi Study Bible)

An evil spirit takes control of the boy and calls out through the boy and injures the boy, causing the boy to foam at the mouth. This is apparently what has been taking place for a considerable time with this boy.

Luke 9:40 **And I besought Your disciples to cast him out, and they could not.**" (Niobi Study Bible)

The man has asked the Lord's other disciples to cast this demon out, but they were unable to.

Luke 9:41 **And Jesus answering said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and suffer you? Bring your son here."** (Niobi Study Bible)

Jesus makes that very odd statement, "O faithless and perverse generation; how long shall I be with you and put up with you?" The problem was, this man did not know Who Jesus

was. He seemed to be incurious about the Person of Jesus. Jesus was just some Man who some said could heal and cast out demons; but this man saw Jesus as sort of a last resort. He does not appear to stop and ask himself, "If Jesus is able to miraculously heal my son, what does that mean? Who is this Jesus?"

Luke 9:42 *And as he was yet coming, the devil threw him down and tore him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.* (Niobi Study Bible)

The man helped guide his son toward Jesus, but notice even the child does not have enough positive volition to come to Jesus. The demon throws the boy onto the ground, harming the boy. Jesus casts the spirit out and heals the boy, handing him back to his father.

There is no follow up, like, *and so, both the man and his son believed*. For all we know, this man was in the presence of Jesus; his son was healed by Jesus. Does he then stop to thank Jesus? Does he even asked Jesus, "Who are You?"

### **Jesus Again Foretells His Death**

The disciples heard Peter correctly identify Jesus as the Messiah and all that they saw was amazing—particularly in that light. However, Jesus then says something which confuses and distresses the disciples.

Luke 9:43–44 \* Jesus Again Predicts His Death *And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered everyone at all the things which Jesus did, He said unto His disciples, "Let these sayings sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men."* (Niobi Study Bible with subtitles included)

For the second time, Jesus tells the disciples what is going to take place in Jerusalem. He tells them to let these words enter into their thick skulls, that He would be delivered into the hands of men.

The disciples have just seen Jesus perform miracle after miracle. They did not understand how Jesus could be *delivered into the hands of men*. The idea that Jesus might be seized and hauled away made no sense to them.

Luke 9:45 *But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not; and they were afraid to ask Him about that saying.* (Niobi Study Bible)

The disciples did not understand what Jesus was saying. There was no category of doctrine in their souls known as *the suffering Servant*. If they heard Jesus quote Isaiah 53,

that section of Isaiah did not fit into their thinking. There was no mental shelf or compartment for this information to be placed. So they heard this, but the information has no place to take root. In the minds of the disciples, the kingdom of God was just about to take place. But there was no place in their souls where they understood that *the cross must come before the crown*.

## **Who Is the Greatest?**

Luke 9:46 \* Who Is the Greatest? *Then there arose a reasoning among them as to which of them should be greatest.* (Niobi Study Bible with subtitles included)

The change in subject is jarring. The disciples begin to argue which of them is the greatest.

Luke 9:47–48 *And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child and set him by Him, and said unto them, "Whosoever shall receive this child in My name receives Me; and whosoever shall receive Me receives Him that sent Me. For he that is least among you all, the same shall be great."* (Niobi Study Bible)

The disciples, as evidence by this argument, had gone far afield. Jesus uses this young child to bring them back to reality. Every existing generation should not ignore the next generation coming up. They need guidance and direction. Every generation must provide the gospel message for the next generation coming up. Bible doctrine must be taught from one generation to the next.

By bringing this child before the disciples, Jesus is showing them that there is something far more important than this argument, *which disciple is the greatest*.

"The least among you—the most grace oriented person—will be the greatest." This was both a general principle and a prophecy of Paul, the least of the Apostles, who is not yet among them.

## **Anyone Not Against Us Is For Us**

Luke 9:49 \* Jesus Forbids Sectarianism *And John answered and said, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Your name, and we forbid him, because he follows not with us."* (Niobi Study Bible with subtitles included)

Apparently, when the disciples went out on a mission, they came across another man who would cast out demons in the Lord's name. They believed the right thing to do was to tell the man to stop.

Luke 9:50 **And Jesus said unto him, "Forbid him not; for he that is not against us, is for us."**  
(Niobi Study Bible)

Jesus tells His disciples, "Don't stop anyone like this."

This short two-verse section is an argument for religious freedom.

### **A Samaritan Village Rejects Jesus**

Luke 9:51–52 \* A Samaritan Village Rejects the Savior **And it came to pass, when the time had come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and He sent messengers before His face. And they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for Him.** (Niobi Study Bible with subtitles included)

In v. 51, Jesus recognizes what is before Him. Nevertheless, He sets His face toward Jerusalem. This will be His final journey to Jerusalem. Three times in this chapter, Jesus speaks of going to Jerusalem.

In many instances during His public ministry, Jesus would have an advance team enter into a city and make preparations for all of them to come to that city.

Luke 9:53 **But they did not receive Him, because His face was set as though He would go to Jerusalem.** (Niobi Study Bible)

There was considerable animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans (who were half Jewish). The Samaritans were not accepted by the Jews, so the Samaritans were often negative toward the Jewish people and Judaism. When they were told that Jesus would be going through this city on His way to Jerusalem, they were no longer interested in what He had to say.

Luke 9:54 **And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, will You that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elijah did?"**  
(Niobi Study Bible)

Two of the Lord's disciples had been apparently doing some personal Bible study on the side. These are two who saw Elijah when Jesus was transfigured. So they began to ask around and find out about who Elijah is and what he did. Well, they heard about this fire from heaven, which is recorded in 2Kings 1:10–14. So they ask Jesus if He will command fire to come down from heaven. James and John were Jews, and it is likely that they bore some personal animosity toward the Samaritans. So they ask Jesus, "Are you going to call for this city to be destroyed by fire, as Elijah did?" They ignored the context of 2Kings 1 in asking this question.

Luke 9:55 But He turned and rebuked them and said, "You know not what manner of spirit you are of. (Niobi Study Bible)

Jesus rebukes them for this remark. "You do not know realize what is motivating your words," Jesus tells them. They were being motivated by racial prejudice and self-righteousness.

At this point, we do not know what would come out from this Samaritan village, despite their current display of negative volition.

Luke 9:56 For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." And they went to another village. (Niobi Study Bible)

Jesus tells them, "I have not come in the flesh to destroy whole villages." It is unfortunate that, after three years with the Lord, they do not get this.

### **The Cost of Following Jesus**

What takes place in this section is, several believers come up to Jesus and He speaks to them about when they will be able to follow Him.

Luke 9:57 \* The Cost of Discipleship And it came to pass that, as they went along the way, a certain man said unto Him, "Lord, I will follow You whithersoever You go." (Niobi Study Bible with subtitles included)

One man comes up to Jesus and says he will follow Jesus anywhere. Jesus knew how to read people. But He does not attack this man verbally; Jesus simply tells him the truth of the situation:

Luke 9:58 And Jesus said unto him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." (Niobi Study Bible)

Jesus points out the great inconvenience of following Him. "Even foxes of lairs and birds have their nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." Once Jesus began His public ministry, he had no fixed address and he had no home or bed to go home to. His ministry was not on ten months and off two. Those who followed Jesus did not have the promise of an endpoint or of a vacation or a bonus in their salary (there was no salary).

Bear in mind that this was very specific to that time and place. Most believers today have such basic comforts, but when it came to following Jesus during His brief public ministry, those things were set aside.

We, as believers in the Church Age, have had a pretty easy life in the Church Age in client nation USA. As a result, American believers have not been forced to search out and cling to the truth. However, this is our key to following Jesus in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Search out the truth and grab onto it. Bear in mind that, for 99% of us, this includes a well-qualified pastor-teacher and a local church.

Luke 9:59 **And He said unto another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father."** (Niobi Study Bible)

In a great number of instances, Jesus would come upon various men and He would tell them to follow Him. What was taking place was more than a once in a lifetime circumstance. Jesus had a single public ministry in all of human history. Following Him and learning Bible doctrine directly from Him was pretty much the rarest human experience that any man could have. Even if this man's father had just died, that no way could take precedence over God saying to him, "Follow Me."

As an aside, this man's father did not even need to be on the verge of death for him to use this expression.

We ought never to lose sight of the fact that, we are able to follow Jesus in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; and, to some degree, we are able to duplicate this experience, if only in our doctrinal imagination.

Luke 9:60 **Jesus said unto him, "Let the dead bury their dead, but go you and preach the Kingdom of God."** (Niobi Study Bible)

Jesus says to this man, "Let the spiritually dead bury the physically dead. You have the grand opportunity to proclaim the Kingdom of God. You potentially offer eternal life to all who will hear you."

Beyond the call of salvation is the call of Jesus to follow Him (these are not the same things). We follow Jesus today by learning Bible doctrine and growing in grace and knowledge of Him. However, to be clear, we are not saved by following Jesus; we are saved by believing in Him. Our lives reach human fulfillment by following Him.

Luke 9:61 **And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go bid those farewell who are at home at my house."** (Niobi Study Bible)

Jesus called to another man to follow Him. This man promises to do so, but he must first return to His family and tell them farewell.

The 1<sup>st</sup> advent of Jesus was a unique event in human history. It would happen one time;



and there would be a scant three or four years where Jesus—God in the flesh—would make Himself accessible to any who would desire to follow Him.

Today, we participate in this simply by studying the gospels (and, ideally speaking, studying the gospels under the guidance of a well-qualified pastor-teacher).

Luke 9:62 **And Jesus said unto him, "No man, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God."** (Niobi Study Bible)

Jesus does not give this man the option of following Him half-heartedly. When He came into a town and proclaimed the gospel message and called to a believer to follow Him, this was not an offer which would be given again. Someone receiving this call would participate, in some way, in the greatest series of events in human history. There was no half-hearted way to do this.

Again, this is not salvation. We are not saved by following Jesus. We are saved by believing in Him. We cannot lose that. However, in our lives, we will make subsequent decisions which potentially leave others behind.

This is not giving a man the excuse to leave his wife and family. These words of Jesus should not be used to pick up and leave your current life in order to follow some cult or cultic figure.

## **Lesson 296: Luke 10**

## **Introduction to Luke 10**

### Introduction to chapter 10

#### **My Process; the Three Sets of Lessons:**

For those reading this as a weekly Bible lesson (or accessing all of the lessons online), let me explain my process and the different documents which are available online. One thing that you might notice in Luke 10 is, there are certain terms appear to be hyperlinked in the weekly lessons, but the link takes you nowhere. What is happening is this: I first do a verse-by-verse study of the entire chapter of Luke 10. Then I do a second draft, which often includes a theological vocabulary list specific to Luke 10 and its commentary. These theological terms (in their first occurrence) are directly linked to the vocabulary list. However, these hyperlinks only take place in the chapter studies. There is a vocabulary list in every chapter study; there is no vocabulary list in the weekly studies (there is no vocabulary list even when the weekly lessons are combined and placed online in groups of 100 lessons).

So, when I choose to do an exegetical study of any chapter in the Bible, (1) I write the first draft for each chapter in Luke. This chapter study includes a set of sample translations (chosen from about 60 different translations for a New Testament book), a word-by-word Greek exegesis, three original translations, and I also write some commentary. (2) Then I do a second draft, where my three original translations are rechecked, the commentary is expanded, and a vocabulary list is provided (this is where the links for certain terms are inserted). An additional 40–50 translations are drawn from as well. (3) Since Luke is a book I am writing weekly lessons for, I take the Luke commentary from the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft and move it into a new document which becomes the weekly study of the book of Luke. This new document does not have the entire Greek exegesis, my three original translations, or the vocabulary table. I may rewrite this commentary four or five times (or more) in this process and expand upon it. These are the lessons which I email out each week. (4) Once one hundred lessons of the emailed weekly studies are completed, I place them together into one document and post that document online. That makes for easy access for the people who receive these weekly lessons. (5) When a chapter is completed in Luke in the weekly lessons, then that commentary (which is often expanded considerably over the commentary found in the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft) is then inserted back into the chapter study. At that time, all of those vocabulary links are linked again.

Once this process is complete, there are three separate but related commentaries which emerge: (1) The chapter reviews are all gathered and placed into a single document, which is a brief commentary on Luke. That entire document might be 500 pages or so. A well-known translation is often used; and there is almost no reference to the Greek text. A typical chapter is covered in 10–15 pages. This document is found in the Luke index ([www.kukis.org/Luke/](http://www.kukis.org/Luke/)); more specifically: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) ([Folder](#)). This document provides a quick, overall view of the book of Luke. (2) The weekly lessons are gathered in groups of 100 lessons and posted online. These weekly lesson lack the three original translations, the representative samples of 100+ translations which I consult, the word-by-word Greek exegesis, and the vocabulary table. Each set of 100 lessons is about 500 pages long. There may be anywhere from 300–900 emailed lessons in total for each book that we cover in the weekly mail-out. These lessons are found in the Basic exegesis index ([www.kukis.org/Basicexegesis](http://www.kukis.org/Basicexegesis)) (3) The third document, the chapter study, has everything in it. It contains the most complete commentary and all of the things lacking in the weekly lessons. It contains 3 original translations; samples from over 100 other translations; the vocabulary table for the chapter; and often there is included additional material and references not found in the first two sets of documents. Often, additional doctrines are included in the addendum for each chapter for reference. Because the chapter studies are so extensive, there are many links throughout the document (especially at the beginning) to allow for easy access to verses, chapters, and sections of the study. Each individual chapter study may range from 200–500 pages. When all of the chapters and introduction are taken together, it is not unusual for the commentary for a single book to number 3000–15,000 pages. The individual chapter documents for Luke are found here: [www.kukis.org/Luke](http://www.kukis.org/Luke); they are individually linked in this document: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) ([Folder](#)). It is unlikely that you will find a more extensive study in written form anywhere else. At this point in the chapter studies, Luke 1-9 are essentially complete; Luke 10-24

are in 2<sup>nd</sup> draft form; and the weekly lessons from Luke 10 are in progress.

Now let's get back to introducing Luke 10:

Given that Luke was not a first person source, and given that all he learned came from the testimony of others, he collected narratives and sermons and parables which may have had nowhere to go, chronologically speaking (I am simply postulating this). So it appears that he just put these sermons altogether into one section, bookended by two chronological sections. Bear in mind that this approach to Luke is just a theory. The end of Luke 9 and all of Luke 10 appear to be sprinkled with chronological clues, such as, *after these things*; or *and then*. So, even though Luke 10 cannot be matched to anything in the other synoptic gospels, it appears to follow Luke 9 chronologically.

The big picture is this: Jesus is turning His face toward Jerusalem (Luke 9:31, 51, 53). Therefore, Jesus is going to Jerusalem for the last time, and we are not even halfway through the book of Luke. Luke 10 appears to be a continuation of Luke 9, given the chronological markers found in Luke 10 (vv. 1, 17, 21, 23, 25, 38). The time frame for Luke 11-18½ is up for discussion at this point. In the second half of Luke 18, Jesus is approaching Jerusalem for the last time, and the numerous parallels with the synoptic gospels return.

Luke 9 has about nine places where it matches up with Matthew 14–18 and Mark 6, 8–9; and Luke 18b–19 has nine or more places where it matches up with Matthew 19–21 and Mark 10–11. Therefore, there is a center section of Luke—Luke 11–18½—which is possibly untethered to the chronology of the rest of the book (again, that is a working theory, nothing more).

I don't know if this knowledge actually affects your understanding of these chapters of Luke or not. I am a person who is fascinated by maps, so I like seeing things laid out on a giant map first. Most people who have read or studied these middle chapters of Luke have never given a single thought to this (as far as I know). And whether or not these middle chapters belong here chronologically or not may have no effect on your understanding of Luke and what Jesus is teaching.

Another possible theory, given the context, is these middle chapters of Luke may be what Jesus taught primarily to the Samaritans. Luke, a gentile, would find this very interesting; Matthew, Mark and John, being Jews, may not have taken the same interest in this material.

In Luke 10, every section begins with a time-related word or words. Going by the ESV, Luke 10:1 begins with *after this*. Luke 10:21 begins with: *In that same hour...* Luke 10:38 begins with: *Now as they went on their way...* These are transitional phrases which seem to take us from one incident to the next. Since there are no actual chapter breaks in the

original text, *after this* in Luke 10:1 follows the events of Luke 9, events which have take place right before Jesus is going to Jerusalem for the last time.

In Luke 10, Jesus first sends out 70 (or 72) believers ahead of Him. Then Jesus pronounces the woes on certain cities. Then the disciples whom He sent out at the beginning of the chapter return. Therefore, these three things apparently happened in this order (the sending out of the disciples, the woes pronounced, the disciples return). And all of this appears to take place after Luke 9, based on the first three words of Luke 10:1 (as well as the simple reasoning that the disciples whom He sends out must also return at a later date).

The next section (Luke 10:21–24) begins with *in that same hour*; the next section (Luke 10:25–37) begins with *and behold*; and the final section (Luke 10:38–42) begins with *now, as they went on their way*.

Given that information, what takes place in Luke 10 appears to be a continuation of Luke 9, but without any real parallels in the other gospels (most of Luke 10–18½ has no parallels in the other synoptics). Ken Palmer's Harmony Gospel chart—found in the introduction to Luke ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))—shows no parallel passages at all.

So far, I have made two basic points: (1) Luke 10 continues Luke 9 and (2) we don't know about Luke 11–18½.

Section 1 (Luke 10:1–12): We begin this chapter with Jesus sending out 70 (or 72) men to evangelize and to talk about the [Kingdom of God](#), which is to come (we know this is coming because the King is here). These men are given power over sickness and over demon possession. They are not to pack any additional provisions; but to depend upon God's [logistical grace](#) for this short-lived ministry.

Section 2 (Luke 10:13–16): Before these [disciples](#) are sent out, or, right after they leave, Jesus pronounces woes against specific cities—primarily against those cities which should receive His disciples (now or in the future), but will not.

Section 3 (Luke 10:17–20): The 70 go out, and later return expressing great enthusiasm regarding this adventure.

Section 4 (Luke 10:21–24): Jesus rejoices in the Father's will. This is, no doubt, confusing to some. If Jesus is God, isn't His will the Father's will? Jesus, in His humanity, has voluntarily set His Deity aside (the doctrine of Kenosis). Therefore, most, if not all of the gospels, are about Jesus in His humanity. Choosing not to access His Deity is an act of His human will. Almost everything that Jesus does is done from his humanity and not from His Deity. Think of this as illustrated by the young man born into a wealthy family, who chooses to begin his adult life without any financial dependence on his family's wealth. He

pays for his own education, he pays for his own room and board; and he works to put food on his own table. He could draw from his family's money, but he chooses not to. That is analogous to Jesus in His 1<sup>st</sup> advent, where He sets His Deity aside for a time.

Section 5 (Luke 10:25–28): Jesus, when receiving the public, takes a question from an expert in the [Law of Moses](#). The expert asks Jesus, how does one attain to eternal life? Jesus puts it back to that man, asking him, “What do you think? Give Me your opinion.” The man says that people must love the Lord with all their heart, [soul](#) and mind; and that they must love their neighbor as themselves. Jesus agrees with him, which prompts the man to ask, *who exactly is my neighbor?* (This begins section 6)

Section 6 (Luke 10:29–37): Jesus then tells a story about a man who is beaten and robbed and how a [Samaritan](#) (a half [Jew](#)) comes to his aid. Jesus then asks the law expert, if this Samaritan is a true neighbor compared to two [Jewish](#) men who saw the half-dead man and just walked on by. The law expert agrees with Jesus that the Samaritan is truly the neighbor; and Jesus tells the man, “Go and behave like this man.”

Now, as an aside, remember our time and place. Jesus is traveling from Galilee through Samaria, heading toward Jerusalem for the last time. Is Jesus teaching this in a Samaritan village? Off the top of my head, I cannot recall anything which indicates to us that we are in a city of the Jews or a city of the Samaritans (although section 6 really sounds like something which was taught in Samaria).

Section 7 (Luke 10:38–42): Finally, this chapter ends with Jesus in the home of Martha and Mary, presumably with His many disciples. Martha is running around and taking care of things, while Mary is sitting at the Lord's feet, taking in [Bible doctrine](#). When Martha complains, Jesus sets her straight. It is possible that this short narrative may provide a key to unraveling the time frame of Luke 11–18½.

As previously discussed, many of these sections are tied together with time stamps (phrases which seem to lead from one section to the next). So we appear to still be on the trail from Galilee through Samaria going to Jerusalem. Jesus may be traveling between Galilee and Samaria, so He might go to a Galilean city, and then to a Samaritan city.

As an aside, you have no doubt noticed that many technical words appear to be hyperlinked, but the links don't take you anywhere. In the chapter-by-chapter studies, each chapter will feature a vocabulary table within the first ten pages of the document and there may be as many as five pages of vocabulary covered in that section. The hyperlinked words here will be linked to their definitions *in the Luke 10 chapter document* (but not within the emailed study). If you read some of these words and think to yourself, *it would be really handy to have them defined*; then simply go to the chapter we are in, Luke 10 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). So, if you go to the chapter study of Luke 10, then all of the linked words will actually be linked to a dictionary on p. 5 of that document. The commentary on Luke 10 will be more sparse than what you are reading now because I have taken that

commentary (which is in 2<sup>nd</sup> draft form) and transferred it to the weekly lessons where I both append and rewrite this material many times. As soon as we complete chapter 10 in the weekly lessons, all of this material will be edited back into the Luke 10 chapter study.

Introducing the first section:

Jesus sends out the 70 (or 72) on this occasion; and He sends out His [Apostles](#) on another (Matthew 10 Luke 9).

Although I have seen that some try to make this into the same incident (the sending out of the 70 and the sending out of the twelve), it appears that these take place at different times and for different purposes. There are similarities regarding some of what the Lord has to say to prepare them, but there are two reasons why these two events are distinct: (1) Luke talks about sending out the twelve in Luke 9; so why would he talk about the same incident in Luke 10? (2) What seems to be key in this mission of the seventy is preparing the way for the Lord. They were to determine which cities Jesus would go to and which ones He should skip over. This was a very practical mission. Jesus was going to Jerusalem and He needed to be there by the time of the Passover. Therefore, He needed to confine His movements to villages who wanted to hear from Him. Those with no positive volition could be skipped.

Now, with regards to the second reason, you may be asking, “Doesn’t Jesus just know which cities to go to and which ones to skip? Isn’t He [omniscient](#)?” Jesus has the ability to access His [omniscience](#) as God, but He does not. He voluntarily set aside His privileges and powers as Deity. This is known as the doctrine of [Kenosis](#). Therefore, for almost every day of His life, Jesus does not know what is going to happen next. Just like us.

## Lesson 297: Luke 10:1–2

## The 72 Evangelists

Luke 10:1a *After this...* (ESV; capitalized)

Luke 10 begins with three short common words: *After what things*, is how it literally reads. One might ask, *after what things*? Since the original Scriptures do not have verse or chapter demarcations, this would be after the things which took place in Luke 9. That would be Jesus interacting with the reluctant disciples and passing through the Samaritan village which did not want Jesus to come to them.

Therefore, even though Luke 10 has nothing which matches the other three gospels, these events are a continuation of Luke 9 (there will be phrases like this throughout Luke 10 which move us from one series of events to the next).

Luke 10:1b *...the Lord appointed seventy-two others ...* (ESV; capitalized)



The majority of the manuscripts have 70 and not 72. The manuscripts to which I refer (Scrivener Textus Receptus, Byzantine Greek text and Tischendorf's Greek text) all have seventy. The Westcott Hort text adds *two* in brackets, which means, *we thought about this for awhile and finally decided that "two" belongs*. J. Webb Mealy (of the SENT Bible translation) footnotes this, *The best ancient mss are evenly split on this number [of 70 or 72].*<sup>76</sup> Wilbur Pickering footnotes this: *Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, add "two" (as in NIV, LB, TEV, etc.), (also in verse 17).*<sup>77</sup> As you can tell, both Mealy and Pickering have picked sides, and their comments unnecessarily push their point of view (Mealy has 72 and Pickering has 70). Bear in mind, it does not make a dime's worth of difference which one it is, meaning, we do not need to take a dogmatic position—and remember this when it comes to questionable text. There are perhaps a handful of questionable texts in the New Testament which actually make an actual difference as to how we treat them.

More importantly, and often left out in the discussion, is the Greek word translated *others*. This is *héteros* (ἕτερος) [pronounced *HEH-ter-os*], which means, *another [of a different kind], other; different, altered*. Strong's #2087. This means that the main twelve guys were not included in this group. Jesus sent out *others of a different kind*.

At this point, there is a fairly large number of disciples who regularly travel with the Lord for Him to be able to select 70 or 72 men (I am assuming that these would be men) to send out.

As Jesus moves about with a large number of disciples, preparations have to be made in each place that they go to, because time is short. When they come into a new city or village, food, places to stay (even if it is a field), etc. must be secured. So Jesus makes a plan; and He sends out disciples in advance. In many cases, it is all about finding people who have [positive volition](#) (or they might have believed in the Lord already) and if they can help accommodate such a large group.

This is the principle of *testing the waters*. There are going to be cities and villages interested in having the Lord come to them; and others which really have no interest. Let's say that Centerville is welcoming to the Lord; but Next Town is not. Jesus would want to go to Centerville and spend time there teaching and healing, but walk right past Next Town.

This also helps us to understand the question, *what about those who have never heard the gospel message?* God the Father has a plan to evangelize every person who has positive volition toward Him. So, if Charley Brown lives in Centerville and wants to know God, God will make certain that someone armed with the gospel message will go to Centerville and provide the person on positive signals with the gospel. However, if Lucy Van Pelt lives in Next Town and she has no interest whatsoever, then God has no compelling reason to

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<sup>76</sup> *The Spoken English New Testament*, by J. Webb Mealy; ©2012; Luke 10:1 (footnote).

<sup>77</sup> Wilbur N. Pickering, ThM PhD, *Wilbur Pickering New Testament*; from e-Sword, Luke 10:1 (Footnote).

send the gospel message her way. God has no ethical requirement to send a person the gospel message who has no interest in Him whatsoever. Many people who are negative toward God hear the gospel message; and, for the most part, it just makes them angry and more negative. So God allows some people negative toward Him to simply live apart from ever hearing about Jesus. However, that is not a lot of people. The most godless people in the world often know about Jesus. In Hollywood, script writers and producers use the words *Jesus*, *Christ* and *Jesus Christ* more often than any other proper name. And, interestingly enough, as Hollywood becomes more and more godless, the Lord's name is blasphemed by them more and more often (the R rated movies I saw when younger might have a single profanity in them; and now, a single episode of an HBO or Showtime may reference Jesus ten or more times). For them, His Name is simply a strong word of dialogue. But they know His name.

Back to the narrative:

Luke 10:1c ...and sent them on ahead of Him, two by two, ... (ESV; capitalized)

These men would pair up and go out before Him. They would go first, determine where the positive volition was located, and report back.

This is a reminder that the ministry of the believer is not an isolated one. This does not mean that believers will, at various times, do their work in isolation (the janitor of a church is going to work in isolation; the [pastor](#) when studying is going to work in isolation). However, we function as a team. For instance, the [pastor-teacher](#) cannot really function well at a church if the toilets are stopped up and very messy (I am speaking literally here, not metaphorically). Believers cannot concentrate, if the comfort stations are all messtup.

A pastor-teacher for a medium sized church (let's say 50–100) must have support staff of some sort. Even the pastor of a very small church (let's say, 5–20) requires some sort of assistance (maybe a part-time secretary and a part-time janitor/groundskeeper<sup>78</sup>). On a practical level, for a smaller church, they may want to rent a facility and that eliminates some of the necessary work (I knew of one small church in Little Rock who found a public classroom which could be used without charge). Often buildings can be rented on a Sunday for a small amount of money. And never forget, there is nothing wrong with meeting in a person's home.

We are mandated to meet in local groups under the teaching of a well-qualified pastor-teacher; we are not mandated to build a church building or auditorium.

Now, even a pastor who delves into the original languages of the Bible and primarily teaches from them is still standing on the shoulders of many men who have gone before

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<sup>78</sup> Every local church figures this out on their own. Some very small churches simply meet in public buildings.

him. I write commentary, and in order to write the most basic commentary, I am depending on perhaps 100 men who went before me who provide the resources from which I work (chiefly, Greek and Hebrew sources)—and that is just to do the most basic exegesis and commentary (and each of those 100 is standing on the shoulders of 20 or 50 or 100 men). When I do the first draft of a chapter study, I look at 60 different translations. How many people were involved to make that happen? 200? 1000? Not only was there the massive amount of work needed to write the translation, but then, there were many involved who placed these Bibles into e-sword so that I could easily access them. I would say that my work depends on many thousands of men who went before me.

A pastor-teacher, in order to prepare a lesson, works in isolation, but he has received teaching for decades, often from a dozen or two dozen men (if he attended a seminary), and those men, all experts in their fields, have studied and learned from dozens, if not hundreds of others. That pastor will read and study books, which have the hands of hundreds if not thousands of men on them. I audited two courses at a Bible institute and still have those books with me today, 50 years later. Even though one of those books *An Introduction to the Bible* by Geisler and Nix was mostly the work of two men, there were hundreds involved in their sources, if not thousands. (This book, by the way, is a must-have for any serious student of the Word of God).

The point I am making is, production in the [Christian life](#) is very much a team effort. There is no one out there who acts completely on their own (and if they are attempting to be some sort of spiritual leader, their work is often suspect). Any person who thinks that they are reinventing Christianity or building up Christian theology from the ground floor up, should be avoided (R. B. Thieme, Jr., for instance, developed a fresh vocabulary and carefully taught a cohesive theology, often using terms and illustrations not found before, however, his theology was absolutely orthodox at its core).

Ecclesiastes speaks to the concept of teamwork:

Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 [Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!](#) (ESV)

Personally, I write commentary, which is essentially an isolated activity. However, I depend upon e-sword, which has the works of hundreds (if not thousands) of men; and I also consult and include about 100 translations when working in the NT.<sup>79</sup> Sometimes those translations are someone's individual work and sometimes the work of a group; but they themselves depend upon hundreds/thousands of men to get them to that point.

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<sup>79</sup> I look to translations which are available online and I have a handful of Bible translations in hard copy which cannot be found online.

I had one of the greatest teachers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (I think the greatest teacher) pastor the church that I attended, and there were dozens (if not hundreds) of people who made that church function, as well as thousands who donated from their own resources to financially maintain it.

Now, consider the passage that we are studying. This is Jesus, our Lord, and He is appointing a support staff here, to prepare the way for Him.

Luke 10:1d ...into every town and place where he himself was about to go. (ESV; capitalized)

There were a great many small villages and cities where Jesus was about to go; and he wanted a pair of point men to enter into these places first and prepare the people and the logistics for Him.

One of the simple tasks for them is to determine if the people in each town or village even want to hear the Lord. Jesus is only One Man. If no one in Next Town has any interest in listening to Him, then why should He go there? His public ministry was both the shortest and most influential of any historical religious figure. Given this very sort public ministry, Jesus had to go where there was positive volition.

Luke 10:1 After these things, the Lord appointed seventy others [of a different kind] and He sent them out in pairs before Him, into every city and place where He is about to go. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

You may ask, *doesn't the Lord, in His omnipotence, know where to go?* The Lord has voluntarily shut down the connections between His humanity and Deity. Things are such that He does not depend upon His Deity during His public ministry (and possibly never during His human existence). This is the Doctrine of Kenosis. Therefore, Jesus the man actually requires that this advance work be done, particularly right now. He is walking toward Jerusalem for the final Passover.

Luke 10:2a And He said to them,... (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is going to give these 70 (or 72) instructions in vv. 2–11 (He will pronounce woes for those cities on negative signals in vv. 12–16).

Luke 10:2b ..."The harvest is plentiful,... (ESV; capitalized)

There are a great many people out there, even in the small area in which He went, who want to hear Him, who want to be healed by Him. The people who are positive toward Jesus Christ are His harvest. Jesus wants to concentrate on the harvest which is ready

to be harvested.

Luke 10:2c **...but the laborers are few.** (ESV; capitalized)

The laborers are the people who stand before the Lord right here, which is a pretty small group (based upon some things that will take place as Jesus approaches Jerusalem, He probably has at least a few hundred followers and possibly close to a thousand).

Bear in mind that those who spread the message of Christ, after He ascends into heaven, are going to be a very small group of men. I don't know if there are a billion or two billion Christians around the world, but this movement began in a very small geographical area, on the other side of the world from us. The center of Christianity has moved quite a number of times. The early church began in Jerusalem, but it eventually moved out to many gentile cities, and eventually to Galatia (now Turkey) and Rome. Quite obviously, neither of those places is the center for Christianity today. Christianity goes not where there is a military conquest in order to establish Christianity, but where there is positive volition.

Christianity goes not where there is a military conquest in order to establish Christianity, but where there is positive volition.

There was once great positive volition throughout the Roman Empire, which included regions like Galatia. Paul had a tremendous response there. He did not go to these various cities with an army. He went with a very small evangelical team. He won over hearts and minds with the gospel message and with Bible doctrine.

Today, the former Galatian region is known as Turkey. 90% of the population are Sunni Muslims. About 0.2% are something else, like Christian.<sup>80</sup> There are strange laws there, where a person cannot hand out Bibles or gospel tracts, but if such are displayed, then people can take them.<sup>81</sup>

At this point, a primary center for Christianity is the United States. How did that happen? Very early on when American was being colonized by Europeans, the people who came to America were almost all Protestant Christians. Huge numbers of persecuted Christians came to America and settled. Even though there were skirmishes, battles and finally wars fought in what became the United States of America, these were all about territory and control. Who would have the ultimate control over this new land? The British, the French, the Spanish, the Indians or the colonists? Who would be ultimately in control? Rulers from Europe or the people of the Americas? Among those occupying the land, who would take

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<sup>80</sup> As per [Wikipedia](#) accessed June 14, 2024.

<sup>81</sup> From <https://www.biblemission.us/stories/the-ministry-in-turkey> accessed June 14, 2024.

ultimate control, the Indians or the new settlers? This entire process took about 300 years to decide. Even though the original settlers came from all over Europe, after a very short time, those actually born in America began to far outnumber those who came from Europe. They also chose, in large numbers, to believe in Jesus.

I went on a tangent based on positive volition. Now, back to our narrative:

Luke 10:2a-c **And He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.** (ESV; capitalized)

There were many people interested in God; and many of them would come to believe in Jesus. However, they needed to be reached. God has chosen His people to convey His message.

In this set of instructions to His disciples, Jesus uses 3 analogies or figures of speech. Here, His disciples are likened to *harvesters of a crop*. The crop out there are souls in these various cities who want to believe in Jesus; and these disciples will bring His message to them.

Luke 10:2d **Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest...** (ESV; capitalized)

The people that Jesus is sending out are urged to pray to the Lord of the harvest (that would be God the Father).

Luke 10:2e **...to send out laborers into his harvest.** (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples are to pray for there to be enough workers in the field in order to complete the entire harvest (that is, to bring the gospel to those who want to hear it).

## **Lessons 298–299: Luke 10:2–9**

## **The 72 Evangelists Part II**

Jesus is with His disciples about to send out a large group of them to do prep work for Him. They were to go into the cities before Him and determine where the positive volition was.

Let me ask this question: *Jesus has been teaching throughout the Galilee area for three years or so; how does He not already know where the positive volition is?* To answer this question, think about where He is. He has come out of the Galilee area and is going into Samaria, heading toward Jerusalem for His final entry into Jerusalem. Jesus has not spent very much time in Samaria up to this point in time, but He apparently wants to go to whichever towns and villages will receive Him on His trek toward Jerusalem. He has already gone to the lost sheep of Israel. Some have responded to Him with great



enthusiasm; others with great antagonism. However, Samaria, with a population of half-Jews, is even considered by many to be gentile territory. Jesus, before His public ministry draws to a close, is going to go through Samaria to teach and heal them.

**Palestine at the Time of the New Testament** (a map); from [Blue Letter Bible](#); accessed June 21, 2024. You can tell by where Jesus started (in Galilee) and where He is going (Jerusalem), that He can travel through Samaria. That is what is taking place in Luke 10 (and possibly some subsequent chapters as well).

Luke 10:2 And He said to them, “Indeed, the harvest [is] great and the laborers [are] few. Pray, therefore, to the Lord of the harvest, that He should send out [enough] laborers into His harvest. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The laborers being sent out by Jesus are these 70 (72) evangelists, armed with the gospel message, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the powerful message that Jesus will come to their city.



Dr. Daniel Hill: *The statement in verse 2, **The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few**, is explained The only way that many can be harvested by the gospel is for many to be sent out, covering a great multitude of people. The city is the focus of the disciples' efforts because reaching many is the goal of their mission. The emphasis on reaching the cities with the gospel also helps us understand our Lord's instructions not to greet anyone on the road.*<sup>82</sup>

Luke 10:2 And He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is making an analogy to a small farm making a harvest, something which virtually

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<sup>82</sup> From <https://www.gracenotes.info/luke/luke.pdf> (Chapter 10); accessed December 2, 2019.

every person who is hearing this analogy understands. They have planted crops, the crops have come up and have ripened, and now it is time for them to be harvested. That requires manpower; that requires a certain amount of harvesters to go out into the field and to harvest the ripened grains. An individual farm family rarely has enough manpower to handle this job on their own. When Jesus says, “**The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few**” farmers understand these words completely.

Jesus knows that there are many people out there who are ready to hear and then to believe the gospel message; so this requires enough men who know that message to go throughout the land and give it. That mission, in fact, is a very important part of the church’s purpose. Sometimes the evangelism from a church takes place in a very organized way (such as, through a prison ministry, or through missionaries) and sometimes, it is very individual (individual persons telling their friends and associates about Jesus).

Luke 10:3 **Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.** (ESV; capitalized)

All of this appears to be sudden to me. Jesus is not taking these 70 aside and training them on the spot, with the idea that they are going out probably in the next hour or so. He has been teaching them, day in and day out, but this sending them out, all of a sudden, seems like it is out of the blue. However, as I have pointed out, this is apparently Jesus’ only time for an extensive march through Samaria.

Jesus is sending these men out, not quite as missionaries, but to prepare the way for Him. These men are going to go out to a minimum of 35 cities (or more), and Jesus is going to go to those cities that want to hear Him speak. He does not want to step into this or that town where no one is interested in Him. This is His one and only whirlwind tour through Samaria. Because of a few recorded incidents involving Samaritans, it is clear to Jesus that there is some positive volition in this region.

Jesus has a timetable to go to Jerusalem in order to be there for the Passover. However, first He will go through Samaria, but only to the cities and villages who want to hear Him. The purpose of this advance team is to eliminate the cities who do not want to hear from Him.

Jesus warns these men that, even though they are going out into the world with the best of intentions, there will be those who want to do them harm.

Let me offer up the analogy of the brand new teacher, stepping into the classroom for the first time. He has had a lot of training and preparation, but it does not quite prepare him for the reality of being a teacher. There will be some kids in the classroom who hate him simply because he is a teacher. There are others whose first instinct is to disrupt and take

the attention of the other students onto themselves. These men, who have been chosen by Jesus to go out, have received months of instruction, but still, stepping out onto the mission field on their own would be a brand new experience.

Luke 10:3 *[All of you] depart. Listen, I am sending you [all] out as lambs in the midst of wolves.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Jesus uses three analogies or figures of speech. The first analogy was about the laborers being needed because the harvest is big. V. 3 is the second analogy, where there disciples are called *lambs*.

*Dr. Daniel Hill: One thing I have never seen is a lamb with claws and big teeth. They are not offensive aggressive animals. They are totally dependent upon the shepherds even when in the midst of a pack of wolves. Sheep easily panic and they freeze in the face of danger. One thing that is positive, they are usually too terrified to run. And we do not need to run but can depend upon the shepherd to protect us. Normal wolves eat lambs and yet here these lambs are sent to feed the wolves. And we could extend this out to say that if the lambs did not have the food to feed the wolves (the Gospel) they would get eaten alive.*<sup>83</sup>

Luke 10:3 *Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.* (ESV; capitalized)

Enough is known about Jesus, at this point, to where there will be those who accept Him and those who oppose Him. If this is taking place at the end of His ministry (which explains the *missionary tour* in Samaria), He knows through experience some of them really want to hear His message but many do not.

Luke 10:4a *Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals,...* (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is sending these men out right now, and they don't have time to go back to get some money or to pack. They are to just pick up and leave right now. I believe that is what is meant here. "Go just as you are." There is only a limited amount of time for Jesus to travel through Samaria, and they do not have the time to gather necessary things together for an extended tour.

When Jesus first gave instructions to the twelve, when Jesus sent *them* out, they were not to take an extra pair of sandals; and I believe that is essentially what is being said here. In other words, I don't believe that Jesus is telling these men, "Take off your sandals and

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<sup>83</sup> From <https://www.gracenotes.info/luke/luke.pdf> (Chapter 10); accessed December 2, 2019.

leave them here; hand your money belt, if you have one, to someone here.” I believe that is reading more into the text than we ought. I think the idea is, “You are moving out right now; you are not going back home to get this or that for your trip. Immediately after Me telling you what your mission is, you are going out to begin it.”

Dr. Dan Hill: *In the urban environment into which they are going there is no need to take along the extras. Also they are to depend upon God to provide in each place they go and He will lead them through His provision or by not providing.*<sup>84</sup>

Luke 10:4a **Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals,...** (ESV; capitalized)

This is one of those passages where the translator faces the very common problem, *just how literal do I make this?* At least one translator spoke of a *backpack* here, even though no disciple actually owned a backpack. However, a *backpack* is something that believers of a young age today can totally relate to. So, for a Bible designed to be readable, this is an excellent translation. Almost every child today understands what a backpack is. A pastor-teacher covering this passage in detail will explain that people in that era had something more akin to a ruck sack than to a backpack (but the general purpose is the same). Young readers understand what a backpack is; few of them will understand what a ruck sack is.

Luke 10:4b **...and greet no one on the road.** (ESV; capitalized)

This instruction is an odd one. Let me suggest that Jesus does not want them to become distracted from their specific mission. They are to find the cities and villages where there with positive volition. They need to remember which ones, and bring this information back to Jesus.

It is also very likely that Satan is going to send out men specifically to stop them or slow them down. But Jesus wants them to proceed to the next city or village.

Dr. Dan Hill provides another reasonable explanation: *By telling them to greet no one on the way indicates that they have a destiny and they are not to be distracted as they press towards the cities in which they are to minister. They were to reach people en mass because the time is short. Many must hear the message and so there is instructions not to deal with the individuals but to get the message to many in the cities.*

*Let's say you were a soap salesman and you were on your way to a TV*

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<sup>84</sup> From <https://www.gracenotes.info/luke/luke.pdf> (Chapter 10); accessed October 5, 2019.

*studio to do an infomercial but along the way you stopped to tell five people about your great soap. Well, five would hear but five million would not.*<sup>85</sup>

Is each team just going to one city or village? Is there a time frame? Are they going to as many villages as possible in three days? I see this as being a very tight time frame—either just a few days and no more than a week. Essentially, these men are going to return to Jesus and tell Him, “Let’s go to villages A, B and C; and bypass villages X, Y and Z.”

The ministry of Jesus operated on a very tight schedule. Jesus came to make His identity and purpose known to man, and this was only going to take place over a period of 3 or 4 years and in a very small geographical area. Although Jesus would make Himself available during this time, He primarily expected others to be His witness, to tell the world Who He is and what He has done. Furthermore, as we have seen, they are to reveal all that they know about the gospel message after He is gone from them. Some things Jesus did not want His disciples to reveal immediately (for instance, the three disciples which were given the privilege to see Jesus in His glorified state).

For this reason, these men are going out, right then and there. Not in a few hours, but right after Jesus gives them instructions, they are heading out.

Luke 10:4 **Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus is dispatching His people to test the waters of positive volition throughout Samaria.

Luke 10:3–4 **[All of you] depart. Listen, I am sending you [all] out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Do not carry a money bag, food sack or sandals; and greet no one along the road.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Jesus warns these disciples that this is a potentially dangerous mission; but they are to move out quickly.

Although Jesus is going to give them a few limitations, He appears to allow them to determine just exactly how they will organize themselves.

Luke 10:5a **Whatever house you enter,...** (ESV; capitalized)

They may come to this house and they may enter into the house, depending upon how they are initially greeted. Obviously, they only enter if invited.

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<sup>85</sup> From <https://www.gracenotes.info/luke/luke.pdf> (Chapter 10); accessed October 5, 2019.

In any case, something must be established first and foremost:

Luke 10:5b ...first say, 'Peace be to this house!' (ESV; capitalized)

*House* here is a **metonym** for the people living in the house.

The disciples who arrive at this house are to speak *peace* to the people there. This is the peace which is established between man and God through God's [grace](#) (which would be the cross, which was in their future). In other words, these believers are to speak to them the gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ.

Given the primary disciples and what they understood, we cannot assume that these people had a full sense of the [gospel message](#). At this point, the gospel message is, *Jesus is the Promised [Messiah](#)*. He is coming through this region; do you want Him to stop in your city and speak?

Time is indeed limited. Remember that even prior to the last trek to Jerusalem, Jesus tried to tell His disciples on several occasions that He would be taken and crucified, and this did not fit into their brain. In any case, this had to happen on the Passover, because Jesus is the Passover Lamb for Israel.

The gospel message at this point in time was pretty thin. Recall that Jesus, when speaking to Nicodemus, merely said, "He who believes in Me has eternal life; but he who does not, the wrath of God will abide upon him." (from John 3) Today, we often talk about more—the death of the Lord to pay for our sins. But it all boils down to having faith in the [Revealed God](#). Jesus is the Revealed God. However, soteriology is a very big and very deep doctrine. Even though we can still give the gospel message from John 3, with some people, you may want to approach the gospel in a different way. There are many different ways to present the gospel (however, they must all culminate with placing our faith in Jesus Christ).

Luke 10:5 *Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!'* (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus' disciples will come to houses where the people are very positive toward their message and understand that they need a base of operations as well as some food and a place to sleep. Some people will offer their house as a home base right up front.

Luke 10:6a *And if a son of peace is there,...* (ESV; capitalized)

*A son of peace* (or, *a man of peace*) would be a person who has a relationship with God because he has believed in the Revealed God. Since the Lord's public ministry, the Revealed God is Jesus Christ.



Luke 10:6b ...*your peace will rest upon him*. (ESV; capitalized)

Then the peace from the disciples—the peace and blessing from their Lord—is to rest upon the house. There are two masculine singular nouns nearby: the *son of peace* and the *house* (which stands for the people in the house). This peace from God is for the individual and also for his house. All his house will be blessed because of his faith.

The word is *eirênê* (εἰρήνη, ης, ῆ) [pronounced *eye-RAY-nay*]. Here, in this context, it means, *peace and prosperity*; previously, it referred to the *peace between God and man*.

Luke 10:6c *But if not, it will return to you*. (ESV; capitalized)

If there is no *man of peace* in the house, and they are unreceptive to the disciples, then this peace and prosperity would be *retracted or returned* to the disciples. Peace, here, is treated here almost like a commodity which can be carried about and given. The disciples would ask for peace to be upon this family, and God the Father would answer this prayer. However, if it turns out that there is no positive volition, then the disciples are to retract any such blessing and move on.

Luke 10:6 *And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not* [if there is not someone there who has believed in the Revealed God], *it* [the peace] *will return to you*. (ESV; capitalized; explanatory brackets from me)

Jesus' disciples are to confirm that they are being invited into the house by a believer. They can ask God the Father to bestow peace and prosperity upon this house, a prayer which God would certainly answer.

**Application:** As an aside, I have known families which are greatly blessed of God and those which are not. I have known families which ended up being divided, but that was simply because one portion of the family was progressing spiritually and another portion was not.

Luke 10:7a *And remain in the same house,...* (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples of Jesus who are going out are not to *house shop*. They are not to look for whomever is offering the best deal (the best accommodations, the best food). When they have been invited to stay at a house, they were to remain in that house for as long as they remained in that city. They were not to initiate some sort of competition between houses. The disciples were there for a purpose, and that purpose was not to find the best accommodations possible.

Luke 10:7b *...eating and drinking what they provide,...* (ESV; capitalized)

Whatever is offered to them, by way of food and drink, they were to accept this graciously. They were not to tell the people in that house just exactly how they wanted this or that dish; or whatever (unless, of course, asked). People in this era were not wealthy. There was no freezer that they could go to where they might say, “I can offer you fish sticks, veal Parmesan, or pork chops.” The people would have whatever they had, and whether this was a sumptuous meal or a bare subsistence meal, they were to accept this food graciously.

Bear in mind that this set of disciples were sent out with virtually nothing, so that they were to depend entirely upon the graciousness of their host (s).

Luke 10:7c ...for the laborer deserves his wages. (ESV; capitalized)

This food and shelter was the wage of these workers; whatever the people offered them, that was the wage that they were *due*.

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> analogy or figure of speech. The Lord’s disciples standing before Him are laborers; and they should be paid a wage in order for them to work. That wage here is the food and shelter provided them by others while on this missionary tour.

So, Jesus has called them harvesters, lambs and laborers. As harvesters, they go out into the world and harvest the crop that is there, which are the souls who will believe in Jesus. They are lambs being sent out among the wolves, as they are going out there without protection, unarmed, potentially subject to the attacks of others (God would oversee their protection). And here, they are called laborers, and this is in relation to them being remunerated for the work that they do (healing the sick, casting out demons,<sup>86</sup> and presenting the message of the kingdom).

The implication here is, if you allow your [spiritual gift](#) to function, you will be remunerated for that. Understanding God’s care for His lambs (His laborers) often takes a lot of pressure off (there is no need to worry). However, this does not excuse a believer from working. Paul made tents as a second job even as an Apostle. You may discover your spiritual gift and still find yourself having to work besides (your job is God’s provision for you). This is true when a pastor has a very small congregation (of, say 4–20 souls). In fact, if the congregation is less than a hundred, the pastor may find himself needing to work a second job. There is nothing wrong with this; there is no shame in this.

**Application:** I am aware that many [doctrinal churches](#) are small. If you are the pastor of a doctrinal church, do not think that you are going to have a congregation like R. B. Thieme, Jr.’s (I was not there in Berachah’s heyday, but I think there may have been

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<sup>86</sup> Although this is not specifically named in the Lord’s instructions Luke, it will be spoken of by the disciples upon their return.

around 3000, give or take). On many occasions, Bob would discourage people from coming, because the church got so crowded. The pastor-teacher deals with the congregation that God gives to him, even if it is small and he must hold down a full-time job in addition to teaching that flock.

Luke 10:7d **Do not go from house to house.** (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples are not to go about and search out their best deal; the best food and the best service. Whoever offered their home and offered them a meal, that is what they were to accept graciously, knowing that, ultimately, God has provided that for them.

Luke 10:7 **And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus tells His disciples, "If you run into a saved person and they offer you a place to sleep and meals, then, by all means, take them up on this offer. Do not concern yourself with finding a better host. In other words, where they stay and what they eat are unimportant elements of their mission. God takes care of that. Just go out and determine whether or not this village wants Jesus to come and speak to them.

Luke 10:8a **Whenever you enter a town and they receive you,...** (ESV; capitalized)

These disciples would be going from city to city. It is not clear how many cities they were to go to; it was not clear how long they were to stay. I assume that they would allow the guidance of their situation to tell them how long to remain in each city.

It would seem to me that there is some kind of organization, so that 10 disciples do not go to the same city. They paired up before; so, very likely, they paired up once again. Someone likely knew the towns around, so someone was in charge of guiding the disciples in such a way that they would quickly visit every city and village of Samaria.

Luke 10:8b **...eat what is set before you.** (ESV; capitalized)

These disciples, who would speak of Jesus and the offer of the kingdom, would be going into homes where they do not know the people and possibly eating food that they were not familiar with. If something was placed before them and called *dinner*, that is what they were to eat.

Luke 10:8 **Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you.** (ESV; capitalized)

Jesus appears to be giving these disciples permission to eat whatever is served. In fact,

they are told to do that. Jesus does not tell them, “Now, make certain that food is kosher.”

Luke 10:9a **Heal the sick in it...** (ESV; capitalized)

These disciples were given some supernatural abilities. They would be allowed to heal those who are sick, as this is a great analogy to the Lord and what He ultimately does. Because they represented the King, they were given some of His authority to apply when needed.

Luke 10:9b **...and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'** (ESV; capitalized)

Their message was to be, *the Kingdom of God has come to you; the Kingdom of God is near to you*. This is because the King was here; Jesus is the King of God's kingdom.

Luke 10:9 **Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'** (ESV; capitalized)

*Steve Ellis: I believe the only way that a believer in this portion of the Age of Israel would have manifested such receptivity to the message of the gospel of the kingdom is if they had been steeped in a knowledge of Hebrew Scripture (i.e. the Old Testament). The believer who was intimate with Hebrew Scripture would have manifested an understanding of Yahweh's purpose for the nation Israel and for the Jewish race. This believer would have understood Yahweh's essence to include the attributes of sovereignty, omniscience, immutability, and veracity to name a few. This believer would have had an understanding of Israel's future based upon such passages as Daniel 9 that would have indicated that the Messiah would be coming in their generation (e.g. the story of Simeon in Luke 2:25-35). This believer would have a lot in common spiritually with Zecharias, Elizabeth, and Mary (Luke 1).<sup>87</sup>*

It should be noted that many people in Jerusalem and elsewhere understood the coming kingdom to a limited degree. Many of them expected a Messiah very different from Jesus (they expected someone like King David, a warrior). Remember, even John the Herald sent his disciples to Jesus to ask Him if He was really the Messiah. They were expecting to be led by a great warrior to defeat Rome, but that is not Who Jesus is. Had the people of Israel accepted Jesus as their Savior-king as a whole people, things would have been somewhat different. However, well over half of Israel rejected Jesus, despite all that God had revealed to them about the coming Messiah.

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<sup>87</sup> From <http://www.cotsk.org/studyguides/LK10-Ch10.pdf> accessed December 2, 2019.

**Cults and the True Family of God:**

The more that a believer understood the Word of God in that era, the easier it was for him to accept Jesus as their Messiah. As is done today, one set of Scriptures is either over-emphasized or emphasized to the point where other Scriptures are ignored or choked out. Cults are famous for this approach to Scripture. For instance, often a cult will try to convince you to break ties with your family and friends, because believers from that cult are your true family. They take a true principle in Scripture—in this example, your true family being those who have believed in the Lord—along with the principle of separation, and turn that into a doctrine of isolation from family and friends.

When it comes to your true family in Christ and separation from family members, there are two things to keep in mind: (1) Believers are not to isolate themselves entirely from the world. We have the gospel message; we have the freedom by which Christ set us free. Should be not be in a position to share that message rather than off, away from all else? (2) Secondly, cults like to separate out their members *from the world* because they don't want others to know what they are up to. A reasonably intelligent unbeliever can recognize a cult and cult-like behavior. Cults are aware of this, and so they try to isolate their members from other believers or unbelievers.

Early on, when I was first saved, I read literature from many different groups, some of them cultic. At that point in time, I knew nothing. I probably still have some booklets hidden deep in my library that I would be ashamed to admit that I still had. After listening to R. B. Thieme, Jr., I also read some negative pamphlets about him, just trying to get my bearings as a new believer. As a result, I got to know quite a bit about cults—not from the inside, mind you, but from their literature, which was designed to reach people on the outside. Although I did not fully understand why, it made sense to me that, any group that tried to separate you from your friends and family was problematic, at the very least.

As an aside—and I need to be careful at this point—there is literature on evolution and apologetics put out by some Christian cults which is quite good. I particularly think of Armstrong's Cult, the Worldwide Church of God (which was, at one time, a fairly large enterprise<sup>88</sup>), and they put out booklets like *A Whale of a Tale* and *A Fishy Story* and *A Theory for the Birds*. These booklets can still be found on the internet, and they are still very good sources of information about evolution. However, bear in mind, a group can churn out some good information about evolution and apologetics without having accurate

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<sup>88</sup> Gardner Ted Armstrong was an outstanding and persuasive speaker. But, that is not the same thing as being theologically correct.

theology.

Now, I have not spent a lot of time searching out new literature from questionable places that might be good, but no doubt, there is accurate information about homosexuality and trans-people which is accurate, but put out by cultic groups.

My point is, cultic groups can produce some good literature—particularly regarding specific subjects. However, their cultic theology is often revealed in their theological doctrines. So, for instance, you may find some good information on evolution from the Worldwide Church of God or even from the Jehovah's Witnesses, this does not mean that all of their literature has value. I don't know what is happening today with the Worldwide Church of God—I am quite suspicious of organizations which place themselves over the local church. But I do know, that last place I would go to for information about Jesus is the JW organization.

Our chief topic is Jesus sending out 70 (or 72) believers into the cities and villages that Jesus is going to walk through or walk by. Jesus will indicate to them that they have certain abilities which most believers do not have.

Luke 10:9 **Also, you [all] will heal those in the city [lit., in her] who are sick, saying to them, 'The kingdom of God is near to you [all].'** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

For the Messiah, the emphasis in that era was upon Him being a great warrior, to, presumably, defeat Rome. See how they take a generally true doctrine and apply it to their situation at that time? This was all that some focused upon, so that the Jesus Who healed and cast out demons—doing miracles unlike has ever been seen before—is rejected. This narrow view of their King led much of Israel to reject their own Savior. It took believers with doctrine and with some flexibility to accept Jesus as the Messiah of the Old Testament. What they heard in their synagogues did not completely match up with Jesus.

Steve Ellis: **Principle:** *The spiritual believer who has discernment and humility is extremely rare in any generation. Therefore, as you grow towards spiritual maturity in knowledge and application, expect to find yourself at odds (in mental thought pattern) with the thinking of the mainstream.*<sup>89</sup>

This is a more complete set of instructions:

Luke 10:7–9 **Remain in the same house, eating and drinking [whatever is provided] by them, for the laborer [is] deserving of his wage. Do not go from house to house. [Regarding] whatever city you [all] enter and they receive you [all], eat the [food] placed**

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<sup>89</sup> From <http://www.cotsk.org/studyguides/LK10-Ch10.pdf> accessed December 2, 2019.



before you [all]. Also, you [all] will heal those in the city [lit., *in her*] who are sick, saying to them, 'The kingdom of God is near to you [all].' (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Once the disciples—probably in groups of two—had received logistical grace, from there, they were to proclaim the message of the King.

Let's say that the people of a town do not receive them. Jesus speaks to this in vv. 10–12.

Luke 10:10a **But whenever you enter a town...** (ESV; capitalized)

There are going to be some cities that these evangelists go to who are negative to the message of the kingdom and are negative to Jesus Christ. This is what these evangelists are to do when that happens.

Luke 10:10b **...and they do not receive you,...** (ESV; capitalized)

There are going to be some cities that these evangelists come to who are not interested. They know about Jesus and they are not interested. In some cities, they will be offered a place to stay and meals. In other cities, they will enter, begin to speak, and they will be asked to leave; or they will be harassed by the people listening to them.

Luke 10:10c **...go into its streets...** (ESV; capitalized)

When it becomes clear that the people are not interested at all, but are very negative to the message, the evangelists are to exit the city. They find the road leading out of the city and get on that road (which is, apparently, usually just an open area which might be between a few buildings or residences. Going either direction on that road will lead the evangelists out of town.

Luke 10:10a-c **But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets...** (ESV; capitalized)

The disciples were to make a quick exit from that town and go on to the next one. They do this by going to the main street.

Luke 10:10d–11a **...and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you.'** (ESV; capitalized)

As they begin to walk out of the city, they are to say this to the people who are still listening (but obviously, hostile towards them). "There is obviously some dust on our feet which we have picked up in your city."

“We are going to shake off or scrape of this dust for you, for your benefit. In this way, no one can say that we took anything from your city—not even the dust from your streets.” I believe that this is what they are trying to convey.

Luke 10:11b *Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.*’ (ESV; capitalized)

“But remember this as we leave—the Kingdom of God is near to you; the Kingdom of God has come to your city. Despite your negative volition, the Kingdom of God is here.”

They had come, they had told them of the kingdom; and the King was willing to come to this town. However, there was no positive volition to bring Him there.

Luke 10:10d–11 *...and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.'* (ESV; capitalized)

*Dr. Daniel Hill: I once took a course in selling and I will never forget what one top salesman said. He told the class that his objective was to go out and eliminate the ones who did not want to buy his product. When someone said NO he said GREAT because that moved him on to those who would say YES. God the Holy Spirit is preparing the hearts of those who would believe and our job is not to persuade the negative but to seek and find the positive.*

*Hill continues: Now as we look at Jesus sending the seventy we can begin to answer the first question. Where do you find significance? These seventy men were significant in the very ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth. They were sent to save, commissioned by the king, given a mandate to minister, given taught how to tell others, promised provision, and assured of results. What a grand privilege! Yet no more so than the honor and privilege that we have to take the Gospel of Christ as His ambassadors to a lost and dying world. And yet we will see that even that is not the great honor and privilege we have. There is a greater significance that we have and yet we so often ignore it.<sup>90</sup>*

Luke 10:10–11 *If you enter a city and they do not receive you with gladness, but reject the message of the gospel, then simply walk away from there. As you are leaving, walking down their street, heading out of their city, say this to them: ‘Regarding the dust of your city which is adhering to our feet, we will scrape it off before we leave your city, so that we take nothing of your city with us. But, despite your negative volition, know this, that the Kingdom of God came to you and to your city.’* (Kukis paraphrase)

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<sup>90</sup> From <https://www.gracenotes.info/luke/luke.pdf> (Chapter 10); accessed December 2, 2019.

These are Jesus' instructions to His disciples to prepare the way for Him.

There are great similarities between Jesus sending out the 12 disciples and His sending out the 70.

The ESV; capitalized will be used below:

<b>Jesus' Instructions to the Twelve and to the 70</b>	
<b>(from) Luke 9:1–6</b>	<b>(from) Luke 10:1–11</b>
Luke 9:1–2 And He called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.	Luke 10:9a Heal the sick in it...  The 70 are told to heal the sick in Luke 10:9. They remark on their power over demons in Luke 10:17.
Jesus sends His disciples out to proclaim the kingdom of God (Luke 9:2a).	Luke 10:9b ...and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'
Luke 9:3 And he said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics.	Luke 10:4 Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.
Luke 9:4 And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart.	Luke 10:7 And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house.
Luke 9:5 And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them."	Luke 10:10–11 But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.'

Interestingly enough, the instructions were very similar. In fact, these are similar enough for missionaries to follow the principles found in here. That is, if they are welcomed into someone's home, they are to eat whatever is placed in front of them.

Much of this was taken from <http://www.cotsk.org/studyguides/LK10-Ch10.pdf> (accessed December 2, 2019).