

Introduction

Who is Christ? This is the question that dominates this section of Luke. [Luke 9:28-62](#) answers that question in relation to Jesus's glory as the Son of God.

Transfiguration

[Luke 9:28-31](#) “28 Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. 29 And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. 30 And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.”

- *When did the events of vs 28ff. take place?* [Luke 9:28](#) “Now about eight days after these sayings ...” Matthew and Mark both say “after 6 days.” It is difficult to know why this detail varies. However, it is reasonable that Luke may be counting from a different ending point than Matthew and Mark.

Why did Jesus go up the mountain? [Luke 9:28](#) “... went up on the mountain to pray.”

Who went with Jesus up the mountain? [Luke 9:28](#) “... he took with him Peter and John and James ...”

- These are the same three disciples Jesus took into the room with Jarius's daughter ([Luke 8:51](#)) and into the Garden to pray the night of His arrest ([Mark 14:33](#)).

What changed about Jesus's appearance? [Luke 9:29](#) “... the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white.” Verse 32 confirms that this describes the appearance of Jesus's glory.

Who spoke with Jesus? [Luke 9:30](#) “... two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah,” These two men represent the Law and the Prophets (OT Scripture).

- There are quite a few details between the transfiguration and Moses's time on Mount Sinai. The Gospel writers did not include every detail and sometimes include different details than each other. It is likely that the Synoptic writers chose these details to highlight the connection between Moses and Jesus.
- A cloud covered both mountains ([Luke 9:34](#); [Exod 24:16](#)). God spoke from the cloud ([Luke 9:35](#); [Exod 24:16](#)). Three companions accompanied them up the mountain ([Luke 9:28](#); [Exod 24:1, 9](#)). Both men's appearance changed ([Luke 9:29](#); [Exod 34:30](#)). God's glory was seen on the mountain ([Luke 9:32](#); [Exod 24:16](#)). They discussed Jesus's departure (literally - exodus, ἔξοδος).

- As the book of Hebrews teaches, the OT is a shadow of Christ; He is the fulfillment. We should be careful that we don't read into stories what is not there, but reading the OT with an eye toward Christ is a biblically endorsed way of reading Scripture.
- It is not enough to see the comparison between Moses and Jesus. The NT repeats the idea ... someone greater than _____ is here ([Matt 12:6](#), [41](#), [42](#)). Jesus is not like Moses; He is greater than Moses ([Heb 3:1-6](#)).

[Luke 9:32-34](#) “32 Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. 33 And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. 34 As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.”

What did the disciples see when they awoke? [Luke 9:32](#) “... they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.” *What covered them?* [Luke 9:34](#) “... cloud came and overshadowed them ...”

What did Peter plan to make? [Luke 9:33](#) “... Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah”

- This may be a reference to the Feast of Booths (Tents, Tabernacles). Israel made temporary shelters once per year to remember their time in the wilderness ([Lev 23:39-43](#)).
- There is a connection between the Feast of Booths and the Transfiguration in [1 Kings 8](#). During the Feast of Booths, Solomon dedicated the Temple and brought in the Ark of the Covenant ([1 Kgs 8:1-4](#)). The temple filled with a cloud and the glory of God.
- [1 Kings 8:10-11](#) “10 And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, 11 so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord” (cf. [Exod 40:35](#)).
- Similarly, Moses was covered by a cloud and God's glory on a mountain in [Exodus 24:15-16](#) “15 Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. 16 The glory of the Lord dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.”
- When we examine typology, we cannot forget the principle of the priority of Jesus. [Matthew 12:6](#) “6 I tell you, something greater than the temple is here.”

[Luke 9:35-36](#) “35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” 36 And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.”

What was said from the cloud? [Luke 9:35](#) “... This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!”

- This is similar to what the Father said at Jesus's baptism. [Luke 3:22](#) "22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.""

Summary: *What does the Transfiguration teach about Jesus? Is He a prophet like Moses and Elijah?* Jesus is more than a prophet. Although someone may conclude that this is a meeting of great prophets, God's voice clarifies that Jesus is distinct. He is not a prophet; He is the Son of God (cf. [Heb 3:1-6](#)).

Demon-possessed boy

[Luke 9:37-40](#) "37 On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. 38 And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. 39 And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him. 40 And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.""

Verse 37 says "they had come down from the mountain." *What had happened on the mountain the day before?* Jesus was transfigured before them and spoke with Moses and Elijah ([Luke 9:28-36](#)).

What was wrong with the young boy in this story? [Luke 9:39](#) "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 ..."

- Since only 3 of the apostles went up the mountain with Jesus, the other 9 were probably among Jesus's disciples. In [Luke 9:1](#), Jesus had given the Twelve authority over the demons. Yet, now they had trouble casting out the demon.

[Luke 9:41-43](#) "41 Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." 42 While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. 43 And all were astonished at the majesty of God ..."

What did Jesus call the crowd who had gathered? [Luke 9:41](#) "... O faithless and twisted generation ..." This may be a reference to [Deut 32:5](#), where Moses says that those who have forsaken the Lord are not longer His children and have not faith ([Deut 32:20](#)). There was a crowd present arguing with the disciples, including scribes ([Mark 9:14](#)), so Jesus's rebuke is probably directed toward the crowd, not just the father.

When Jesus healed the boy, how did the crowd respond? [Luke 9:43](#) "43 And all were astonished at the majesty of God ..."

Summary: *How must the disciples have felt in this situation?* They had been given authority over demons, yet now they were unable to cast out this demon. Jesus alone was able to drive out the demon.

Reflection: As we fulfill the Great Commission, it is important to remember that all authority belongs to Christ, not to the church. Our authority only rests in Christ and His word. This is true of pastors as well. God gave pastors the responsibility of teaching and leading the church, but only Christ has authority in the church. A pastor must constantly point people to Christ and to His word.

Jesus's death

[Luke 9:43-45](#) "... But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, 44 "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." 45 But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying."

What did Jesus mean that He would "be delivered into the hands of men?" This refers to Jesus's arrest and crucifixion which He described in [Luke 9:22](#) "... 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."

Why did the disciples not understand Jesus's statement? [Luke 9:45](#) "45 But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it ..." [Luke 8:10](#) says that the secrets of the kingdom of God were **given** to the disciples, but that understanding was **not given** to the crowds ([Matt 13:11](#)). Understanding of spiritual things does not depend on intellect; understanding is **given** by the Holy Spirit ([Matt 11:25](#); [Matt 19:11](#); [1 Cor 2:10-16](#)).

Summary: This is another example of the disciples struggling. They had been given understanding, but they had not been given **all** understanding.

Reflection: Very often, we will disagree with people about theology or biblical interpretation, even within a local church. The **natural** response is to conclude that those who disagree are clueless, or even that they are heretics. In reality, we all lack understanding. This does not mean that we shouldn't call out false teaching. This also does not mean that we should accept someone else's view. This **does** mean that we should approach disagreement with humility, acknowledging that, although we think we are right, we may lack understanding.

Meekness

[Luke 9:46-48](#) "46 An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. 47 But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side 48 and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great."

How does Jesus define greatness in the Kingdom of God? [Luke 9:48](#) “... For he who is least among you all is the one who is great.”

[Luke 9:49–50](#) “49 John answered, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us.” 50 But Jesus said to him, “Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you.””

Why did John want to stop the man who was casting out demons in Jesus’s name? [Luke 9:49](#) “... because he does not follow with us.”

[Luke 9:51–56](#) “51 When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. 52 And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. 53 But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. 54 And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” 55 But he turned and rebuked them. 56 And they went on to another village.”

What did James and John want to do to those who rejected Jesus? [Luke 9:54](#) “... Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?”

Summary: The disciples struggled with meekness. They wanted recognition for greatness. They wanted recognition for following Jesus. They wanted anyone who didn’t follow Jesus like they did to be dealt with harshly.

Reflection: Following Jesus requires meekness. It requires serving in humility. It requires serving without recognition. It requires patience with those who reject Christ. Pride is the enemy of devotion to Christ.

Cost of following

[Luke 9:57–58](#) “57 As they were going along the road, someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” 58 And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.””

Why did Jesus tell the man that He had “nowhere to lay his head?” Following Jesus is not convenient. Following Jesus demands sacrifice and anticipates suffering.

[Luke 9:59–60](#) “59 To another he said, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” 60 And Jesus said to him, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.””

What did the man want to do before following Jesus? [Luke 9:59](#) “... Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”

What did Jesus say He should do instead of burying his father? [Luke 9:60](#) “... go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” This has been repeated throughout the chapter. [Luke 9:2](#) “2 and he sent

them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.” [Luke 9:6](#) “6 And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.” [Luke 9:11](#) “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.”

[Luke 9:61-62](#) “61 Yet another said, “I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” 62 Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.””

What did this man want to do before following Jesus? [Luke 9:61](#) “... let me first say farewell to those at my home.”

What did Jesus say about those who look back? [Luke 9:62](#) “... No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Summary: *How does Jesus describe the decision to follow Him **and** how is that different than what you witness in modern Christianity?* Following Christ requires complete devotion. Those who want to delay following Jesus do not want to follow Jesus. Those who want to split their devotion between Jesus and something else cannot be devoted to Jesus.

Reflection: Consider how many people you have known who have half-heartedly devoted themselves to Christ. It is obvious to you when you see that they want to follow only when it is convenient. Genuine reflection on Scripture, however, requires that you look at your own devotion as critically as you look at the devotion of others. Perhaps you are more devoted than others, but *in what areas are you looking back? In what areas are you delaying devotion?* Following Christ requires complete devotion; otherwise, you are not following Him.

Conclusion

Jesus is the eternal God. Although He humbled Himself to humanity, He did not cease to be God. Jesus was glorified in the Transfiguration, but also in His crucifixion. Our devotion to Christ is a response to who He is (the eternal God) and what He has done (His substitutionary death).

We follow Christ through humble devotion. Following Christ is characterized by exalting Christ, not self.