

**Luke 9:28-36**  
**July 7, 2019**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: Will we be able to see and know our friends and family members in Heaven? Will we know each other in Heaven? [Let people engage]

Q: Will we remember our earthly lives when we are in Heaven? [Let people engage]

**Transition:** We are getting ready to read the Transfiguration account, and I believe There are lessons to learn about the appearance of Moses and Elijah regarding departed loved ones. Let's begin.

**BOOK:**

*The Transfiguration*

<sup>28</sup> About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup> As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. <sup>30</sup> Two men, Moses and Elijah, <sup>31</sup> appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. <sup>32</sup> Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. <sup>33</sup> As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.)

<sup>34</sup> While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. <sup>35</sup> A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." <sup>36</sup> When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and told no one at that time what they had seen. [X-REF Matt 17:1-8, Mk 9:2-8]

**Process Observations/Questions:**

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

- It reminds me that in the future, in death, believers will meet the risen Christ in the incandescent clouds to be with him forever (1 Thess 4:17-18). Peter, James, and John were to put their arms around this blessed experience and pull it within themselves. So must we! It is our hope. I Thess 4:17b says that the same Lord is going to return in a cloud of glory, and that those who die before are going to rise up and meet him in the air (1 Thess 4:16), and that the living are going to meet him in the air too (1 Thess 4:17)—in that great cloud of glory. Someday we are going to be in that cloud! The Shekinah glory is going to surround us!
- This passage shows us **the safety of all true believers who have been removed from this world.**

- The Transfiguration reaffirms that Jesus is the Son of God (reiterating the truth revealed at His baptism) and the command to **listen to Him** identifies Him as God's messenger and mouthpiece.

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage; I wish the other nine disciples could have experienced the Transfiguration. I wonder why they weren't invited.]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn't understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage; He invites us to spend time alone with Him]

**LOOK:** There are lessons to learn about the **appearance of Moses and Elijah** regarding **departed loved ones:**

1. They lived on even though they had left earth hundreds of years before.
2. They could be identified without any formal introduction.
3. They could speak to each other.
4. Their intelligence was not impaired.
5. They knew about coming events.
6. They showed no dread in the presence of the glory of Christ.
7. They were able to commune with Christ ([Matt 17:3](#)).

**Process Observations/Questions:**

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn't understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

**LOOK:**

We can have a spiritual "transfiguration" experience each day as we walk with the Lord. Romans 12:1–2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18 tell us how. As we surrender body, mind, and will, the Lord transforms us from within so that we are not conformed to the world. As we behold Him in the Word (the mirror), we are "transfigured" by the Spirit "from glory to glory." The theological name for this experience is *sanctification*, the process by which we become more like the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the Father's goal for each of His children (Rom. 8:19; 1 John 3:2).

**Close in Prayer**

### **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, pp. 207-208). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

*His kingdom* (vv. 27–36). As far as the Gospel record is concerned, the Transfiguration was the only occasion during Christ's earthly ministry when He revealed the glory of His person. Luke did not use the word *transfigure* but he described the same scene (Matt. 17:2; Mark 9:2). The word means "a change in appearance that comes from within," and it gives us the English word *metamorphosis*.

What were the reasons behind this event? For one thing, it was God's seal of approval to Peter's confession of faith that Jesus is the Son of God (John 1:14). It was also the Father's way of encouraging the Son as He began to make His way to Jerusalem. The Father had spoken at the baptism (Luke 3:22) and would speak again during that final week of the Son's earthly ministry (John 12:23–28). Beyond the suffering of the cross would be the glory of the throne, a lesson that Peter emphasized in his first epistle (1 Peter 4:12–5:4).

Our Lord's own words in Luke 9:27 indicate that the event was a demonstration (or illustration) of the promised kingdom of God. This seems logical, for the disciples were confused about the kingdom because of Jesus' words about the cross. (We must not be too hard on them because the prophets were also confused—1 Peter 1:10–12.) Jesus was reassuring them that the Old Testament prophecies would be fulfilled, but first He had to suffer before He could enter into His glory (note especially 2 Peter 1:12–21).

But there is also a practical lesson here, for we can have a spiritual "transfiguration" experience each day as we walk with the Lord. Romans 12:1–2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18 tell us how. As we surrender body, mind, and will, the Lord transforms us from within so that we are not conformed to the world. As we behold Him in the Word (the mirror), we are "transfigured" by the Spirit "from glory to glory." The theological name for this experience is *sanctification*, the process by which we become more like the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the Father's goal for each of His children (Rom. 8:19; 1 John 3:2). Note that our Lord was once again praying, which suggests that prayer is one of the keys to a transformed life.

Peter, James, and John had accompanied Jesus when He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead (Luke 8:51ff), and they would accompany Him when He prayed in the Garden (Matt. 26:36–46). These three occasions remind me of Philipians 3:10, "That I may know Him [the Transfiguration], and the power of His resurrection [raising the girl], and the fellowship of His sufferings [in the Garden]."

This may well have been the greatest "Bible conference" ever held on earth! Even apart from the great glory that was involved, here you certainly had the greatest speakers: Moses, the Law; Elijah, the Prophets; and Jesus, who came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. You had the greatest topic: Jesus' "decease" (the Greek is *exodus*) that He would accomplish at Jerusalem. Moses had led Israel out of bondage to Egypt, and Elijah had delivered them from bondage to false gods; but Jesus would die to set a *sinful world* free from bondage to sin and death (Gal. 1:4; Col. 1:13; Heb. 2:14–15).

And while all of this was going on, the three privileged disciples were sleeping! (They would repeat this failure in the Garden.) Peter's suggestion reminds us of the Jewish "Feast of Booths" that in the Bible is related to the future kingdom (Lev. 23:33–44; Zech. 14:16–21). Peter wanted Jesus to hold on to the glory *apart from the suffering*, but this is not God's plan.

The Father interrupted Peter by bathing the scene in a cloud of glory (Ex. 13:21–22; 40:35, 38) and speaking out of the cloud. (Peter would one day be interrupted by the Son [Matt. 17:24–27] and by the Spirit [Acts 10:44].) These arresting words from heaven remind us of Deuteronomy 18:15; Psalm 2:7; and Isaiah 42:1. When the cloud was gone, Elijah and Moses were also gone.

As wonderful as these experiences are, they are not the basis for a consistent Christian life. That can come only through the Word of God. Experiences come and go, but the Word remains. Our recollection of past experiences will fade, but God’s Word never changes. The farther we get from these events, the less impact they make on our lives. That was why the Father said, “Hear Him!” and why Peter made this same emphasis on the Word in his report (2 Peter 1:12–21). Our own personal “transfiguration” comes from inner renewal (Rom. 12:1–2), and that comes from the Word (2 Cor. 3:18).

**Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 230-231)**

#### **5. JESUS’S TRANSFIGURATION BEFORE THREE DISCIPLES (9:28–36) (Matt. 17:1–8; Mk 9:2–8).**

9:28–31. **About eight days later Jesus ... took three of His apostles up onto a mountain to pray.** But Mark wrote that the event occurred after *six* days (Mark 9:2). The two accounts are not contradictory if one understands Mark as speaking of the intervening days and Luke as including the days of Jesus’ teaching as well as the day on which the transfiguration took place. The transfiguration may have occurred on Mount Hermon near Caesarea Philippi (cf. Mark 8:27), though some say it was Mount Tabor. At the transfiguration three events occurred:

1. Jesus’ **face and clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.** This would have immediately reminded those present of Moses’ face shining with a bright light when he received the tablets of the Law (Ex. 34:29–35).

2. **Moses and Elijah appeared** and spoke **with Jesus.** The bodies of Moses and Elijah were never found. God buried Moses’ body (Deut. 34:5–6), and Elijah did not die but was taken up to heaven (2 Kings 2:11–12, 15–18). These two men represent the beginning and the end of Israel, for Moses, as the Lawgiver, founded the nation, and Elijah is to come back before the great and terrible day of the Lord (Mal. 4:5–6).

3. Moses and Elijah **spoke about His departure** (*exodon*, “going out or away”) **which He was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.** “Departure” referred to Jesus’ leaving the world through which He would bring salvation—much as Yahweh had brought deliverance to Israel in its Exodus (departure) from Egypt. This departure was to be fulfilled in Jerusalem. From this point on, Jesus indicated several times that He was headed toward Jerusalem (Luke 9:51, 53; 13:33; 17:11; 18:31). Jesus did not want His miracles widely publicized at that time, for the fulfillment had to be at Jerusalem. This was confirmed by Elijah’s and Moses’ words.

9:32–33. Three disciples were with Jesus. This number is reminiscent of Moses’ three companions—Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu—who saw God (Ex. 24:9–11). **Peter, James, and John were very sleepy** at the beginning of the transfiguration. Later these three and the others fell asleep while Jesus was praying in the garden (Luke 22:45). As the disciples woke up, they were overwhelmed with the **glory** of the situation. They realized they were in a kingdom setting which triggered Peter’s idea that they build **three shelters.** Peter may have been thinking of the Feast of Booths, a feast of ingathering long associated with the coming kingdom (cf. Zech. 14:16–21). Peter seemed to have assumed that the kingdom had arrived.

Luke editorially inserted that Peter **did not know what he was saying**. The thought is not that Peter misunderstood the significance of the kingdom setting—he was correct in that. The problem was that he forgot Jesus’ prediction that He would suffer (Luke 9:23–24).

9:34–36. **While Peter was speaking, a cloud ... enveloped them.** Grammatically the word “them” could refer to the three disciples or to all six people (Jesus, Moses, Elijah, and the three disciples). But more likely it refers to Jesus and the heavenly visitors, with the disciples being those who **were afraid**. A **cloud** was often a symbol of God’s divine presence (Ex. 13:21–22; 40:38). Perhaps the disciples thought Jesus was being taken away from them, and they would never see Him again.

As was the case at Jesus’ baptism (Luke 3:22), so here a voice spoke to those witnessing the event: **This is My Son, whom I have chosen; listen to Him**. Those familiar with the Old Testament, as the disciples were, doubtless immediately recognized the reference (in the words “listen to Him”) to Deuteronomy 18:15 with its messianic prediction of a Prophet greater than Moses. The people were to listen to (i.e., obey) the Prophet.

Suddenly **the disciples saw that Jesus was alone**. At that time they did not tell anyone **what they had seen**. The experience at the transfiguration fulfilled Jesus’ prediction (Luke 9:27). Three of the disciples did see a manifestation of the kingdom of God before they died (cf. 2 Peter 1:16–19).

**Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (p. 1531). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.**

**9:28–36** The historicity of the transfiguration is doubted by some because of its supernatural elements. It is often thought to be a post-resurrection story read back into the life of Jesus. But the story bears no real resemblance to other resurrection appearances (Moses, Elijah, and the glory of Jesus do not appear in any resurrection story). And reference to it in 2 Pt 1:16–18 indicates that the transfiguration was always seen as occurring before Jesus’ passion and not after.

**Stein, R. H. (1992). *Luke* (Vol. 24, pp. 282-287). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.**

## **Context**

In Luke as in the parallel accounts in Matthew and Mark, the transfiguration follows Peter’s confession (9:18–21), Jesus’ passion prediction (9:22), and the sayings on discipleship (9:23–27). The temporal designation that introduces the transfiguration account (9:28; Mark 9:2; Matt 17:1) probably is traditional, indicating that these accounts were already associated in the oral period. The imagery draws heavily from the OT, in particular from the theophany to Moses on Mount Sinai in Exodus. Some of the OT images that parallel Luke’s account are a mountain on which revelation takes place (Exod 19:3; 24:15; cf. also 1 Kgs 19:7–18), the alteration of Jesus’ face (Exod 34:29), the glory of the Lord (Exod 24:16), a cloud (Exod 24:16; 33:10); lightninglike appearance (Dan 10:6), and fear (Exod 34:30; Dan 10:7). Parallels between this account and Jesus’ baptism include the common voice from heaven, “You/This is my Son” (Luke 3:22; 9:35); the use of *eidōs* to refer to “bodily form” (3:22) and “appearance of his face” (9:29); and the reference to Jesus’ praying (3:21; 9:28–29).

The differences between Luke and the other accounts may be due to his use of a special source, but they are more probably due to his own editorial work in that most of the differences express Lukan theological motifs. The oral traditions of this incident with which Luke was familiar may have influenced him as well. Some of the more evident differences are: “about eight days” (9:28) instead of “after six days” (Mark 9:2); the addition of references to Jesus’ praying in Luke 9:28–29; the omission of Jesus’ “transfiguration” (Mark 9:2); the reference to Jesus’ “glory” (Luke 9:32); the explanation of the disciples’ foolish comment as due to their being “very sleepy” (9:32); the change of “Rabbi” (Mark 9:5) to “Master” (Luke 9:33); and reference to Jesus as God’s “chosen” (9:35).

The historicity of this account is often denied. If one’s world view does not allow for the supernatural, then naturalistic or mythical explanations must be found. Some have sought to explain the incident as a vision (cf. Matt 17:9), but *horama* can also be used to describe historical events (Deut 28:34, 67, LXX). All three Gospel writers, as well as 2 Pet 1:16–18, however, understand this to be a real event. There is also no evidence that this account was originally a resurrection experience read back into the life of the historical Jesus because “Rabbi” and even “Master” are not completely adequate forms of address for the risen Lord. Furthermore, the error of placing Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah (“let us put up three shelters”) is most unlikely after the resurrection.

If one accepts the historicity of this account, the question of what actually happened still must be raised. There are three main explanations. (1) The preexistent glory of the preincarnate Son temporarily broke through the limitations of his humanity (cf. Phil 2:6–9; John 1:14b). (2) A glimpse of the future glory of the risen Christ is given to the disciples. Even as the first passion prediction (Luke 9:22) does not end in an announcement of death but in the promise of resurrection, so the discussion of Jesus’ departure is followed by a glimpse of the glory awaiting him at the resurrection (24:26; cf. also Heb 2:9; 1 Pet 1:21). (3) A glimpse of the glory of the Son of Man at the time of the parousia is given to the disciples. In support of the last explanation is the fact that the glory of the Son of Man at his parousia has just been mentioned (Luke 9:26; cf. also 21:27, where Luke referred to “cloud,” as in 9:34–35, rather than “clouds” as found in Mark and Matthew). Also 2 Pet 1:16–18 clearly understands it in this manner. Although the last explanation is the primary understanding of the event for Luke, elements of the second may also be present.

## Comments

**9:28 About eight days.** There is no totally convincing explanation of why Luke changed this temporal designation. It has been suggested that he may have sought to translate the Jewish week (“after six days”) into a Hellenistic reckoning of an eight-day week. Others have sought to explain this as a reference to the eighth day in the Feast of Tabernacles/Booths in Lev 23:36 (cf. Luke 9:33). The use of “about” eliminates any idea of chronological discrepancy. The chronological tie to the preceding event indicates that one should interpret what is happening in the transfiguration account in light of Peter’s confession.

**After Jesus said this.** By this addition (literally *after these words*) Luke tied this account even more closely to the preceding one.

**He took Peter, John and James.** See comments on 8:51.

**And went up onto a mountain.** Speculation about which mountain (Mount Tabor, Hermon, or Carmel) was of no interest to the Evangelists. For them it was not where this happened that was most important but what happened. Luke was even less interested than the other Evangelists

in the geographical designation. This is evident by his dropping of the term “high” (cf. Mark 9:2; Matt 17:1), even as he dropped the designation Caesarea Philippi from the preceding account. This may be due to his desire not to place Jesus outside of Galilee and in Gentile territory (Caesarea Philippi; “high” mountain, perhaps designating Mount Hermon on the border with Lebanon).

**To pray.** It has frequently been noted that this is a strong emphasis in Luke. See comments on 6:12. Luke added this statement of Jesus’ purpose in going to the mountain. Did Luke have special information about Jesus on this occasion? Or did he know that Jesus’ life was so characterized by prayer that his desire to be “alone” (Mark 9:2) would naturally mean “alone to pray”?

**9:29 As he was praying.** This second reference to Jesus’ praying adds even more emphasis to this theme.

At this point Luke omitted the reference to Jesus’ being “transfigured” (Mark 9:2; Matt 17:2) or “metamorphosed.” Luke may have done this to avoid any similarity with pagan religious myths. (Cf. Acts 14:11, “The gods have come down to us in human form!”)

**The appearance of his face changed.** The transfiguration was not from the outside in but from the inside out. Jesus’ “person” was transfigured before his clothing. Both Matthew and Luke referred to Jesus’ face shining “like the sun” (Matt 17:2). It is difficult not to see in this some allusion to Exod 34:29–35 (cf. also 2 Cor 3:7–13). Moses’ glory, however, came from the outside.

**His clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.** Compare Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10 (cf. also Luke 17:24). This description shows the heavenly character of the event and may be understood by Luke as a foreshadowing of the glory of the Son of Man when he returns (cf. 17:24).

**9:30 Two men, Moses and Elijah.** Luke placed the two men in chronological order in contrast to Mark 9:4. Do these men represent (1) the law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah)—cf. Luke 16:29, 31; 24:27; (2) heavenly figures who were expected to return at the end time; or (3) two OT prophetic figures who had not experienced death? The first possibility seems best. The reference to “two men” ties together the transfiguration, resurrection (24:4), and ascension (Acts 1:10). The presence of Moses and Elijah refutes the incorrect guesses about Jesus’ identity given in Luke 9:8, 19.

**9:31 In glorious splendor.** By this addition Luke emphasized that Moses and Elijah brought them the glorious splendor that came from their presence with God.

**They spoke about his departure.** The term “departure” is *exodos*. This can refer to (1) Jesus’ death. This interpretation is supported by the following statement “which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem” (cf. 13:33; 2 Pet 1:15; cf. also Wis 3:2; 7:6). (2) His death and resurrection. This is supported by the passion prediction in Luke 9:22, which mentions both Jesus’ death and resurrection. (3) His death, resurrection, and ascension. Luke 9:51 and perhaps also 24:26 favor this, although the latter may also be understood in light of the second interpretation. It seems probable that the most inclusive interpretation (3) is the correct one. Moses and Elijah did not “inform” Jesus of the details of his “exodus,” for by 9:22 he already knew them. They were present rather to illustrate Jesus’ fulfillment of the divine plan in the OT, i.e., he fulfilled the law and the prophets. This verse prepares the reader for 9:51f. There may be present a chiasm in 9:30–31 in which *A* = Moses; *B* = Elijah; *b* = glorious splendor; *a* = departure [*exodos*].

**Bring to fulfillment.** This can refer to the fulfillment of the OT (cf. 24:25–27, 44) or the fulfillment of what God has ordained. The latter, which includes the former, is more comprehensive and fits better the thought of 13:33 (cf. also Acts 12:25; 13:25, 27).

**At Jerusalem.** Luke purposefully mentioned Jerusalem, for it was in this city that the redemptive acts of salvation history took place. These acts included the announcement in the temple to Zechariah (Luke 1:5–23); the dedication of Jesus (2:22–38); the yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem (2:41); Jesus’ final journey to Jerusalem (9:51f.); the crucifixion, resurrection, post-resurrection appearances, ascension, and the coming of the Spirit. Jerusalem also would be significant as the center of world evangelism and the site of the Jerusalem Council.

**9:32 Were very sleepy.** Compare Mark 14:40. Only in Luke do we find this explanation of Peter’s unconsidered offer to build three shelters. Luke sought to explain the disciples’ sleeping at Gethsemane as having been due to their being “exhausted from sorrow” (Luke 22:45), and in 9:22–23 he omitted Mark 8:32–33. Luke clearly painted a sympathetic portrait of the disciples.

**They saw his glory.** That is, they saw Jesus transfigured. Compare also Luke 9:26.

**And the two men standing with him.** This should not be interpreted as the fulfillment of 9:27 because the men standing were not the disciples of 9:27 but Moses and Elijah.

**9:33 As the men were leaving Jesus.** This refers to Moses and Elijah, not the three disciples. Only Luke recorded the departure of Moses and Elijah.

**Master.** See comments on 5:5.

**It is good for us to be here.** Peter’s appreciation was for the opportunity to share in this experience, not for being able to serve Jesus and build shelters.

**Let us put up three shelters.** Such huts were constructed at the festival of tabernacles/booths (cf. Lev 23:33–43; Exod 23:16; 34:22; Deut 16:13–16). In Luke 16:9 the same Greek term is used in referring to the final state of the righteous as “eternal dwellings.”

**He did not know what he was saying.** Luke explained this in the previous verse by stating that Peter’s offer was due to his being sleepy. Clearly Peter’s suggestion was out of order. But what exactly was wrong with it? Was Peter wrong for suggesting that this experience should be prolonged? The previous statement about Moses and Elijah leaving gives some support to this view. A better explanation, however, is that Peter erred in equating Jesus with Moses and Elijah. They were not equals. The Voice from heaven explains Peter’s error. In contrast to Moses and Elijah, who were God’s servants, Jesus is God’s Son, the Chosen One. He is unique. He cannot be classed with anyone else, even two of God’s greatest servants. He is not only greater but other. It is hard not to see in the Voice from heaven at least a hint of an ontological Christology in which Jesus’ essential nature is sharply distinguished from that of Moses and Elijah.

**9:34 A cloud appeared.** The divine presence comes upon the scene in the form of a cloud, a common symbol of the presence of God. Clouds are also a means of taking people up to heaven (Acts 1:9; 1 Thess 4:17; Rev 11:12) and are associated with the parousia (Mark 13:26; Matt 24:30). In Luke 21:27 Luke used the singular “cloud” rather than the plural found in Mark 13:26 and Matt 24:30, tying the parousia more closely to the transfiguration. He also used the singular “cloud” in Acts 1:9.

**And enveloped them.** Compare Exod 24:15–18; 40:34–38. “Them” most probably refers to Jesus, Moses and Elijah, and the disciples.

**And they were afraid as they entered the cloud.** Both “theys” refer to the disciples and are an appropriate response to a theophany. See comments on 5:10.

**9:35 A voice came.** See comments on 3:22 and cf. 2 Pet 1:18.



**This is my Son.** Whereas these words were spoken to Jesus at the baptism (Luke 3:22), here they are addressed to the disciples. This title is also found in the temptation (4:3, 9) and trial (22:70). See comments on 3:22.

**Whom I have chosen.** This is the only place where this title is used in the NT, although a related term is found in 23:35 (cf. also John 1:34, which is textually questionable, and 1 Pet 2:4, 6). It is used in the LXX of Aaron (Ps 105:26), the Suffering Servant (Isa 42:1; 44:1f.; 49:7), Moses (Ps 106:23), and David (Ps 88:20–21, LXX).

**Listen to him.** In Mark this refers back to Peter's refusal to accept Jesus' teaching concerning his death (cf. Mark 9:7 and 8:32–33), for Jesus had not spoken anything in the account itself. The "after Jesus said this" of Luke 9:28 reveals that Luke wanted to tie this injunction more broadly to the need to obey Jesus' teachings/commands on discipleship in general. The Voice affirmed Jesus' teachings, especially those in 9:22–27. Theophilus and the other readers needed to realize that the words of the Son of God have even greater authority than those of Moses and Elijah and therefore need to be heeded all the more.

**9:36 Jesus was alone.** The account centers on Jesus, not on Moses and Elijah and not even on Moses, Elijah, and Jesus. The law and the prophets pointed to Jesus. He is the essence and the heart of God's revelation. Anything that detracts from Jesus "alone," such as Peter's suggestion in 9:33, loses sight of the fact that believers in the early church were called "Christians" (Acts 11:26) because Jesus "alone" was the ground of their faith. Therefore, when anyone seeks to add something, making the Christian faith "Jesus +," a basic misunderstanding of the Christian faith has occurred.

**The disciples kept this to themselves.** Luke did not refer to Jesus' command (Mark 9:9) but only to its observance. Compare Luke 9:21.

**At that time.** This contrasts the situation of Jesus' day with that in Luke's day. Luke clearly viewed his situation as different from "that time."

**What they had seen.** The verb is an intensive perfect, which indicates that this scene produced lasting effects on the disciples.

## The Lukan Message

Once again we come across an account that reveals several Lukan theological emphases. As in Matthew and Mark, the account serves a clear Christological purpose. The answer to the question of "Who is this?" in Luke 8:25 and 9:9, which was answered by Peter's confession on behalf of the disciples in 9:20, is now confirmed by God himself. The heavenly confession addressed to Jesus at the baptism (3:22) was now shared with the disciples. Jesus is indeed the Christ, God's Chosen. He is not just Moses or Elijah risen from the dead. He is God's Son.

While Luke was not reporting this confession in order to affirm the later Christological understanding of Nicea, it is clear that he wanted his readers to know that Jesus is unique. No one is like him. He does not fit any human category available.

A second major Lukan theme involves the understanding of Jesus' death. Jesus' forthcoming death in Jerusalem was not a tragedy or mistake. It was an *exodos* known beforehand by the OT prophets (9:31). It was furthermore an event that would be a "fulfillment" of the divine plan. The divine "must" (*dei*) of which Jesus had just spoken (9:22) was now affirmed by the prophets (9:31) and by the Voice from heaven (9:35). (The latter is not as emphatic in Luke as it is in Mark, but one cannot eliminate from the command to heed Jesus' words what Jesus had just taught the disciples in 9:22.) See Introduction 8 (1).

Another Lukan theological emphasis also merits attention. Luke probably wanted his readers to see a partial fulfillment of 9:27 in Jesus' transfiguration. This is seen in the twofold reference to glory found in 9:31–32. The glory of the returning Son of Man (9:26) is in part foreshadowed in the transfiguration as the three disciples “saw his glory” (9:32). This understanding is supported by the use of the term “bright as a flash of lightning” (*exastraptō*) in 9:29 and the use of a related term to describe the returning of the Son of Man (*astrapto*) in 17:24.

**The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Lk 9:28-36). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.**

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