

Systematic Bible Study of the Book of Luke

Luke Chapter 9 verses 18 - 27; Key verse: Who do you say that I am?

Summary of Luke 9:1-27

Jesus gave his disciples the power over all devils and to cure diseases. The disciples then put the power into action by going through the towns preaching the gospel and healing. Herod heard about Jesus. He thought Jesus was John risen from the dead. Herod desired to see him. The disciples returned and they went to a desert place near Bethsaida. The people found out and followed to hear Jesus speak and heal. Jesus then fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes. Later he told the disciples that the Son of man must suffer, be slain, and rise on the third day. ***The challenge today is about following Jesus.*** To follow him, a man must take up his cross daily. Any life without Christ is in crisis. ***Jesus told his disciples that the Son of man has not come to destroy, but to save. Follow me. No man is fit for the kingdom of God if they look back.*** This study is divided into 4 sub headings namely:

1. Prayer in the ministry of Jesus
2. Our Lord's question and Peter's confession
3. Our Lord's advance warning of His death and His resurrection
4. Discipleship

1. PRAYER IN THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

Lk 9:18; Isa 55:6; Mt 7:7; Php 4:6 Lk 11:1; 22:39-41; Mt 26:36

And it came to pass, as he was alone praying ---Luke 9:18

Luke documented in his gospel several instances where our Lord Jesus prayed. This should serve as a lesson to us that we can never pray too much. At the beginning of His earthly ministry He prayed (Luke 3:21). He often withdrew himself from the crowd to pray (Luke 5:16). Before He chose His disciples, he prayed all night (Luke 6:12). Towards the end of His life on earth He prayed for Peter that his faith might not fail (Luke 22:32). It was when Jesus had finished praying that a disciple came forward and asked Him to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1). Jesus prayed giving thanks by looking up to heaven before He fed the five thousand people (Luke 9:16). In 8 days time He will take His disciples Peter, James and John to the mountain to pray (Luke 9:28).

He definitely was God and never ceased to be God, had much public work to do and yet he found some time to be alone in private, to commune with his Father, and with his disciples in prayer. He functioned in this earth as 'man' as such He had to pray. He prayed to his God and Father, for himself as man, and mediator for no one can come to the father except through Him. He prayed for the success of His Gospel, and for His disciples, that they might have a clearer revelation of him. Prayer is the life wire of a Christian. A prayer-less Christian is a powerless Christian. We are commanded to pray in and out of season. ***Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, ask it shall be given you, seek and you shall find and knock and the door shall be opened unto you, be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known unto God.***

2. OUR LORD'S QUESTION AND PETER'S CONFESSION

Lk 22:67; Mt 16:16; 26:63; Mr 8:29; 14:61; Jo 1:41; 4:29; 6:69 Jo 7:41; 11:27; 20:31; Ac 8:37; 9:22; 17:3; 1Jo 5:1

Luke 9:18-20

..... Whom say the people that I ambut whom say you that I am?

The answer to this question held consequences of great importance. Notice that the Lord was praying when He put this question to His disciples. This place he now retired for private devotion was somewhere in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi; for he was now gone from the desert of Bethsaida, as appears from (Matthew 16:13, Mark 8:27) and when he is said to be alone, the meaning is, that he was retired from the multitude, but

not from his disciples; for we are told that while *his disciples were with him*, in this solitary place *'he asked them saying, Whom say the people that I am?'*

It is not as if Christ was ignorant, nor did Christ want to bask in vain glory by enquiring after the opinion of the multitude; but his intention and design was to settle and more firmly establish his disciples in the belief of his being the true and promised Messiah. It is about knowing Jesus personally. It is about our personal identification with Him on the cross. He delivered us from the powers of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His father. Jesus paid it all....all to Him we owe, sin has made a crimson stain...He washed us as white as snow. It is a mission accomplished. He is the Messiah and the soon coming king. Whom do you say He is.

They answering said, John the Baptist representing the opinion of some who thought that he was risen from the dead, as in Luke 9:7. *But some say Elias*; the prophet, the Tishbite; who according to the Jewish notion, was to be the forerunner of the Messiah as in Luke 7:8. *And others say: that one of the old prophets is risen again*; thus were they divided in their sentiments about him. The bible does not teach reincarnation neither does it support transmigration of the spirit of the dead to another. It is noteworthy that the Jews of today still regard Jesus as their brother (not as Messiah) and the Moslems regard Him as a prophet while the Hindus regard Him an advanced soul (a mystic) but they can be excused because they don't know Him! His disciples regarded Him as the master of masters, and a mystery over and above but now He wants them to make a life changing discovery of Him and *He said unto them (disciples); but whom say ye that I am.*

This question was the main reason for this private conference. *Peter answering said, the Christ of God*; "Christ God"; the Messiah, the Son of God, and God over all, blessed for ever "the Christ, the Son of God". Christ is actually a title and means 'the anointed' meaning Messiah. Let's take a moment and reflect on this. **Who is Jesus to you?** Do you have a personal relationship with Him? What do you say to Him when you wake up in the morning and when you retire to bed at night.

3. OUR LORD'S ADVANCE WARNING ABOUT HIS DEATH AND RESSURECTION

Lk 9:21,22; Mt 16:20; Mt 17:9; Mk 8:30,31; 9:31; 10:33,34; Lk 9:44; 18:31-34; 24:7,26; Ge 3:15; Ps 22:1-31; 69:1-36; Isa 53:1-12 Dan 9:26; Zec 13:7; Mt 16:21; 17:12,22; Ac 4:25-28; 13:27-29; 1Co 15:4; 1Pe 1:11

Consequent upon Peter's confession 'Jesus strictly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing'

Why? Though he highly approved of Peter's confession and pronounced Peter blessed upon it; and signified that it was a discovery which flesh and blood could not make, yet He gave them a strict charge, and laid his commands on them *to tell no man that thing* i.e. that he was the Messiah. It is also possible that the instruction was given to avoid the jealousy of the Romans who might fear He would set Himself up against Caesar as the king of the Jews who at that time expected that the Messiah would be a temporal prince. The religious leaders of Israel who made up the grand Sanhedrim of the nation rejected Jesus as the Messiah and for the disciples to herald it far and wide that He was the Messiah would have aggravated a tense relationship between Him and the Pharisees and the Scribes who have rejected the truth. The fact that men reject the truth does not mean that it is no longer the truth. As long as the truth is of the scriptures we might do well to heed the warning of Gamaliel to the Jews 'take heed to yourselves what you do to these men for if this counsel be of God you cannot overthrow it lest haply you be found even to fight against God' Acts 5:35-39. The Sanhedrim were the builders of whom it was foretold that they should reject the head stone of the corner, (Psalms 118:22).

'The son of man must suffer....and be slain and be raised the third day'. This refers to the crucifixion of Christ for which the religious leaders of Israel would be guilty of. Even though the religious leaders would precipitate His death, it is not in doubt that going to the cross was the reason God became man. This is the only way the seed of the woman would bruise the head of Satan and address the issue of sin once and for all.

4. DISCIPLESHIP

Lk 9:23-27;14:26,27; Mt 10:38; 16:22-25; Mk 8:34-38; Jo 12:25,26; Ro 8:13; Col 3:5; 2Ti 3:12; Lk 17:33; Ac 20:23,24; Heb 11:35; Rev 2:10; 12:11.

‘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

The cross is here pictured as a figure of speech taken for the miseries of this life because to be hanged on the cross was the most grievous and cruel punishment that there was amongst the Jews. But our own daily cross is a joyful one because the old rugged cross where our Saviour bled and died has paid the way for our light afflictions to follow. On that old rugged cross Jesus was punished that we might be forgiven (Isaiah 53:4-5), wounded that we might be healed (Isaiah 53:4-5), made sin with our sinfulness that we might be made righteous with His righteousness (Isaiah 53:10; 2Corinthians 5:21), died our death that we might receive His life (Hebrews 2:9), made a curse that we might enter into His blessing (Galatians 3:13:14), endured our poverty that we might share His abundance (2Corinthians 8:9; 9:8), bore our shame that we might share His glory (Matthew 27:35-36; Hebrews 12:2; 2:9), endured our rejection that we might have His acceptance with the father (Matthew 27:46-51; Ephesians 1:5-6), was cut off by death that we might be joined to God eternally (Isaiah 53:8; 1Corinthians:6:17) and our old man was put to death in Him that the new man might come to life in us (Romans 6:6; Colossians 3:9-10). In our daily cross we are troubled on every side, yet not distressed, perplexed but not in despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body (2Corinthians 4:10). We follow Him through absolute surrender! We must trust and obey for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus!

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it’ For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? 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. Luke 9:24-26

William Burkitt commenting on these verses stated that ‘our Saviour goes on to show the folly of those that for saving their temporal lives will expose their eternal life, or the life of their souls, to hazard and danger; yea, sometimes by refusing to lay down our temporal life for Christ, we lose them also; which renders it the greatest folly in the world to refuse to part with any enjoyment, even life itself, at the call and command of Christ (see William Burkitt on notes on New Test. Luke 9). ‘Earthly goods may repair earthly losses, but they cannot repair any breach that may be made in the peace or holiness of the soul (Adam Clark).

Whoever is desirous of preserving himself from troubles, reproaches, persecutions, and death; and takes such a method to do it, as by forsaking Christ, denying his Gospel, and dropping his profession of it; and by so doing, curries favour with men, in order to procure to himself worldly emoluments, honour, peace, pleasure, and life ***shall lose it***; he will expose himself to the wrath of God, to everlasting punishment, the destruction of soul and body in hell, which is the second death, and will be his portion.

The history of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus imparts a new confidence in us His followers especially as we look at the life and death of the early church leaders. In Foxes Book of Martyrs John Fox chronicles the deaths of the early church leaders.

Stephen was stoned to death, James the Great was beheaded by Herod, Philip was scourged, thrown into prison and afterwards crucified, Matthew was slain with a halberd in the city of Nadabah in Ethiopia AD 60, James the Less at the age of 94 was beaten with a fuller’s club and stoned until his brains dashed out, Mathias was stoned at Jerusalem and then beheaded, Andrew was crucified on a cross, the two ends of which were fixed transversely in the ground, hence St Andrews cross, Mark was dragged to pieces by the people of Alexandria, Peter was crucified with his head being down and his feet upward, Paul was beheaded, Jude was crucified, Bartholomew was at length cruelly beaten and then crucified by idolaters, Thomas called Didymus was killed by being thrust through with a spear, Luke the evangelist was hanged on an olive tree, Simon the zealot was crucified in Britain in AD 74. They gave their lives willingly. John the beloved disciple was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil. He escaped by miracle without injury but Domitian banished him to the Isle of Patmos where he wrote the book of Revelation. Nerva, the successor to Domitian recalled him back to Rome where he died a natural death.

In spite of all these persecutions and horrible deaths of Christians under emperor Nero, the church daily increased being rooted in the doctrine of the apostles and watered with the blood of saints. Even in the face of death they were not ashamed of Jesus *for whosoever shall be ashamed of me of him shall the son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory.*

Verily I say unto you; there be some standing here; which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom;

Some refer the words to the times of the gospel after Christ's resurrection and ascension, when the gospel was propagated far and near, and the kingdom of God came with power. This implies that where the gospel is powerfully preached, and cheerfully obeyed, there Christ comes most gloriously in his kingdom.

Some bible scholars understand these words of Christ's coming and exercising his kingly power in the destruction of Jerusalem, which some of the apostles then standing by lived to see. Others (as most agreeable to the context) understand the words with reference to our Saviour's transfiguration; as if he had said, "Some of you, (meaning Peter, James, and John,) shall shortly see me upon Mount Tabor, and that in such splendour and glory, as shall be a shadow and representation, of that glory which Christ shall appear in, when He shall come with power to judge the world at the great day." Whereas our Saviour said not, there are some standing here which shall not die, but *which shall not taste of death*, until they have seen this glorious sight; this may have two applications; That after they had seen this transfiguration, they must taste of death as well as others and that they should but taste of it, and no more.

Most renowned servants of Christ, for faith, holiness, and service, must at length, in God's appointed time, taste and have experience of death, as well as others. To die is not the issue but the main issue is how well we died. Are we yet dead to the world around us? Are we dead to our personal opinion and self ego? Dying in Christ means dying well. Although we must taste of death; we shall not drink of the dregs of that bitter cup; though we fall by the hand of death, yet shall we not be hurt by it, because we are more than conquerors. Death has lost its sting and we are to set our hands on the plough without looking back. Some say that you don't put all your eggs in one basket but the kingdom of God is the only safe place you can put all your eggs in one basket and they will all be safe.