SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

Luke

Chapter Nine, Verses 1–62

The Christ of God and the Road to the Cross — twelve men sent out, five loaves in a desolate place, glory on a mountain, and a face set toward Jerusalem

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

Jesus sends the Twelve out with His authority, feeds five thousand from a boy's supper, hears Peter confess Him as the Christ of God, and is transfigured in glory — then turns His face toward Jerusalem and tells every would-be follower what it will cost. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind Luke's key words.

THE PASSAGE

Luke 9:1–62

sent · fed · confessed · glorified · set toward Jerusalem

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

Contents

Six movements from the mission of the Twelve to the plow that does not look back

—	**How to Read This Study** · *the four voices & their colors*	3
—	**Before the Passage** · *from Galilee's villages to the road south*	3
I	**Sent with His Authority** · *Luke 9:1–9 · the Twelve sent out*	5
II	**You Give Them Something to Eat** · *Luke 9:10–17 · the five thousand fed*	6
III	**The Christ of God — and a Cross** · *Luke 9:18–27 · Peter's confession*	7
IV	**His Departure at Jerusalem** · *Luke 9:28–36 · the transfiguration*	9
V	**Down in the Valley** · *Luke 9:37–50 · the boy and the child*	11
VI	**He Set His Face** · *Luke 9:51–62 · the road to Jerusalem*	13
VII	**The Passage in the Whole Bible** · *cross-references*	15
†	**At a Glance** · *the four voices side by side*	17
†	**Key Insights & Questions for the Table** · *discussion*	17
†	**Sources** · *where each voice comes from*	19

"But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God." — Luke 9:20

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

Luke 9:1–62

The Christ of God and the Road to the Cross — Peter names Him the Christ of God — and Jesus names the cross, for Himself and for everyone who follows

† How to Read This Study

This study walks Luke 9 in 6 movements, in Luke's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where Luke is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle — MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · LUKE 9:23

"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

† Before the Passage

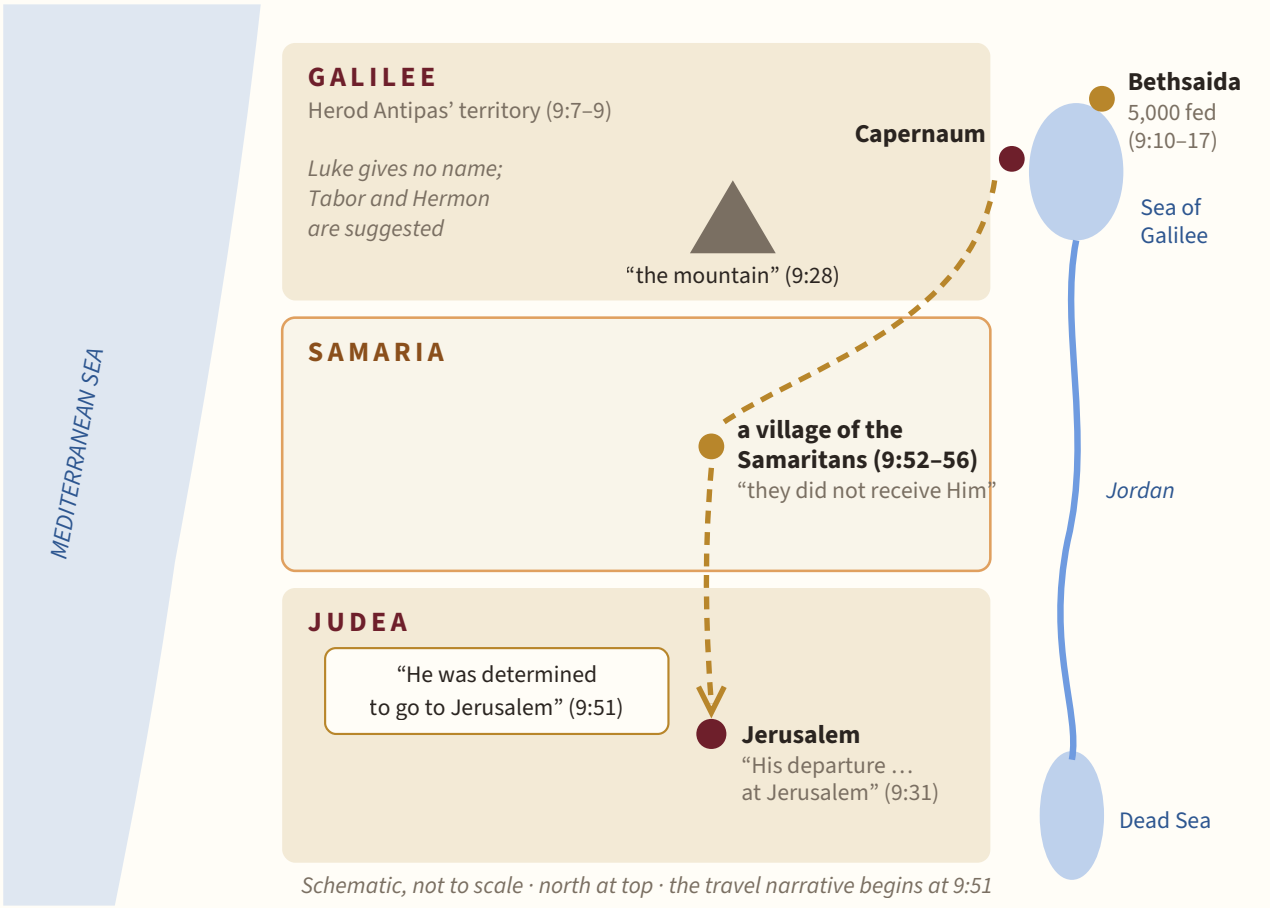
Luke 8 showed Jesus' authority over a storm, a legion of demons, a twelve-year illness and death itself, and it ended with Jairus' daughter raised. Chapter 9 now hands some of that authority to others: "He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority" (v. 1). The Twelve had been chosen in 6:13 and have been watching and listening since; now they go out to do what they have seen Him do. Sproul calls it the moment they moved from learners to apostles — men sent with His authority.

The question that runs through the whole chapter is Herod's: "who is this man about whom I hear such things?" (v. 9). The crowds guess John, Elijah, one of the old prophets (vv. 7–8, 19). Peter answers, "The Christ of God" (v. 20). The Father answers from the cloud, "This is My Son, My Chosen One" (v. 35). Herod Antipas — son of Herod the Great, ruler of Galilee and Perea — had John beheaded (v. 9; see 3:19–20); Luke tells us he "kept trying to see Him," and he will finally get his wish in 23:8–11.

Luke 9 is also a hinge in Luke's Gospel. Verses 1–50 close the Galilean ministry; verse 51 opens the long journey to Jerusalem that fills chapters 9–19: "When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem." Luke leaves out the walk north to Caesarea Philippi that Matthew and Mark record, and he places Peter's confession right after the feeding, so that the bread and the confession sit side by side.

The Old Testament stands close behind the chapter. Moses fed Israel in the wilderness and spoke of a coming Prophet: "you shall listen to him" (Deuteronomy 18:15). Elijah called down fire (2 Kings 1:10) and called Elisha from his plow (1 Kings 19:19–21). Both men appear on the mountain, and both stories are echoed — and surpassed — before the chapter ends.

FIGURE · FROM GALILEE TOWARD JERUSALEM



Schematic, not to scale · north at top · the travel narrative begins at 9:51

Luke 9 begins in Herod's Galilee and ends on the road south: the feeding near Bethsaida, an unnamed mountain, a Samaritan village that would not receive Him, and Jerusalem, where His departure waits.

I
MOVEMENT

LUKE 9:1–9

Sent with His Authority

Power over demons, nothing for the journey, and a guilty king asking questions

1 *And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal*
diseases. 2 *And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing.* 3 *And He said to*
them, "Take nothing for your journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not even have
two tunics apiece. 4 *"Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that city.* 5 *"And as for those who do*
not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them."
6 *Departing, they began going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.* 7 *Now*
Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was happening; and he was greatly perplexed, because it was said by some
that John had risen from the dead, 8 *and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets*
of old had risen again. 9 *Herod said, "I myself had John beheaded; but who is this man about whom I hear*
such things?" And he kept trying to see Him.

LUKE 9:1–9

δύναμις καὶ ἐξουσία

DYNAMIS KAI EXOUSIA · "POWER AND AUTHORITY" · G1411, G1849

Luke pairs two words. *Dynamis* is ability, might — the root of our "dynamite" — and Luke uses it of the power that went out of Jesus to heal (5:17; 6:19; 8:46). *Exousia* is delegated right, the authority to act in someone else's name. The Twelve receive both, and neither is their own: Sproul, "The Twelve had no power in and of themselves." A man sent with a king's seal can do what the king can do, as long as he goes where the king sends him.

ἀποκεφαλίζω

APOKEPHALIZŌ · "BEHEAD" · G607

Herod's blunt word in verse 9: "I myself had John beheaded" (*apekephalisa*, "I beheaded"). The "I myself" (*egō*) is emphatic. The verb appears only four times in the New Testament, every time of John the Baptist (Matthew 14:10; Mark 6:16, 27; Luke 9:9). Luke never tells the story of the banquet; he lets the murderer confess it in one word and then ask, "but who is this man?"

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that Jesus gave the Twelve "power and authority" and then sent them out with almost nothing — no staff, bag, bread, money or spare tunic — so that they would learn to trust God for provision as they went. They obeyed: they went through the towns "preaching the gospel and healing everywhere." On Herod he is direct: "There is no indication that Herod (Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great) was a man of sincere spiritual interest." His conscience was troubled over John, and his curiosity was not faith: "Herod wanted to see Jesus, but not as a sincere seeker."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Sending of the Twelve" (7 April 2013) calls verses 1–6 a turning point: the disciples become apostles, men sent with Christ's authority. "The Twelve had no power in and of themselves." To reject them is to reject the One who sent them — "You cannot have the Father and not have the Son." The shaken-off dust was a solemn testimony, and he presses it: "You cannot hear the gospel and be neutral to it." In "Haunted By Guilt" on verses 7–9 he pictures Herod lying awake — "He saw the ghost of John the Baptist when he went to bed at night" — and says, "The only cure for guilt is forgiveness, but it is usually the last resort we seek."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry reads the commission as an attack on Satan's realm: "Christ designed a total rout and ruin to the kingdom of darkness, and therefore gave them power over all devils." The Twelve were to preach the kingdom and heal, go light, and live on the hospitality of those who received them. Herod, hearing of it all, was troubled by the reports and wanted to see Jesus — but Henry doubts the motive, for Herod "had enough of John Baptist, and cared not for having to do with any more such reprovers of sin." His perplexity is the common lot of the guilty: "Those who oppose God will find themselves more and more embarrassed."

II
MOVEMENT

LUKE 9:10–17

You Give Them Something to Eat

Five loaves, two fish, five thousand men, and twelve baskets left over

10 *When the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done. Taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself to a city called Bethsaida.* 11 *But the crowds were aware of this and followed Him; and welcoming them, He began speaking to them about the kingdom of God and curing those who had need of healing.* 12 *Now the day was ending, and the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the crowd away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside and find lodging and get something to eat; for here we are in a desolate place."* 13 *But He said to them, "You give them something to eat!" And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless perhaps we go and buy food for all these people."* 14 *(For there were about five thousand men.) And He said to His disciples, "Have them sit down to eat in groups of about fifty each."* 15 *They did so, and had them all sit down.* 16 *Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and broke them, and kept giving them to the disciples to set before the people.* 17 *And they all ate and were satisfied; and the broken pieces which they had left over were picked up, twelve baskets full.*

LUKE 9:10–17

εὐλογέω

EULOGEŌ · "BLESS" · G2127

Literally "to speak well of." Verse 16 gives four verbs in a row — He took, He blessed, He broke, He kept giving — nearly the same pattern Luke uses at the Last Supper (22:19, "given thanks") and at Emmaus, where the two disciples knew Him "in the breaking of the bread" (24:30, 35). Jesus looks "up to heaven" first; the multiplying starts with blessing God.

κόφινος
KOPHINOS · "BASKET" · G2894

A stout wicker basket, the kind a traveling Jew carried for food. Twelve of them came back full (v. 17) — one for each of the apostles who had said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish" (v. 13). The verb in verse 17, "were satisfied," is *chortazō*, to be filled to the full — the word of 6:21: "Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik follows Jesus teaching and healing the crowds in a desolate place as the day ends, and then turning the problem back to the Twelve. "To the disciples, this request must have sounded strange or even shocking." "With this statement, Jesus challenged both their faith and their compassion." He ordered the crowd into groups of fifty, blessed the little that was there, and "Jesus miraculously multiplied the loaves and fishes, until far more than 5,000 were fed", with twelve baskets left over.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Feeding of the Five Thousand" (12 May 2013) notes that all four Gospels record this miracle and asks the plain question: do we believe it, and what difference does it make? "Jesus did not debate with them" when the disciples counted the cost; He simply acted. Sproul walks through the nineteenth-century attempts to explain it away — myth, fraud, a lesson about sharing — and answers, "I have no interest in adoring, worshiping, praising, or working for a myth." If it happened, Jesus is God incarnate who cares for His people. "It makes all the difference in the world."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry follows the apostles back from their mission and the crowds after them, and notes that Jesus welcomed and healed those who came: "There is healing in Christ for all that need it, whether for soul or body." The disciples' five loaves and two fish teach a rule for every small supply: "Those that have but a little, let them do what they can with that little, and that is the way to make it more." The full baskets show the Lord's bounty, for "He replenishes every hungry soul, abundantly satisfies it with the goodness of his house."

III
MOVEMENT

LUKE 9:18–27

The Christ of God — and a Cross

"Who do you say that I am?" — a suffering Son of Man and a daily cross

18 *And it happened that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them,*
saying, "Who do the people say that I am?" 19 *They answered and said, "John the Baptist, and others say Elijah;*
but others, that one of the prophets of old has risen again." 20 *And He said to them, "But who do you say that I*
am?" And Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God." 21 *But He warned them and instructed them not to*
tell this to anyone, 22 *saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief*
priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day." 23 *And He was saying to them all, "If*
anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. 24 *"For*
whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.
25 *"For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?* 26 *"For whoever is*

> *ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.* 27 *"But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."*
>
> LUKE 9:18–27

> *"He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."*
>
> ISAIAH 53:3

δεῖ

DEI · "MUST" · G1163

"The Son of Man *must* suffer many things" (v. 22). *Dei* is the word of divine necessity, and Luke loves it: the boy Jesus "had to be" in His Father's house (2:49); "I must preach the kingdom" (4:43); and after the resurrection, "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things?" (24:26). Sproul: "It must happen." The cross is not an accident that overtook the Messiah; it is the plan He came to carry out.

ἀρνέομαι · καθ' ἡμέραν

ARNEOMAI · "DENY" · G720 · "DAILY"

To deny is to say "no" to someone, to disown. Peter will use the same verb of Jesus — "Woman, I do not know Him" (22:57). Here a disciple says that "no" to himself. Only Luke adds *kath' hēmeran*, "daily": the cross is not one dramatic decision but every morning's choice. Verse 24 turns on *psychē* (G5590), "life" or "soul" — the self a man tries to keep and so loses.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik hears Peter get the answer right — "The Christ of God" — and explains why Jesus still told them to keep quiet: the Twelve did not yet know what kind of Christ He was. "Before they could preach that Jesus was the Messiah, they had to learn what that meant." He is blunt about the cross: "Carrying a cross always led to death on a cross. No one carried a cross for fun." And "Jesus made deny himself equal with take up his cross. The two phrases expressed the same idea." But "The end isn't the cross; the end is the glory of God."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "Peter's Confession and Our Cross" (26 May 2013) warns that knowing who Jesus is is not enough — the demons know, and do not love Him. He speaks of his own unconverted years and of a friend who held the right belief and lived without faith, and he presses each hearer: "I do not know your souls, but you should." Of the cross: "You cannot follow Christ and yourself." The suffering of verse 22 was necessary — "It must happen." But the confession is also the greatest gift: "There is no greater blessing, dear friend, than to know the Son of God."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry notices that Jesus was praying with His disciples before He questioned them, and draws a lesson for every teacher: "Those we give instructions to we should put up prayers for and with." Peter confesses Him the Christ of God, and at once Jesus foretells His sufferings and calls His followers to deny themselves and take up the cross. Henry makes it a daily discipline: "We must accustom ourselves to all instances of self-denial and patience," and adds, "This is the best preparative for martyrdom." To gain the world and lose the soul is the worst bargain a man can make, and Christ will be ashamed of those who are ashamed of Him.

IV
MOVEMENT

LUKE 9:28–36

His Departure at Jerusalem

A face changed in prayer, Moses and Elijah, and a voice from the cloud

28 Some eight days after these sayings, He took along Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. 29 And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and △ His clothing became white and gleaming. 30 And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, 31 who, appearing in glory, were speaking of ◷ His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him. 33 And as these were leaving Him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—⚠ not realizing what he was saying. 34 While he was saying this, a cloud formed and began to overshadow them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 Then 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 reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen.

LUKE 9:28–36

"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him."

DEUTERONOMY 18:15

FIGURE · ON THE MOUNTAIN

ON THE MOUNTAIN · LUKE 9:28–36 · WHO WAS THERE, AND WHAT THEY TALKED ABOUT

MOSES	JESUS	ELIJAH
the Law	praying (v29)	the Prophets
met God on Sinai;	His face changed;	met God on Horeb
his face shone	clothing white	(1 Kings 19)
(Exod 34:29)	and gleaming	called down fire
led Israel's exodus	glory from within	(2 Kings 1)
died; the LORD	speaking of His	taken up to heaven
buried him (Deut 34)	"departure" (v31)	alive (2 Kings 2)

THE SUBJECT: "His departure" — Greek *exodos* — "about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (v31)
Peter wants to stay and build three tents (v33); the cloud comes, and only Jesus remains (v36).

"This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!" (v35)
Moses had said of the coming Prophet: "you shall listen to him" (Deut 18:15)

Read across: the Law and the Prophets stand beside Jesus and talk about His exodus at Jerusalem, and then the Father points to Jesus alone.

ἔξοδος

EXODOS · "DEPARTURE" · G1841

Moses and Elijah were "speaking of His departure" (v. 31) — literally His *exodos*, His "way out." Only three New Testament uses: here; Hebrews 11:22, where Joseph "made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel"; and 2 Peter 1:15, of Peter's own death — the same Peter who stood on this mountain. The word that named Israel's rescue from Egypt now names Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension, and Luke says He would "accomplish" it (*plēroō*, to fulfill). Guzik cites Trapp: "Greek, of his exodus; in reference to that expedition or departure of Israel out of Egypt."

ὁ ἐκλελεγμένος

HO EKLELEGMENOS · "MY CHOSEN ONE" · G1586

Where Matthew and Mark have "My beloved Son," Luke's best manuscripts read "My Son, My Chosen One" (the KJV follows others: "my beloved Son"). The verb is *eklegomai*, to pick out — the word of 6:13, where Jesus "chose twelve." Isaiah's Servant is "My chosen one in whom My soul delights" (42:1). At the cross the rulers will sneer, "if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One" (23:35).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik follows Trapp on the Greek of verse 31: "Greek, of his exodus; in reference to that expedition or departure of Israel out of Egypt." Of the visitors he writes, "Moses represents those who die and go to glory, and Elijah represents those who are caught up to heaven without death." Peter's offer of three tabernacles was well meant but wrong: "Like many since, Peter made trouble for himself when he spoke, not knowing what he said." The voice set Jesus above both great men: "He is the beloved Son – so Hear Him!"

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Transfiguration" (9 June 2013) contrasts Moses' shining face with Jesus'. Moses' glory was reflected: "It did not come from inside of Moses, but was bouncing off of Moses." Jesus' glory was His own: "It was the divine glory coming from the second person of the Trinity." He names the two visitors "Moses, who represents the Law, and Elijah, who stands at the head of the long line of Prophets." Peter wanted to stay — "This is a mountaintop experience I'm never going to get over." The cloud, he thinks, was the Shekinah, and the voice rare: "Only three times in the New Testament are we told that God speaks audibly from the heavens."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry sees the glory come in the act of prayer: "When Christ humbled himself to pray, he was thus exalted." Moses and Elijah speak with Him of the departure He was to accomplish at Jerusalem, while the disciples sleep and then wake to see His glory. The cloud that frightened them carries a comfort for every frightened believer: "But never let any be afraid to enter into a cloud with Jesus Christ; for he will be sure to bring them safely through it." Their silence afterward was right for the time — "Every thing is beautiful and useful in its season."

V
MOVEMENT

LUKE 9:37–50

Down in the Valley

A boy the disciples could not help, a word they could not hear, and an argument about greatness

37 *On the next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met Him.* 38 *And a man from the crowd shouted, saying, "Teacher, I beg You to look at my son, for he is my only boy,* 39 *and a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly screams, and it throws him into a convulsion with foaming at the mouth; and only with difficulty does it leave him, mauling him as it leaves.* 40 *"I begged Your disciples to cast it out, and ⚠ they could not."* 41 *And Jesus answered and said, "⚠ You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here."* 42 *While he was still approaching, the demon slammed him to the ground and threw him into a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy and gave him back to his father.* 43 *And △ they were all amazed at the greatness of God. But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples,* 44 *"Let these words sink into your ears; for the ⟳ Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men."* 45 *But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.* 46 *An argument started among them as to ⚠ which of them might be the greatest.* 47 *But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood 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 ☆ the one who is least*

among all of you, this is the one who is great.” 49 *John answered and said, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us.”* 50 *But Jesus said to him, “Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you.”*

LUKE 9:37–50

μονογενής

MONOGENĒS · “ONLY” · G3439

“He is my only boy” (v. 38). Only Luke tells us the boy was an only son — as he alone told us the widow’s son at Nain was “the only son of his mother” (7:12) and Jairus’ girl “an only daughter” (8:42). It is the word John uses of Jesus, the “only begotten” of the Father (John 1:14; 3:16). When Jesus “gave him back to his father” (v. 42), Luke echoes 7:15, “Jesus gave him back to his mother.”

μείζων

MEIZŌN · “GREATER, GREATEST” · G3187

The argument of verse 46 is literally “which of them might be *greater*” — the comparative. Every man was measuring himself against the next. Jesus answers with a child and with a reversal: “the one who is least (*mikroteros*, “smaller”) among all of you, this is the one who is great (*megas*)” (v. 48). The argument comes back at the Last Supper (22:24), and so does the answer: “I am among you as the one who serves” (22:27).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik sets the father’s desperate plea beside the disciples’ failure. Jesus was not rattled by the demon’s last violent fit: “Not intimidated by this last display of demonic power, Jesus delivered the demon-possessed boy instantly.” “What was too hard for the disciples was not too hard for Jesus.” He draws on Matthew 17:21 to say that “their failure was due to a lack of prayer and fasting,” and he sees grace even here: “Their failure was in fact good for them. Their failure taught them.” Then he follows Jesus correcting their pride with a child and their narrowness with “he who is not against you is for you.”

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew’s

Sproul’s “The Greatest” (23 June 2013) sees spiritual warfare in the boy’s torment: “Jesus understood that what ailed the man’s son was no mere disease, but an invasion from hell into the boy’s life.” Jesus’ frustration in verse 41, he thinks, was aimed most at His own men: “I think His annoyance was with His own men whom He had commissioned and given power and authority.” “Whenever human beings fail to trust God, they twist their lives into all kinds of crazy shapes.” The desire to matter is not evil — “we are given aspirations for significance” — but greatness belongs to the childlike, trusting and humble. In “Discipleship” he adds that John’s complaint in verse 49 showed “a spirit contrary to authentic discipleship.”

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon’s “The Devil’s Last Throw” (No. 1746, 10 June 1883) takes the boy thrown down while he was still coming to Jesus (v. 42) as a picture of a sinner drawing near to Christ. Hopeful signs appear — he hears, reads, prays — and then the enemy throws him down with temptation, doubt and despair just before deliverance. Spurgeon is careful: “Coming to Christ is not the best possible condition, for the best condition is to have already come to him.” But one word from Jesus is enough: “That one name is the name of Jesus, the Son of God, to whom all power is given.” “It is never too late as long as Jesus lives, and the sinner repents.”

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry feels the father's grief — "O the afflictions of the afflicted in this world!" — and watches Jesus do in a moment what His disciples could not. Then he follows the Lord into the disciples' hearts. They could not grasp His word about being delivered into the hands of men, and they argued about rank, but "Jesus Christ is perfectly acquainted with the thoughts and intents of our hearts." He answers with a child. As for the stranger casting out demons in His name, Henry counsels generosity: "We need not lose any of our friends, while we have so few, and so many enemies."

VI
MOVEMENT

LUKE 9:51–62

He Set His Face

A Samaritan village, a request for fire, and three men who wanted to follow — later

51 *When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem;* 52 *and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him.* 53 *But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem.* 54 *When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"* 55 *But He turned and rebuked them, [and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of;* 56 *for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."] And they went on to another village.* 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, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."* 59 *And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father."* 60 *But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God."* 61 *Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home."* 62 *But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*

LUKE 9:51–62

"Elijah replied to the captain of fifty, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty.""

2 KINGS 1:10

"He left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?""

1 KINGS 19:20

FIGURE · THREE MEN ON THE ROAD

THREE MEN ON THE ROAD · LUKE 9:57–62 · WHAT EACH ONE HELD BACK

THE EAGER ONE vv57–58	THE CALLED ONE vv59–60	THE HALF-TURNED vv61–62
he offers: "I will follow You wherever You go"	Jesus: "Follow Me." he: "permit me first … my father"	he offers: "I will follow You … but first …"
Jesus: "nowhere to lay His head"	Jesus: "go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom"	Jesus: "hand to the plow and looking back"
the cost: comfort	**the cost: first place**	**the cost: looking back**

Two of the three say "first" (vv59, 61). Elijah let Elisha go back to kiss his parents (1 Kings 19:20); *Jesus, "determined to go to Jerusalem" (v51), asks for more than Elijah did.*

Each would-be disciple keeps something back — comfort, first place, a look behind — and Jesus' answer names the cost before the man starts.

ἀνάλημψις

ANALĒMPSIS · "ASCENSION, TAKING UP" · G354

"When the days were approaching for His *analēmpsis*" (v. 51) — His "taking up." The noun occurs only here in the New Testament, from *analambanō*, "to take up." The related verb *analambanō* is used of Jesus being "taken up" in Acts 1:2, 11, 22, and the Greek Old Testament uses it of Elijah going up by a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11). Luke looks past the cross and the empty tomb to the day the Son is received back into heaven — and says the journey to Jerusalem begins with that end in view.

στηρίζω τὸ πρόσωπον

STĒRIZŌ TO PROSŌPON · "SET THE FACE" · G4741

The NASB's "He was determined" translates a Hebrew-style idiom: "He set (*estērisen*) His face to go to Jerusalem" (KJV "stedfastly set his face"). *Stērizō* means to fix, make firm, establish. Isaiah's Servant says, "I have set My face like flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed" (50:7). Guzik: "Jesus hardened His face; not in the sense of becoming a hard or angry man." Luke repeats "face" in verses 52–53 (KJV "before his face … his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem").

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik reads "set His face" as resolve, not harshness: "Jesus hardened His face; not in the sense of becoming a hard or angry man." "He saw the cross on the horizon, but still steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." The Samaritans refused Him because He was headed for Jerusalem, and James and John wanted Elijah's fire. But "He came to save the lost, not to burn them up with fire from heaven," and "Following Jesus means being merciful to others, instead of harsh with them." Of the three would-be followers: one "was not torn between the right and wrong. He was torn between the right and right" (Morrison); another "wanted to follow Jesus, but not just yet."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "Discipleship" (7 July 2013) sets these verses under the high calling of following Christ. James and John's fire and John's complaint about the outsider both show a narrow, wrong spirit. Then the three men. The first is eager, but "There's not a lot of glamour in following after Me." The second is told that the kingdom comes first: "The seeking after the kingdom of God is the chief business of the Christian life." Sproul warns that "The overwhelming majority of people who claim to be Christian follow Him with no more than half their hearts," and he says of the plow: "Once you sign up, you are in for the duration."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In his exposition of Luke 9 Spurgeon notes how verse 51 looks past what lay between: "It overleaps that, and speaks only of his glorious ascension into heaven." He has no patience with the brothers' fire: "Do not grow angry with people." "That is not the way to make them better." Going on to another village was "the easiest thing for them to do, and a great deal better than calling for fire from heaven upon anybody." Of the first volunteer: "his zeal was too hot to hold out long." Of the second: "We do not even know that his father was dead." And for all of them: "The King's business requireth haste."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry admires the way Jesus handled the Samaritan refusal: "When a stream of opposition is strong, it is wisdom to get out of the way of it, rather than to contend with it." James and John wanted Elijah's fire, but "Christ came to slay all enmities, not to foster them." The three would-be followers each show a divided heart, and Jesus answers that His call comes first. For the man who wanted to look back, Henry's word is plain: "Those who begin with the work of God must resolve to go on with it, or they will make nothing of it."

VII
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

From the Servant's set face to the Son of Man's glory

> *"For the Lord GOD helps Me, Therefore, I am not disgraced; Therefore, I have set My face like flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed."*
>
> ISAIAH 50:7

> *"I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed."*
>
> DANIEL 7:13-14

> *"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."*
>
> JOHN 1:14

> *"Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.""*
>
> JOHN 6:35

> *"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."*
>
> GALATIANS 2:20

> *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."*
>
> ROMANS 8:18

> *"They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.""*
>
> ACTS 1:11

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul closes his transfiguration sermon by looking ahead: the glory Peter, James and John saw is the glory every believer will one day behold. "We missed the transfiguration the first time, but God willing, we will not miss it the next time."

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, one chapter. Guzik walks the text and gathers the background; Sproul presses the doctrine — apostolic authority, the reality of miracle, the necessity of the cross, the glory of the Son; Spurgeon pleads with the reader to come to Christ now; Henry turns each scene into counsel. They differ on details — why the disciples failed, what Peter meant by his tents — and agree on the center: the Christ of God goes to the cross, and His followers go after Him.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · The Twelve sent	Power, authority, and nothing for the road; Herod curious, not seeking.	No power of their own; no neutral hearers; only forgiveness cures guilt.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Power over all devils to rout the darkness; Herod wanted no more reprovers.
II · Five thousand fed	A shocking command that tests faith and compassion.	It really happened — and that makes all the difference in the world.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Do what you can with a little — that is the way to make it more.
III · Confession and cross	They had to learn what "Messiah" meant; no one carried a cross for fun.	Knowing who He is is not enough; you cannot follow Christ and yourself.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Pray with those you teach; accustom yourself to daily self-denial.
IV · Transfiguration	His exodus; Moses died, Elijah was taken; Hear Him!	Reflected glory vs. His own glory; the Law and the Prophets.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Exalted as He prayed; never fear a cloud with Christ.
V · The valley	Too hard for them, not for Him; failure that teaches.	An invasion from hell; greatness belongs to the childlike.	The devil throws hardest just before Jesus sets the sinner free; never too late.	Christ reads the heart; don't lose friends who work in His name.
VI · The face set	Resolve, not harshness; mercy, not fire; not "not yet."	Half-hearted followers; once you sign up, you are in for the duration.	Not fire but another village; the King's business requires haste.	Step out of opposition's stream; begin God's work and go on with it.

LUKE 9:1–62 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **Authority is borrowed.** "The Twelve had no power in and of themselves" (Sproul). *Dynamis* and *exousia* were given (v1), and so was their bread (vv3–4). SPROUL
- **Herod's question is the chapter's question.** "Who is this man about whom I hear such things?" (v9) gets four answers — the crowds, Peter, the Father and, at last, the cross. THE TEXT
- **He feeds through His disciples.** "You give them something to eat!" (v13). Guzik: "Jesus challenged both their faith and their compassion." The bread passed through their hands. GUZIK
- **"Must" means the cross was planned.** *Dei* (v22) — the same divine necessity as 2:49, 4:43 and 24:26. Sproul: "It must happen." THE GREEK
- **The cross is daily.** Only Luke adds "daily" (v23). Guzik: "No one carried a cross for fun." Sproul: "You cannot follow Christ and yourself." THE TEXT
- **His death is an exodus.** Moses and Elijah talk about His *exodos* (v31) — a deliverance He would "accomplish," not suffer helplessly. THE GREEK

- **His glory is His own.** Moses' face reflected glory; Jesus' face showed it. "It did not come from inside of Moses, but was bouncing off of Moses" (Sproul). SPROUL
- **Listen to Him.** The Father does not say "build Him a tent" but "listen to Him!" (v35), and then "Jesus was found alone" (v36). THE TEXT
- **Failure can teach.** "What was too hard for the disciples was not too hard for Jesus." "Their failure was in fact good for them" (Guzik). GUZIK
- **A set face, not a hard heart.** He was "determined to go to Jerusalem" (v51) and in the same breath refused fire on the village that refused Him (vv54–56). THE TEXT

† Questions for the Table

1 **Herod wanted to see Jesus but never repented of what he did to John. Is there a guilt I am curious about Jesus over, but not yet confessing to Him?**

The only cure for guilt is forgiveness (Sproul).

9:7-9; 1 John 1:9

2 **Jesus told the disciples, "You give them something to eat!" when they had almost nothing. What need in front of me am I trying to send away instead of bringing my little to Him?**

He challenged both their faith and their compassion (Guzik).

9:12-17

3 **If Jesus asked me today, "But who do you say that I am?" what would my honest answer be — and does my week show it?**

Knowing who He is is not enough; the demons know (Sproul).

9:18-20; James 2:19

4 **What does "take up his cross daily" look like on an ordinary Tuesday for me — at work, at home, in my recovery?**

Deny himself and take up his cross are the same idea (Guzik).

9:23-25; Gal 2:20

5 **Peter wanted to build tents and stay on the mountain. Where am I trying to hold on to a spiritual high instead of listening to Jesus and walking down into the valley with Him?**

This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!

9:33-37

6 **Which of the three men on the road sounds most like me — the eager one, the "first let me" one, or the one looking back? What would it take to put my hand to the plow?**

Once you sign up, you are in for the duration (Sproul).

9:57-62

Luke 9 begins with men sent out with borrowed power and ends with men who want to follow on their own terms. Between them stands the Christ of God, shining on the mountain and then setting His face toward the cross. He does not ask us to understand everything before we follow — only to listen to Him, take up our cross today, and not look back.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

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