

Who Do I Say Jesus Is?

Luke 9:19 - 20

Nutshell: All the training of the 12 led to the crucial question of Jesus' identity. Their whole lives would be in witness to that. Ours too.

I. Context: The feeding of the five thousand.

II. Text

Luk 9:19 And answering, they said, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and others that a prophet, one of the ancients, has risen again."

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

A. An outline of Luke to this point

I. About this Letter: So you'll know about this Jesus, 1:1-4

II. Testimonies to Messiah's coming. A boyhood turning point, 1:5-2:52

III. John proclaims repentance for Christ's coming, 3:1 - 20

IV. Messiah's Entry Credentials: Baptism and Genealogy, 3:21-38

V. His Initiation: Fasting and Temptation, 4:1 - 13

VI. His Self-Introduction and Hometown Rejection, 4:14 - 30

VII. Jesus: The FIRST MAN with all authority over demons, sickness, and nature, 4:31 - 5:11

VIII. Turning-Point Healings, 5:12 - 32

A. Repatriating a leper, 5:12 - 16, touching the unclean outcast to preview His taking of our exile/ disease into Himself

1. Israel's unclean laws were pictures of spiritual reality

2. Uncleanness pictured death and alienation from God.

Jesus came to gain ascendancy over both.

B. Forgiving sin, 5:17 - 26, thus declaring His Deity

C. Healing/ renewal of a man's (Matthew's) soul, 5:27 - 32

IX. New and Old Covenants:

A. NC = OC *replacement*, ~~patch-up~~, 5:33-39. NC: Law in ♥.

- B. 6:1-11, OC Sabbath *strict*, but intended as a *help*.
- X. Picking The 12, 6:12-16; teaching / etc., incl. Tyrites, 6:17-19
- XI. Jesus' manifesto: the **SERMON ON THE PLAIN**, 6:20-49
 - A. *Earthly* evidence of the *spiritual* traits in the Sermon on the Mt. (Matt 5). Literal poor vs. rich. We are to love our haters. We must give generously, living by pity.
 - B. Only right teaching creates right living. Convict *self* 1st. Only building on Christ will survive life's floodplains.
- XII. Messiah's **MISSION** Portrayed in His Interactions
 - A. Forecast: A **Gentile** seeks Jesus for a healing, Lk 7:1-10
 - B. Forecast: Hope still held out to **Israel**: Nain widow, 11-17
 - C. John's Q. A.: 2 diverse comings & an interval, 7:24-30
 - D. John & Jesus differently wise. Both rejected, 7:31-35
 - E. Love for Jesus is tied to forgiveness. The sinful woman had both; Simon the Pharisee lacked both, 7:36-50.
 - F. 8:1-15, 4 Soils = 4 kinds of "hearing" of the **Word**. Only a "virtuous and sound heart" is living and fruit-bearing
 - 1. Hence, take care HOW you hear that Word, 8:16-18
 - 2. Mary as mom not an insider; Word-doers only, 8:19-21
 - G. It is a Word of **power** over nature (8:22-25), demons (8:26-39), sickness (8:40-48), and death (8:49-56)
- XIII. Messiah's **COMMISSION**, the first
 - A. You 12 preach, heal, and exorcise like I have. Live on what you're given. Where unwelcome, disassociate, 9:1-6
 - B. Herod wonders among the several guesses at Jesus' identity. A former prophet? John the baptizer? 9:7-9
 - C. A rest scheduled but interrupted, 9:10-17
 - 1. A *further* ministry lesson: *You* 12 feed the crowd.
 - 2. The 12 organize the people, ready for reception from Christ. There is enough, with overflow sufficient for God's servants and the elect they call.
 - D. 9:18-20, From prayer time, Jesus asks whom the crowds say He is. Some previous prophet, they think.

Kid-speak: Besides Jesus' followers, who did the rest of the people think Jesus was? One of God's preachers from the Old Testament who had come back!

B. 9:19 - 20, *Elijah is a prominent guess for who Jesus is. But Jesus turns the question if His identity to the 12.*

Outline:

- I. Jesus and the Prophecy of Elijah, v 19
- II. The Question Put to the Twelve, v 20
 - A. Peter's answer
 - B. The issue of quoting
 - C. "And answering, they said, "John the baptist, and others, Elijah..."
 1. This was in answer to Jesus' question to the disciples, "Whom do the crowds say me to be?" v 18
 - a. He's ministering to the crowds. Their view is consequential.
 - b. Not as a matter of *tailoring* His ministry to them, but knowing where they're at
 2. Thinking he was John could have had two sources:
 - a. One, that John hadn't died, and this was his reappearance (Jesus looked like John?)
 - b. A second, that John had died and come back
 - i. An interesting precursor to the 2 witnesses of Rev 11
 - ii. Inspired by the prophecy of Elijah returning, Mal 4:5-6?

Kid-speak: Some people thought Jesus was John the baptist who had come back from the dead. But was He?

- D. "And others, Elijah"
 1. Again, from Mal 4:5-6
 2. John had come in the *spirit and power of* Elijah, Lk 1:17
 - a. Luke supplies the application/ interpretation of Mal 4:5-6, adding "in the spirit and power of"
 - b. But John didn't mirror Elijah in miracles, for instance
 - c. He was a specific forerunner of Christ, as Elijah was prophesied to be, Matt 11:14
 - i. John precedes the 1st Coming, Elijah precedes the 2nd
 - ii. Note that Christ indicates that John was Elijah in some way *and* that Elijah was still to come
 3. Some have noted that Lk 1:17 only contains half the prophecy of Mal 4:6;
 - a. only turning the hearts of the fathers to the children
 - b. but not the vice versa of Mal 4:6
 - c. Perhaps indicating that that portion of the prophecy

awaits Elijah

4. But the Lk 1:17 quote of Mal 4:6 does have an answering 2nd part to the dual prophecy of Mal 4:6: “and disobedient ones to *the* wisdom of righteous ones”
 - a. Luke’s intention may have been to interpret or elaborate on the 2nd half of the prophecy, indicating its fulfillment
 - b. But the unfulfilled Mal 4:6b view is intriguing

Kid-speak: Which prophet did Malachi say would come back before Jesus comes back? Elijah.

E. “Elijah”

1. Elijah was prophesied to return, Mal 4:5-6
 - (a. During the modern Jewish circumcision ceremony, a *seat* is left for Elijah, per an old rabbinic text
 - b. At Passover, it’s a *cup* left for him)
2. Jesus indicated that Elijah would indeed come, Matt 17:11; Mk 9:12
 - a. And that John had partially fulfilled that prophecy
3. So we have an Elijah-type appearance before Jesus’ *first* coming
 - a. In that light, it’s easy to see the actual return of Elijah preceding Christ’s *Second* Coming
 - b. And it’s not super problematic, since Elijah never died
4. The majority consensus in the history of comments on Rev 11 has been that Elijah is one of the 2 witnesses to come
 - a. The other being the other man who never died, Enoch
 - b. Thus holding intact the ‘law’ of Heb 9:27 that it is reserved for men to die once

F. “Me... Elijah”

1. But the question was whom the crowds said *Jesus* was. Some said Jesus was Elijah.
2. That would only mean He was a prophet, not the Messiah
 - a. Huge difference, as *we* know, but probably not very clear in *their* minds
 - b. Remember, the Pharisees apparently didn’t have room for Messiah being God, Lk 20:41-44

Kid-speak: If the people thought Jesus was *Elijah*, then did they think Jesus was *God*? No, because Elijah was just a man.

3. We ask, as we did last time, what if someone lives his life honoring Jesus as the apex teacher and representative of God, but not as God Himself?
 - a. *Or* not an actual sacrifice for sins? (God’s greatest moral influence)
 - ◆ b. It doesn’t matter how high Jesus ranks on a man’s personal scale if that Jesus falls short of whom Jesus really is
 - c. The man’s view may have ‘nearly everything’ right, straight from Scriptures
 - d. But of course, in terms of salvation, having one key thing wrong = having everything wrong, 1 Jn 2:19-22
- G. “And others, that a prophet, one of the ancients, has risen again”
 1. Elijah was best understood to figure somehow into prophecy, but other prophets were not ruled out
 2. Elijah would not have “risen again,” having never died
 3. Again, not much higher honor they could accord Jesus than being someone like Moses or Isaiah
 - a. But, as we’re about to see, those views fell short
 - b. The Apostles have finally learned

Luke 9:20 And He said to them, “But you- whom do you say Me to be?”

And answering, Peter said, “The Christ of God.”

- H. Was this not embarrassing to ask? All this time, yet His identity is yet to be securely defined?
 1. But how long have we known Jesus, still discovering significant aspects of His person or work?
 2. It was important to know what the crowds said, but mainly by way of *contrast*, the important question being *their* understanding of Christ

Kid-speak: Jesus asked His followers, “Who do you say I am?” Is Jesus asking us the same thing today? Yes!

- I. “But you- whom do you say Me to be”
 1. **Emphatic:** an added pronoun, “you,” and placed first
 2. *Whom else does it really matter if we get right?*

- a. If we don't get Jesus right, no other identification is especially important
- b. If we get Jesus right, we know who everyone else is. They all relate to Him as either Judge or Savior
- 3. To His Apostles especially the question was critical
 - a. They were to be His witnesses
 - b. Note that this hadn't been a prerequisite question for them
 - c. He knew He'd have to train them to this point *and beyond*
- 4. But now that it has been settled, it *is* a prerequisite question:
 - a. For eldership or church membership
 - b. Meaning it's an essential element in saving faith, 1 Jn 2:19-22
- J. "And answering, Peter said, 'You are the Christ of God.'"
 - ➔ 1. We are more familiar with the **Matthew 16:16** version, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Kid-speak: When Jesus asked them who He was, Peter said that Jesus was the one promised in the Old Testament, whom God the Father sent and who was God the Son [= Christ]. Was Peter right? Yes.

- 2. As we've said numerous times, Americans (probably Western culture as a whole) have a hang-up when it comes to quotes. If it's not word-for-word, we don't think you've quoted correctly.
- K. On Bible authors' use of **quotations**
 - 1. But it is clear, for instance, from NT authors' quotes of the OT, that they are not obsessed with word-for-word citation when quoting
 - a. They seem more interested in including knowledge of the context or implications of the original quote
 - b. They knew that their audience had *access to* and was probably already *familiar with* the passage they quoted
 - 2. So who has their quotation method right, us or them?
 - a. This is a crucial question. If we leave the discussion with, "They did it this way; we do it this way," we've left the door open to doubts over Biblical truthfulness.
 - b. Our implicit thought is that Bible authors can't be expected to hold up to modern, scientific standards. We just have cut them some slack.
 - c. Boy, how human nature runs with *that!* Anywhere we sit

in mental, moral, or any other superiority over Scriptures, we hold the Scriptures in contempt. We're not *trying* to, but we can't help it.

- ☑ d. A whole substrata (really a superstrata, a layer over top) of our view of the Bible takes over. *The Bible has gone one notch down, and we didn't even notice!*
- 3. We can add copious amounts of respect and faith- "Well, I believe the Bible 100% anyway!" But once you add the word "anyway," you've lost.
 - a. Yet over the last 100 years, the modern church has increasingly left us with exactly that attitude
 - b. If you're listening for it, you can hear it at key moments. For instance, you quote a Bible verse someone doesn't like; *THEY QUOTE A 'COUNTER' SCRIPTURE.*
 - c. What's the implication? *You've got a Scripture; they've got a Scripture. They cancel each other out.*
 - d. What's the presupposition? EVERY CHRISTIAN HAS THE... RIGHT TO READ THE BIBLE HIS OWN WAY. Don't force *your* preferences on me.
 - e. Enigmatically, people who do this can be vehement advocates that truth ≠ 'my truth vs. your truth'. Yet they implicitly treat the **Bible** that way! It's been engrained.

Kid-speak: If someone shows you a verse in the Bible that says you're doing something wrong, should you listen to that? Yes!

- 4. What is the vital step being skipped?
 - a. Before they present a 'canceling' Scripture, they should be saying, "I believe *that* Scripture and want to know what it means. I'm wondering, though, how it squares with *this* Scripture: ___"
 - b. Instead, we think that some doctrines are indeterminate
 - 5. A proof of the reality of the superstrata we're talking about is this: when someone 'counters' our Scripture, *we don't go to the underlying problem!*
 - ☞ a. The discussion should stop until it's determined whether Scriptures can contradict themselves
 - b. We might find out to our dismay that our conversee isn't interested in resolving such issues
- ★ L. So how *does* Luke 9:20 square with Matthew 16:16?

1. Jesus made a longer statement, from which Matthew and Luke edited/ summarized differently; *or*
2. Jesus said both as part of a longer statement, including (at least) both

3. It's simple but imperative to have a *positive* solution *without* an implicit apology, which would make it basically *negative*: "Well, it's not an exact quote, but..."
 - a. We have an underlying problem of CULTURAL ARROGANCE
 - b. And it's hard to shake. We think it's a 'rule'.

IV. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, "Uphold the strengthless")
 Identifying Jesus is key to our healing and growth.

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V. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, "Convince, rebuke"): **What have I done wrong?**  
**How have I lost righteousness?**  
 How clear am I on Jesus' identity?

VI. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, "Exhort/encourage"):  
**How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?**  
 Let us tell Jesus who He is, since He's asking us.

VII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How do I take this on the road?**  
 Let us carry the identity of Jesus with us, Col 3:17.

Vision: Our goal is to *make the identity of Jesus an ongoing issue in our souls*. We are seeking to always be answering the question of His identity with two basic replies: He is my Savior, so I love Him. He is my Lord, so I live for Him.

How do we *attain* this mentality so as to *maintain* it constantly? A Holy Spirit takeover is the only way I know, simply meaning Divine power. In the flesh, my thoughts dwell low. By the Spirit, my thoughts can remain in Heaven, enhancing and sanctifying all I do here below. My born-again will can now desire and seek this, begging the Spirit's help.