

# **To Seek and To Save the Lost**

## **Jesus Foretells His Death**

*Luke 9:21-22*

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# Jesus Foretells His Death

## Scripture

In our study of the life and ministry of Jesus in *The Gospel of Luke* we have come to a decisive moment. Last time, in our study of Luke 9:18-20, we noticed that Jesus asked his twelve disciples, “Who do the crowds say that I am?”

And they answered, “John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.”

Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

And Peter answered, “The Christ of God.”

One commentator said, “Peter’s confession represents a turning point in Luke’s Gospel.”<sup>1</sup> Up until this point, Luke has been demonstrating the identity of Jesus: he is the Christ, the Messiah, the Promised One sent by God to seek and to save the lost.

From this point on Luke now focuses his attention on “the necessity of Jesus’ suffering, his vindication, and the resultant discipleship required of those who will follow him.”<sup>2</sup>

So, immediately after Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ, Jesus foretells his death.

Let’s read about Jesus foretelling his death in Luke 9:21-22:

**<sup>21</sup>And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, <sup>22</sup>saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”**  
(Luke 9:21-22)

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<sup>1</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, vol. 1, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1994), 844.

<sup>2</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, vol. 1, 844.

## Introduction

When our son Jon was growing up he had a hard time keeping a secret. For example, I would take the children out to the store to buy their Mom a birthday gift. I would also suggest that we take her out for a surprise birthday dinner. No sooner had we parked the car in the garage and walked into the house when Jon would shout, “Hey Mom! Guess what? We got you earrings for your birthday gift and we are taking you to Hoss’s Steak House for a surprise birthday dinner!”

I suppose the upside about Jon not being able to keep a secret is that I had to behave at home so that I would not be embarrassed when he blurted out anything about me!

In Jesus’ ministry with his disciples, he often told them to keep his identity a secret. In the narrative we are going to examine today, Jesus does so as well. And this is just after Peter’s confession that Jesus is the Christ. But Jesus went on to tell his disciples why they should keep his identity a secret.

## Lesson

The analysis of Jesus foretelling his death in Luke 9:21-22 teaches us the necessity of Jesus’ suffering.

Let’s use the following outline:

1. Jesus’ Command (9:21)
2. Jesus’ Prediction (9:22)

### I. Jesus’ Command (9:21)

First, let’s look at Jesus’ command.

In Luke’s account of the life of Jesus, Peter had just made his great confession that Jesus is the Christ of God (9:20). In Matthew’s account of this confession, Jesus first said to Peter, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not

revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 16:17). The Father had revealed to Peter and the rest of the disciples the true identity of Jesus. But, rather strangely, just after Peter’s magnificent confession about the true identity of Jesus, Jesus **strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one** (9:21).

Jesus’ command for silence is called the “Messianic Secret.” One scholar notes, “The historicity of the command for silence involves one of the great debates of twentieth-century New Testament studies.”<sup>3</sup> The question is understandable: why would Jesus want the disciples to be silent about who he is?

The context gives us the reason for Jesus’ command for silence. The disciples still needed further instruction about the kind of Christ (that is, Messiah) that Jesus was.

People in Jesus’ day understood that the Christ would be God’s Promised Deliverer. They understood that the Christ would deliver them from oppression, and that the Christ was a Suffering Servant and also a Victorious King.

However, Jesus knew that during his First Advent he was coming first as the Suffering Servant. Later, when he comes in his Second Advent, he will be coming as the Victorious King.

As you know, the Jews were in bondage to the Roman Empire at the time, and so they keenly expected that God was going to send the Christ as the Victorious King who would free them from the bondage of Roman oppression. But the people had it backwards because Jesus came first as the Suffering Servant. He was going to deliver his people from the bondage of sin. Only during his Second Advent will he come as the Victorious King who will rule visibly forever.

So, Jesus’ command for silence was so that his disciples would grow in their understanding that he was not a political Christ or a Victorious King, but rather that he was a Suffering Christ, a savior who would die to pay for his people’s sins.

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<sup>3</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, vol. 1, 844.

Now, after Jesus' resurrection, he reversed his command. After his resurrection, Jesus' disciples are no longer to remain silent. Instead we are now to proclaim the truth to all about his identity, as Jesus said in Luke 24:46-48, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."

You and I live after the resurrection of Jesus. The command to silence does not apply to us. However, the command to proclaim the good news of Jesus' identity does apply to us.

In a 2008 Adecco survey, 1,807 U.S. workers were asked to identify issues they felt were off-limits for discussion at work. Here are the top five responses:

- Money: 14 percent.
- Politics: 14 percent.
- Personal life: 16 percent.
- Office gossip: 27 percent.
- Religion: 29 percent.<sup>4</sup>

It may not be appropriate to talk about Jesus at work. However, let us find ways to talk to colleagues, friends, neighbors, and family members about the identity of Jesus. Their eternal destiny depends upon their relationship to Jesus. And you and I have the wonderful privilege of telling the truth.

## II. Jesus' Prediction (9:22)

And second, notice Jesus' prediction.

How good are you at making predictions? I confess that I am not very good at making predictions. Some people have made rather interesting predictions. Here are a few examples:

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<sup>4</sup> Jae Yang and Veronica Salazar, "What Is the Most Taboo Topic to Discuss at Work?" *USA Today* (6-17-08).

## To Seek and To Save the Lost

1. Lord Kelvin, president, Royal Society (1895): “Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible.”
2. Charles H. Duell, Commissioner, U.S. Office of Patents (1899): “Everything that can be invented has been invented.”
3. Thomas Watson, chairman of IBM (1943): “I think there is a world market for maybe five computers.”
4. *Popular Mechanics*, forecasting the relentless march of science (1949): “Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons.”
5. Bill Gates (1981): “640 KB ought to be enough for anybody.”<sup>5</sup>

Of course, sometimes people make predictions that do come true. But that is rare.

Jesus, however, at this point in his life made a remarkable prediction to his twelve disciples. “The present prediction is the first of three recorded in the Synoptics. For the second see Luke 9:43b–45 (cf. Matt. 17:22, 23; Mark 9:30–32); and for the third, Luke 18:31–34 (cf. Matt. 20:17–19; Mark 10:32–34).”<sup>6</sup>

Four key words (infinitives in the Greek text) summarize Jesus’ prediction, all of which came true several months later!

### A. *Jesus’ Prediction of His Suffering (9:22a)*

First, let’s look at Jesus’ prediction of his suffering.

Jesus said in verse 22a, “**The Son of Man must suffer many things.**”

Jesus did not give any details about his suffering. But we know that his suffering began when the perfect Son of God left the glory of heaven and in humiliation was born in a low condi-

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<sup>5</sup> Robert J. Morgan, *Nelson’s Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations, and Quotes*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000), 692–693.

<sup>6</sup> William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke*, vol. 11, *New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001), 496.

tion and underwent the miseries of living in this sinful world.

*The Message* Bible translates John 1:14 to read, “The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.”<sup>7</sup> Here’s how Philip Yancey describes the type of “neighborhood” that Jesus moved into:

A succession of great empires tramped through the territory of Israel as if wiping their feet on the vaunted Promised Land. After the Assyrians and Babylonians came the Persians, who were in turn defeated by Alexander the Great. He was eventually followed by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Jews’ worst villain until Hitler. Antiochus began waging war against the Jewish religion. He transformed the temple of God into a worship center for Zeus and proclaimed himself God incarnate. He forced young boys to undergo reverse circumcision operations and flogged an aged priest to death for refusing to eat pork. In one of his most notorious acts he sacrificed an unclean pig on the altar in the Most Holy Place, smearing its blood around the temple sanctuary.

Antiochus’s actions so incensed the Jews that they rose up in an armed revolt that’s celebrated every year as the holiday Hanukkah. But their victory was short-lived. Before long, Roman legions marched into Palestine to quash the rebellion and appointed Herod, their “King of the Jews.” After the Roman conquest, nearly the entire land lay in ruins. Herod was sickly and approaching seventy when he heard rumors of a new king born in Bethlehem, and soon howls of grief from the families of slain infants drowned out the angels’ chorus of “Glory to God . . . and on earth peace.” First-century Israel was a conquered, cowed nation. This, then, was the neighborhood Jesus moved into: a sinister place with a somber past and a fearful future.<sup>8</sup>

Jesus’ entire life was a life of suffering.

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<sup>7</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005), Jn 1:14.

<sup>8</sup> Adapted from Philip Yancey, *The Question That Never Goes Away* (Creative Trust Digital Kindle Edition, 2013).

*B. Jesus' Prediction of His Rejection (9:22b)*

Second, notice Jesus' prediction of his rejection.

Jesus went on to say that he must **"be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes"** (9:22b).

One commentator asks, "Who, exactly, were these three groups?" And the answer given is as follows:

As to *elders*, by this time the term had come to mean the lay members of the Sanhedrin. They were generally members of the highly privileged patrician families in Jerusalem.

The *chief priests* were members of the high priestly families including the high priest himself.

The *scribes* were the trained and ordained theologians of the day, the men versed in the Torah, the rabbis. Their task was to study, interpret, transmit, copy, and teach the law.<sup>9</sup>

The Sanhedrin was the "highest Jewish council in the first century. The council had 71 members and was presided over by the high priest."<sup>10</sup> The Sanhedrin included **the elders and chief priests and scribes**.

The Sanhedrin eventually rejected Jesus and would not believe that he was the Christ, the Messiah, the Promised One.

*C. Jesus' Prediction of His Death (9:22c)*

Third, let's look at Jesus' prediction of his death.

Jesus also said that he must **"be killed"** (9:22c).

Jesus' death is of course of supreme importance because Jesus was "was wounded for our transgressions; he was

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<sup>9</sup> William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke*, vol. 11, 496–497.

<sup>10</sup> Robert J. Dean, "Sanhedrin," ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1445.



crushed for our iniquities” (Isaiah 53:5).

In his book titled *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering* Tim Keller tells the story of Christian minister John Dickson who once spoke on the theme of the wounds of God on a university campus in Sydney, Australia. During the question time, a Muslim man rose to explain “how preposterous was the claim that the Creator of the universe should be subjected to the forces of his own creation – that he would have to eat, sleep, and go to the toilet, let alone die on a cross.”

Dickson said his remarks were intelligent, clear, and civil. The man went on to argue that it was illogical that God, the “cause of all causes” could have pain inflicted on him by any lesser beings. Dickson thought for a minute but he couldn’t come up with a knockdown argument or a witty comeback. So finally he simply thanked the man for making the uniqueness of the Christian claim so clear.

Then Dickson concluded, “What the Muslim denounces as blasphemy the Christian holds precious: God has wounds.”<sup>11</sup>

It was absolutely essential that Jesus, as God incarnate, should **be killed** in order to pay the penalty for our sin.

But, thank God, that is not the end of Jesus’ predictions!

#### D. *Jesus’ Prediction of His Resurrection (9:22d)*

And fourth, notice Jesus’ prediction of his resurrection.

Jesus also said that he must “**on the third day be raised**” (9:22d).

Jesus predicted, long before he was killed, that he would be raised back to life again on the third day. This astonishing prediction was literally fulfilled on that first Easter Sunday morning.

Jesus’ resurrection is proof that God accepted Jesus’ pay-

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<sup>11</sup> Timothy Keller, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering* (New York, NY: Dutton, 2013), 120.

ment for the penalty of our sin. If Jesus did not rise from the dead on the third day, we would still have to pay for our own sin. But Jesus' resurrection is our assurance that God accepted Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf.

In a sermon titled "Jesus Vindicated," Tim Keller says to think of Jesus' resurrection as a store receipt. If you're in a department store and you buy some clothes, you should always ask for the receipt. Why? Because if you're still walking around the store a plainclothes security person could stop you and ask, "Excuse me, may I look in your bag?" And if you don't have a receipt you could get in trouble. So if somebody stops you, you want to be able to hold up your receipt and say, "Oh, plainclothes security person, trouble me not because this proves that this has been paid for and I do not have to pay it again."

The resurrection is a giant receipt stamped across history for all people to see, a receipt that allows you to know that your future is certain if you believe in Jesus Christ.<sup>12</sup>

## Conclusion

Therefore, having analyzed the account of Jesus foretelling his death in Luke 9:21-22, we should thank God for what Jesus accomplished on behalf of his own.

Earlier this year Philip Yancey's newest book was released. The title of his book is, *The Question That Never Goes Away*. In an interview with *Preaching* magazine Yancey was asked, "So what is the question that never goes away?" Yancey responded by saying that thirty-five years ago he wrote a book called, *Where Is God When It Hurts?* That is the question that never goes away. He said that he is often asked to speak on that question. Furthermore, "the question that doesn't go away for most people is: Why? Why do these bad things happen? Why is there so much suffering? Why does such a good God allow such

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<sup>12</sup> Adapted from Tim Keller, "Jesus Vindicated," *PreachingToday.com*.

things?”<sup>13</sup>

Yancey goes on to say that God doesn't fully explain the question, "Why?" When Job suffered and asked the question, "Why?" God eventually responded to Job. In the longest speech in the entire Bible by God, he had the perfect opportunity to answer Job's question, but God never answered Job's "Why?" Yancey elaborated on God's lecture to Job:

Instead, he said, "Let's talk about your role and my role. My role is to run the universe. Let me explain that a little bit," and he gave Job a tour of what it's like to run the universe. Then he said, "Your role is simply to trust me, that I know what I'm doing even when it doesn't look like it."<sup>14</sup>

The supreme act of suffering and rejection took place when Jesus died on the cross at Calvary. But after his resurrection and ascension, Peter preached that "God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it" (Acts 2:24).

God decreed that Jesus should suffer and be rejected and die and be raised up to life again. At the time when Jesus told his twelve disciples this prediction they did not fully understand it. However, after it happened, they all died as martyrs because they were absolutely convinced that Jesus really was the Christ, the Messiah, and the Promised One sent by God to seek and to save the lost.

You and I have the advantage of the full revelation of God. Let us thank God for what Jesus accomplished on behalf of his own, and let us trust Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, and the Promised One sent by God to seek and to save the lost. Amen.

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<sup>13</sup> Michael Duduit, "The Question that Never Goes Away: An Interview with Philip Yancey," *Preaching* (May/June 2014), 32.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Duduit, "The Question that Never Goes Away: An Interview with Philip Yancey," *Preaching*, 32.



# Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ  
and membership in his church family,  
develop them to Christlike maturity,  
equip them for their ministry in the church  
and life mission in the world,  
in order to magnify God's name.*

## Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

This sermon, and other sermons, by the Rev. Freddy Fritz can be found at:

1. [www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/sermons](http://www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/sermons)
2. [www.sermoncentral.com/contributors/freddy-fritz-sermons-11181.asp](http://www.sermoncentral.com/contributors/freddy-fritz-sermons-11181.asp)
3. [www.sermonaudio.com/source\\_detail.asp?sourceid=FredFritz](http://www.sermonaudio.com/source_detail.asp?sourceid=FredFritz)

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**PRAYER:**

Father, thank you for the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi. He understood that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, and the Promised One sent by God to seek and to save the lost.

Jesus told the twelve disciples initially not to say anything about his identity. But now that Jesus' predictions about his suffering, rejection, death, and resurrection have all come to pass, we have the opportunity to believe it and share it.

Oh God, if there is anyone here today that has not yet put his or her faith in Jesus, will you grant that person saving faith.

And will you encourage all of us who do trust in Jesus to tell others about Jesus' suffering, rejection, death, and resurrection for the salvation of sinners such as ourselves.

And for this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

**BENEDICTION:**

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and always. Amen.

**CHARGE:**

Now, brothers and sisters, go and serve God wholeheartedly!