

July 9th, 2023 – (full notes)

“Who Do You Say Jesus Is?”

Luke 9:18-22

Our last time in the Book of Luke (**9:12-17**), we studied the supernatural feeding of some 5,000 men (plus 10-15,000 women and children). Jesus, using one boy’s lunch (five loaves of bread and two dried fish), after having the people sit down (cf. **Luke 9:14**) in groups of 50 men (along with their wives and children).

Jesus then began to break the bread and fish to be distributed to the groups by the Twelve. We are told that the people broke off some bread and fish for themselves, passing the bread and fish to the next person, but it never ran out.

In fact, when everyone had eaten until they were full and could eat no more, the Twelve collected the leftovers, amounting to twelve baskets full of fish and bread (cf. **Luke 9:17**). This event, the feeding of the 5,000 men (mostly Jews), and the resurrection narrative, are the only miracles recorded in all four gospels (cf. **Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:31-44; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:1-14**).

Read **Luke 9:18-22**... The incident that is recorded here by Luke actually takes place near Caesarea Philippi (cf. **Matthew 16:13; Mark 8:27**), a mostly Gentile territory. Jesus goes there to withdraw from the Jewish Religious leaders (**Matthew 16:1**) and the crowds, in order to instruct His apostles, who have been with Him now over two years.

Both Matthew and Mark place this event after the feeding of the 4,000 men (mostly Gentiles, cf. **Matthew 15:32-38; Mark 8:1-9**); and in fact, are the only two gospel writers to record the feeding of the 4,000 men.

By this time in the biblical narrative of Jesus’ ministry, many have witnessed His power over demons, diseases, death, and nature itself; and so, the crowds who have followed Jesus to see His miracles, and the Twelve who have been with Him from the beginning, have all drawn different conclusions about who they think or believe Jesus to be.

We are told in **Luke 9:18** that Jesus is praying alone (to the Father), although the disciples (the Twelve) are there with Him. Jesus then asks them, “Who do the people say that I am?” The “people” refers to the crowds of people who followed Him everywhere to see what He was going to do, and to hear what He said. **Luke 4:31-36**, “And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and He was teaching them on the Sabbath; and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority. In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, ‘Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!’ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be quiet and come out of him!’ And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst of the people, he came out of him without doing him any harm. And amazement came upon them all, and they began talking with one another saying,

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‘What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out.’”

When we were studying **Luke 9:7-9**, a few weeks ago, we read how Herod wasn't sure of who Jesus was, let's take a look at that again.

Read Luke 9:7-9... Herod had heard reports, and he was very distraught about all that was going on throughout the region, that repentance was being preached, people were being healed, and demons were being cast out, and that some were saying it was John the Baptizer who had risen from the dead; or Elijah or another great prophet who had power like the prophets in Israel's past. Herod kept trying to see who was performing these supernatural signs and miracles.

Back to **Luke 9:18-19...** Jesus asks who the people say He is, and the Twelve answer Him saying, “John the Baptist, and others say Elijah; but others, that one of the prophets of old has risen again.”

Let us think back through what the writers of the Gospels have already told us concerning who Jesus is:

When the angel Gabriel came to Joseph in a dream (**Matthew 1:20-21**) he said to him, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

When the angel Gabriel came to Mary (**Luke 1:32-33**) he spoke to her concerning the One to be conceived in her womb, “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end. ”

At Jesus' birth the angel told the shepherds (**Luke 2:10-11**), “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

There is the testimony of Simeon (**Luke 2:25-35**), “And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, ‘Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation, Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, A Light of revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.’ And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.

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And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, ‘Behold, this *Child* is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed— and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.’”

There is the testimony of Anna declaring Jesus to be the Messiah who had been foretold by the Old Testament prophets (**Luke 2:36-38**), “And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with *her* husband seven years after her marriage, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. At that very moment she came up and *began* giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.”

John the Baptizer was the forerunner of Christ, the Messiah, and John’s father, Zacharias, when filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied concerning John (**Luke 1:76-80**), “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways; To give to His people *the* knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise from on high will visit us, to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.’ And the child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel.”

When John came to the Jordan River calling people to repent and baptizing them as they confessed they were sinners in need of God’s forgiveness, the Religious Leaders came to ask him who he was to do this.

John 1:19-23, “This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, ‘I am not the Christ. They asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ And he said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the Prophet?’ And he answered, ‘No.’ Then they said to him, ‘Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?’” He said, “I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord, ‘as Isaiah the prophet said.” **29-34**, “The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and *said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He on behalf of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.

I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.’ John testified saying, ‘I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit

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descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit. ‘I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.’”

When Jesus was 12 years old and his family went up to Jerusalem for Passover, he went to the Temple to sit with the religious leaders; and his family began their journey home thinking Jesus was with other family members in their caravan, but then discovered He wasn’t with them, and so they returned to search for Him.

Luke 2:46-52, “Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, ‘Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You.’ And He said to them, ‘Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s *house*?’ But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them. And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all *these* things in her heart. And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”

At Jesus’ baptism, when He was 30 years old, God the Father declared (**Luke 3:22**), “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.” And when Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on a mountain and showed them some of His glory, they were enveloped in a cloud, and God the Father spoke from the cloud (**Luke 9:35**) saying, “This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!”

After Jesus rose from the grave on that first Sunday, He came to the Disciples who were hiding in a room in Jerusalem (Thomas was not there). But the next Sunday Thomas was present when the Lord came to them (**John 20:26-28**), “After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace *be* with you.” Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’”

Even the demons spoke out concerning who Jesus was (**Luke 4:34**), “Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!” (**Luke 4:41**), “Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, “You are the Son of God!”

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Read again **Luke 9:18-20**... Jesus had asked the Twelve who the crowds said He was, and they answered, “John the Baptist, and others say Elijah; but others, that one of the prophets of old has risen again.” Then Jesus asked the Twelve, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered, “The Christ [*Messiah, Chosen One*] of God.”

In Matthew’s account of the discourse, after Peter’s response in **Luke 9:20**, Jesus says to Peter (**Matthew 16:17**), “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona [son of Jonah], because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”

Clearly, God’s Spirit revealed this to Peter, as human reasoning alone cannot comprehend the thoughts of God.

1Corinthians 2:14-15, “A natural man [unbeliever] does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual [born-again by God’s Spirit] appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one [according to human wisdom].”

Matthew 11:27, “All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.”

Read again **Luke 9:21-22**... This is interesting, the Twelve have just, through Peter their spokesman, told Jesus they believe Him to be the Messiah, the Son of God, the Anointed One. Now Jesus tells them not to tell anyone? Why wouldn’t Jesus want them to spread the news that He is the Savior who was to come?

The Jews were waiting for the Messiah to come, believing that He would immediately free them from Roman oppression and usher in a kingdom of prosperity and long life; but that is not what He had come to do (**Luke 9:22**; pp. Matthew 16:20-22; Mark 8:30-33), “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.”

That was not what the people anticipated, although God had foretold through the prophets, e.g., Moses, Jeremiah, Daniel, Zephaniah, Zechariah, Micah, (cf. **Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; 52:13-53:12**). Messiah would be God in the flesh, to take our punishment, for all our sins. and He would be put to death, but He wouldn’t stay dead, in fact, He would rise from the grave alive.

Some say Jesus was just a good man, a good teacher, one of the many incarnations of God, a powerful prophet, a priest, even a miracle worker.

The question today is, who do you say He is?

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The undeniable truth of God is that Jesus came to die for our sins, being delivered over to death by the very plan of God; He was then buried, and on the third day He rose from the dead, just like He had said that He would, demonstrating victory over sin, death, and judgement; providing forgiveness for sin and eternal life to everyone who will believe in Him.

It is this Jesus, the Jesus of the Bible, whose birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, post-resurrection appearances, and ascension back into heaven to be with the Father are all recorded in God’s Word.

It is He who said (**John 14:6**), “I am the only Way to God, the only Truth from God, and the only Life with God, and no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

Make sure it is Jesus Christ you believe in: God’s Son, Lord and Savior, who was crucified, resurrected, and is coming again, to take all those who believe in Him to be with Him in heaven forever!