

Luke 9 is a transitional chapter. First, in verse 51 it says, "As the time approached for Him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem." In other words, from v. 51 on, Jesus deliberately set His face toward Jerusalem, anticipating the cross, resurrection, and ascension. Secondly, it marks a change in ministry strategy. Up to this point, Jesus had done His ministry by Himself. He did all the preaching. He performed all the miracles. He answered all the questions. In Luke 9 Jesus empowers and sends the apostles to minister as His representatives. Lastly, in chapter 9 Jesus reaches the middle of His three years of ministry and the Galilean ministry comes to an end.

Mark 6:1-6 fills in some details between Luke 8:56 and 9:1, and helps in understanding why Jesus sent the apostles out at this time. It says:

*1 Jesus went out from there and came into His hometown; and His disciples followed Him.*

*2 When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands?"*

*3 "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him.*

*4 Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household."*

*5 And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.*

*6 And He wondered at their unbelief. And He was going around the villages teaching.*

After raising Jairus' daughter from the dead (Lk. 8), Jesus returned to His own hometown, Nazareth. The synagogue in Nazareth was where He, His family, friends, and neighbors went to worship. But it was also the synagogue in Luke 4 where they reacted so violently to His message that they tried to throw Him off a cliff. Now, midway through His ministry, Jesus goes back to Nazareth to preach to them one more time. But they respond no differently; even though they saw His wisdom and admitted that He had done miracles, verse 3 says they took offense at Him. As Jesus said, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household." Jesus marveled at their unbelief, departed, and began to go to other villages throughout Galilee (Mk. 6:6); it was at that time that Mark says He sent out the twelve.

***9:1 And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases.***

***9:2 And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing.***

Jesus would be in Galilee only a few months more and would then be gone. Time was of the essence. If the gospel was to be taken to all the towns and villages of Galilee one last time, He would have to multiply Himself; He did this by sending the twelve.

The disciples went through different stages of their calling. They were first called to believe and then to leave everything (Matt. 4:18). Later, in Luke 6:13, Jesus *named* them "apostles." Apostles were people sent by someone to be their official, authoritative representatives. Although they were called apostles in

Luke 6, it wasn't until Luke 9 that the apostles were actually *sent out to do the ministry* that Jesus had been doing. They were given authority and power (Lk. 9:1, 2) to represent Jesus by preaching the gospel of the kingdom and doing miracles. This prepared them for the time when Jesus would send them into "all the world" to preach the gospel (Matt. 28:19-21; Acts 1:8).

The apostles' priority was to preach about the kingdom of God. This was the priority of Jesus. In Luke 4:18 Jesus defined His mission from the Book of Isaiah which says of Him, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news." In 4:43 "the good news" is synonymous to preaching the kingdom of God. In 7:22 Jesus gave part of His messianic credentials to the disciples of John the Baptist by saying, "the poor have the gospel preached to them." And in 8:1 it says, "He began going about from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God." So the apostles were to imitate Jesus; they were to go out and preach that God has a kingdom and that people can enter His kingdom through repentance and belief in the Messiah. The only restriction placed upon them is found in Matthew 10:5-7. There Jesus said, "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" The reason for focusing on Israel becomes obvious in the historical context. Since the promises of God were made to the people of Israel first, God would offer the promises to them first. Israel was to be the channel through which the blessings of God were to flow to the Gentiles.

Furthermore, the apostles' preaching was accompanied by displays of power over disease and demons. Matthew 10:8 says that they also had the power to raise the dead.

Miracles affirmed people as God's messengers:

- Acts 2:22: Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, *a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him* in your midst, just as you yourselves know-
- 2 Corinthians 12:12: *The signs of a true apostle were performed among you . . . by signs and wonders and miracles.*
- Hebrews 2:3-4: how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, *God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.*

The apostles' ministry we see in its infantile stages in Luke 9 is fully matured in the Book of Acts. When Peter healed a man at Solomon's portico, the people were amazed. Peter responded by saying, "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, *as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk? . . . it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man. . .*" (Acts 3:12, 16). Then as he stood trial before the Sanhedrin to give an account for the incident they asked, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?" (Acts 4:7) Peter replied, "Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that *by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead-- by this name this man stands here before you in good health*" (Acts 4:10). Peter made it

clear that he didn't have the power to heal; the man was healed because Peter was Christ's apostle; he was an official representative, empowered by Jesus to do the work that Jesus Himself had done.

In sum, as Jesus' representatives, the apostles were given authority and power. They preached the same message that Jesus preached. They cast out demons as He did. They displayed the compassion of God toward people who needed deliverance from sorrow, suffering, anxiety, fear, and death, just as Jesus did through His miracles. Through His empowerment, they multiplied His ministry throughout Galilee.

**9:3 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.**

**9:4 "Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that city.**

**9:5 "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."**

**9:6 Departing, they began going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.**

Before Jesus sent the twelve out, He gave them instructions (Lk. 9:3-5). The parallel passage in Matthew 10:8-10 says, "Freely you received, freely give. *Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support.*" This is the key for understanding Luke 9:3 - the good news of the Kingdom, the power to heal, the casting out demons, and raising the dead had been given to the apostles freely, so they were giving it out freely. Jesus wanted them to trust in the provision of God and not receive anything in return. They were not seeking personal benefit from people's sufferings. By giving them no options, Jesus prevented corruption from creeping into the proclamation of the gospel. Paul also forfeited his right to receive financial support in order to avoid the appearance that he preached for money (1 Cor. 9:12). Jesus (and Paul) wanted to make it clear that the benefits of the gospel are *free* from start to finish.

However, in Matthew 10:10 Jesus also said, "a worker is worthy of his support." Though the proclamation of the gospel should not be driven by the desire to personally benefit from it, it was not wrong to receive food and lodging in return for their work - for a worker is worthy of support.

In addition, according to Luke 9:4, they were to stay in the first house that offered them lodging until they were done with their work in that city. It appears that the principle behind this command is that they were to be content with what was given them without trying to "upgrade" to something better; they were not to make decisions that were motivated by personal comfort.

Going out with nothing and receiving nothing in return made the apostles apply the lessons about faith in God that they had observed in chapter 8.

Although these *principles* are still applicable today for anyone who preaches the gospel, it should not be assumed that this lifestyle was always expected. In Luke 22:36 Jesus seemingly reverses what He told them in Luke 9; He says, "But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one." The change in instruction is due to the change in circumstances. In Luke 9 Jesus was training His disciples to trust God for their needs, to learn

contentment, and to be free from the temptation of accumulating wealth through the proclamation of the gospel. These principles are still true today. However, in Luke 22 He was giving them instruction for what to do after His departure. Thus, Luke 22 does not reverse what was said in Luke 9; rather, it shows that they would be rejected once Jesus was gone, so they needed to be prepared for the pressures that were to come.

Lastly, in Luke 9:5 Jesus told them that if people rejected their message, they should shake the dirt off their feet. This was a Jewish custom. Whenever a Jew traveled into Gentile lands and then came back across the border into Israel, they shook the dirt off from all their garments and sandals. They would not defile the Holy Land by bringing Gentile dirt into it. This practice became a symbol of disdain. Some examples of this appear in Acts. When Paul and Barnabas were driven out of Antioch, Acts 13:51 says, "they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium." Then in Acts 18:6 it says, "When they resisted and blasphemed, Paul shook his garments and said, 'Your blood be on your own heads.'" The act meant that Paul was abandoning them to go their own way. This was tantamount to regarding these Jews as pagan (Marshall, 245). In Acts 20:26-27 Paul says something similar to 1 Cor. 9:17: "Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God." Paul saw his gospel ministry as a stewardship entrusted to him. However, once he fulfilled his stewardship by proclaiming the message, he took no responsibility for what would befall those who rejected it.

***9:7 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,***

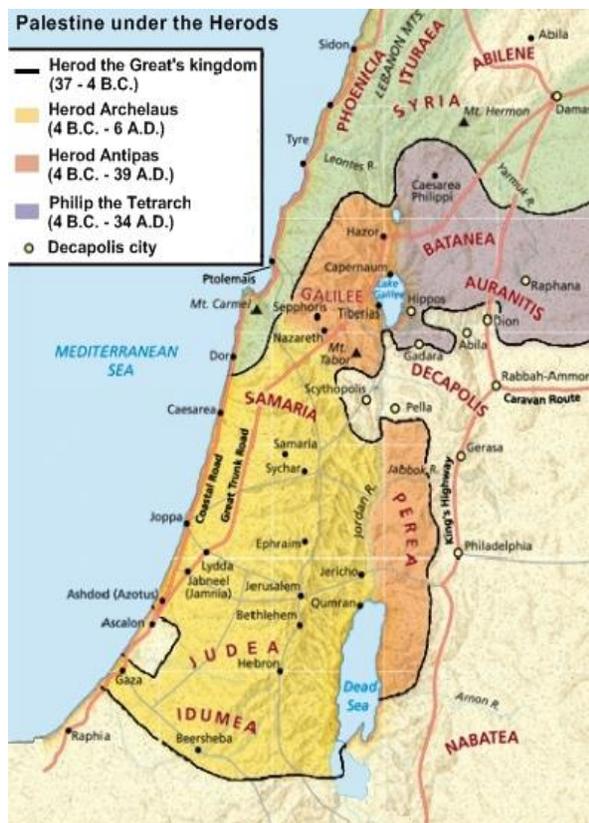
***9:8 and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen again.***

***9:9 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 9:7-9 is a paragraph that pops up out of nowhere. It shows the extent of Jesus' ministry. News about Him even reached the palace of the ruler of Galilee and speculations concerning His identity were growing. Herod's inquiry focuses on the most important question anyone could ever ask: Who is Jesus? This wasn't the first time someone asked this question. In Luke 5:21 the religious leaders asked, "Who is this man . . .? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" In Luke 7:20 the disciples of John the Baptist asked Jesus, "Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?" When Jesus forgave the sins of a woman at a Pharisee's house, "Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, 'Who is this man who even forgives sins?'" (Lk. 7:49). Likewise, when Jesus calmed the storm, the disciples asked: "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?" (Lk. 8:25). In Luke 9:18 Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do the *people* say that I am?" and then in 9:20, "Who do *you* say that I am?" As late as Luke 20:2 people were still asking, "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this authority?" Even hours before His crucifixion, questions about Jesus' identity were still being asked; in Luke 22:67 members of the Sanhedrin questioned, "If You are the Christ, tell us;" and again in Luke 22:70, "Are You the Son of God, then?" The gospels are written to answer this question.

Herod was a family name (the Herodian dynasty); “tetrarch” means “ruler of one fourth”; thus, the title meant that Herod was one of four joint rulers of the province that was once ruled by his father, Herod the Great.

Herod the Great was not a Jew but he had been assigned to rule Israel by the ruler of the entire Roman Empire, Tiberius Caesar. Herod the Great murdered two of his sons fearing that they would try to usurp him as king. He was also the one who killed the children in Bethlehem in an attempt to assassinate Christ in His infancy (Matt. 2:16). When Herod the Great died, his territory was divided into four regions.



1) Herod’s oldest son, Archelaus, ruled Judea; however, he only did so for a couple of years for his heavy handedness in the region caused great unrest, and “his government was taken from him, his possessions were all confiscated by the Roman power and he himself was banished to Vienna in Gaul” (ISBE).

Rome replaced him with governors, the fifth being Pontius Pilate who governed when Jesus was crucified.

2) A second region went to another of Herod the Great’s sons, Philip, who ruled over Iturea and Trachonitis, the region east of Galilee. This area included Bethsaida, where Jesus fed the 5,000. Philip was shortly succeeded by Herod Agrippa (Herod the Great’s grandson). According to Acts 12, he was the one eaten by worms internally for not giving glory to God. At that time, Herod Agrippa was also given the territory of Lysanias (see “3” below).

3) A man named Lysanias was given the region north and west of Galilee.

4) The fourth region, which included Galilee and Perea, was given to **Herod Antipas** (another son of Herod the Great). ***This is the Herod who is called Herod the Tetrarch in Luke 9.***

Herod Antipas was superstitious (Matt. 14:1), cunning (Lk. 13:31) and wholly immoral. He was hated by the Jews because he set up idols, desecrated a Jewish cemetery by building his capital city (Tiberias) on it, and for being a Roman. Herod Antipas, like his father, loved evil. In Rome he seduced and married Herodias who at that time was the wife and niece of his brother, Philip. So Herodias was not only Antipas’ brother’s wife, she also was his niece. He was rebuked by John the Baptist for this which resulted in John’s imprisonment. According to Mark 6, Herodias hated John the Baptist and wanted to put him to death, but couldn’t “for Herod was afraid of John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy

man, and he kept him safe." However, opportunity came when Herod gave a banquet on his birthday. At the party the daughter of Herodias came in and danced. So pleased was Herod and his dinner guests that he said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you want and I will give it to you" (Mk. 6:19-22). "And she went out and said to her mother, 'What shall I ask for?' And she said, 'The head of John the Baptist.'" (Mk. 6:24). Thus, Herod had John beheaded and gave the head to Herodias on a platter. No wonder Herod, harassed by a guilty conscience, was thinking, "This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him" (Matt. 14:2).

As the testimony of Jesus spread, others were also speculating about who He was. Some said Elijah the prophet had returned; this was based on the Old Testament promise that Elijah would be the forerunner for Messiah (Mal. 3:1; 4:5). Others thought He was one of the other prophets (cf. Matt. 16:14).

There is no record of Jesus ever going to Tiberias or of Herod meeting Him until the trials leading to His crucifixion. Jesus was first tried before Pilate who found Him innocent. Pilate then sent Him to be questioned by Herod Antipas. It says in Luke 23: "Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him. And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently. And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate" (Lk. 23:8-11).

At Jesus' trial, Herod's original fear that Jesus might be John the Baptist was gone so his interest in Jesus descended to nothing more than a sick curiosity. He asked Jesus lots of questions. He wanted to see a miracle. He mocked Him, treated Him with contempt, and dressed Him in a robe before sending Him back to Pilate (Lk. 11:23). Though Herod was in the presence of the only one who could save him, never once did Herod show any concern over how he might receive forgiveness for sins.

From what we know, Herod never came to know who Jesus was. Someday, however, he will. Instead of Jesus standing before him in judgment, he will stand before Jesus. He will meet Him as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 17:14), the judge of heaven and earth (Jn. 5:22). He will be forced to bow at His feet (Phil. 2:10). He will stand before a Holy God and books will be opened and he will be judged according to his deeds written within them. What will this incestuous, immoral man who murdered the Messiah's forerunner and mocked the Lord of Glory be thinking as the books are opened? What would you and I be thinking were it not for the grace of God?