

The Exclusive Glory of Jesus Christ, Part 2

Luke 9:32-36

Open your Bibles and turn to Luke 9. We're going to be returning, here, to Luke's account of the transfiguration, Luke 9:28-36. We actually started this account last week and learned about the setting for the transfiguration. We heard about the unveiling of Christ's divine glory, the meeting then, that took place up on the mountain between Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. It's an amazing scene. And today we're going to see how God the Father answered the prayer of Jesus Christ, his Son. And how he answered that prayer for his sake and for his disciples, and how significant and meaningful that that answer proved to be.

Let's start by reading there in Luke 9:28 and following, "Now about eight days after these sayings," those sayings, those are the ones from verse, basically starting back in verse 18 all the way up to verse 27. So that whole scene there, "about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the

appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

“Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah,' not knowing what he said. As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is my Son, my Chosen One, listen to him!' When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.”

We see the grace of God visiting. This is God's intention all along. This was Jesus' intention as he prayed to the father for these three disciples, for their strength and for their confidence. And God descends to answer the prayer of his beloved

Son. Look at verse 34, God descends, "as Peter was saying these things." I love that!

The words are barely out of his mouth, and God is descending. He is answering. He's visiting Peter and the others with his presence and his grace. It's Matthew 6:8, right "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him." Peter's starting to ask, he hasn't even finished his sentence. There's no period or punctuation on it, and God's there. "As Peter was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud." Notice the repetition, there. It's the word, cloud, cloud. Again, in verse 35, the cloud. The cloud came and overshadowed. They entered the cloud. A voice came out of the cloud. This verse here, this scene, it's about the cloud.

Just briefly, if you would, turn back to Exodus chapter 40. Exodus chapter 40. And I want to show you, here, this, this same cloud in Exodus chapter 40, which came to Moses and overshadowed him about fourteen hundred years earlier. The Lord went with Israel. He'd led them along through the wilderness wanderings by day in a pillar of cloud and by night in a pillar of fire to

give them light. So the cloud was an indication of the abiding presence of God. God, who led them, who gave them direction. God who protected them from their enemies. God, who sustained them with his mercy and compassion. God, who provided for their needs. The cloud is a visible symbol of the divine presence, the divine favor even, a reminder of the favor and the grace of God.

At the end of Exodus, after Israel constructed the tabernacle and its implements of worship, the veil, the ark, the table for the showbread, the lamp stand, the ark, altar of incense, the altar for burnt offering, all the rest. After that God commanded Moses to not only built it but to set it up, to erect the temple, to put it in place. They prepared everything. They consecrated Aaron, his sons.

And that same cloud, the one that led them all along the way, that glory, that cloud now settled on that tent. Exodus 40:34 and 35, "The cloud, then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, the glory of the Lord filled the temple. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."

Now I want to just point out a few parallels between those verses, there, and then what Luke recorded in Luke 9:34, several parallels as well as one significant contrast. First, when Luke writes, a cloud came, that's a summary and parallel statement with what Moses had written. "The cloud covered the tent of meeting, the glory filled the tabernacle." That is what Peter and John and James witnessed, the coming, covering, filling glory of that same cloud.

Second, when Luke writes about how the cloud, overshadowed them, Moses had written, "The cloud settled on the tabernacle." Now in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, one with which the disciples, Jesus himself was familiar, the word settled is the Greek word, *episkiazo*, and that is the same word that Luke uses, which is translated into our text as overshadowed. The cloud that Moses watched as it settled upon the tabernacle, the disciples watched that same cloud settle, *episkiazo*, upon them.

Third, the Hebrew word, which is translated by the Greek word, *episkiazo*, overshadowed or settled. That word, *episkiazo*, translates the Hebrew verb *šākan*. *Sakan* means to settle upon. It means to rest upon. It means to, to dwell upon. *Sakan* is the word from which we get, *shekinah*, as in the *shekinah* glory of God. So, yes, we should think of *shekinah* as shining and bright and everything else, but that's not its meaning.

It's meaning is, the dwelling glory of God, the settling, dwelling, abiding glory of God. Luke wants us to see the connection to Exodus 40 so that we see clearly that the same abiding, dwelling, and remaining presence of God that settled upon the tabernacle in Exodus 40, it is the same cloud of glory that settled upon these disciples. It's the dwelling, it's the abiding, it's the remaining glory of God.

Now before I show you the one contrast here, between Exodus 40 and the Transfiguration scene in Luke 9. You can turn back to Luke 9, by the way. Let's stop and consider the amazing grace of God, here. Peter had wanted to build three tents, three tabernacles, in hopes of abiding here, remaining here, basking

as it were in this display of glory. And God said, Nah. That's not what I've got in mind. Let's take it up a notch.

Instead of Peter doing anything to keep the glory there, God did something. God did something. Peter, you can't accomplish this. You can't make this happen. I can. So God visited the scene. He came down. He abided. He dwelt. He settled his glory. His shekinah glory came and settled. He is the one who is going to do this. He's the one who takes the initiative. He is the one who has the power to make this happen, not Peter. Beloved, we don't have the power to make this happen. God does.

Consider the contrast, now, with Exodus 40. When the cloud came, when the cloud settled upon the covered, and covered the tent of meeting, when the glory filled the tabernacle, notice that Moses there in Exodus 40, he was not able to enter the tent of meeting. The glory there overwhelmed him. Same thing happened, by the way, at the dedication of Solomon's temple. David had lamented that while he was living in a permanent house in Jerusalem, he saw the ark still dwelling in the tabernacle, in a tent, and he, he felt ashamed. So David's last great act was to provision his son Solomon with all that he needed and

commanded him, then, to build a temple, not a tabernacle, but a permanent, fixed place, a temple for the Lord in Jerusalem.

Solomon did that. He was faithful. He conducted everything according to what David had commanded. 1 Kings 8:10-11 says, "When the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, because the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord." What's different in Luke 9:34? The divine glory comes. The divine glory overshadows them. Yes, they were afraid, but they were afraid "as they entered the cloud." They weren't pushed away. They were drawn in. Same verbs used in the Septuagint translation of Exodus 40:35, Luke 9:34, it's the verb, *eiserchomai*. Moses was unable, it's a negation of the word *dunomai*. So he's not able to enter, *eiserchomai*. Peter, John, and James, they *eiserchomai*-ed. They entered into the cloud.

What made the difference between Moses and these three disciples? Were they any better than Moses? No. The difference is that Jesus Christ is standing there with them. Now Moses, along with Elijah. Now Peter, along with James and John, because



Jesus is standing there with all of them, they are now able to enter into the cloud of God's shekinah glory. Why is that?

Because John 1:14, Jesus Christ is the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us. Dwelt, there, is the word, *skenoo*. It's the word tent. It's the word tabernacle. "The Word became flesh and he tabernacled among us." He is literally God with us.

It isn't Peter who needed to build a tent, a tabernacle for Jesus or for anyone else. What he needed, what we need, is for God to make the tent, for him to tabernacle with us, that he might dwell among us in the person of Jesus Christ. So John says, the apostle John, as one of those who stood there on this occasion with Peter. He who was descended upon by the cloud, he who was overshadowed by the presence of God, he who was enveloped into the glory of God, John wrote, "We have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." "No man can see my glory and live," God said. And yet, "We have seen his glory."

We're not done, yet. There's still more to see in this perfect picture of divine grace. Verses 35 and 36, "A voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen

to him!’ And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone.” God provided Peter, John, and James the cloud so they could see, so they could see the glory of God in relation to Jesus Christ. That Jesus Christ is the glory of God. Now God provides the voice so that they can hear the glory of God also in relation to Jesus Christ.

Again, echoes of the Old Testament on hearing the word of God, Mark read it this morning. “*Shema, O Israel.*” *Shema* is a verb that means to hear, to listen, to heed. Old Testament echoes on hearing the Word of God, always with a view to obey it. Moses wrote, Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear, O Israel. The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently. You shall talk of them when you sit and walk and lie down and rise. You shall bind them before your eyes, and you shall write them.” Hear! Hear these words! Teach them, talk about them, bind them, and write them. A lot about the Word, the Word, the Word, the Word. Listen. Hear. Heed. Obey. God spoke from the cloud. He spoke to them.

Back in Luke 3:22, you remember, Jesus emerged from the waters of baptism there. John's baptism, "A voice came from heaven," saying something very similar, he said, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." The voice of God, there, the father, coming out of heaven, when he spoke, he spoke directly to his son. Here, the voice comes out of the cloud, the voice of God the Father, and coming out of the cloud, it speaks not to the Son. It speaks to the disciples. And these words that he speaks from heaven, from the cloud, this time it's for them. "This is my Son, my chosen one. Listen to him."

What's that a reference to? It goes back to the prophecy of Moses. I'll ask you to turn back one more time to Deuteronomy 18, Deuteronomy 18 and verse 15. This is all about, all about the prophecy of Moses, about hearing and heeding the words of God. Hearing and heeding the words of, of God spoken through the end times prophet, the one. It's not any prophet, but is the prophet, the one for whom Israel had been waiting and watching and looking for, anticipating.

Look at what Moses said in Deuteronomy 18:15-19, "The Lord your God will raise up a prophet for you, a prophet like me from

among you, from your brothers, it's to him you shall listen." God is repeating himself in Luke 9, "It's to him you shall listen, just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.' The Lord said to me, 'They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.'"

God has spoken, hasn't he? He's placed his stamp of approval, here, upon his son, upon his chosen one. Interesting expression, there, it comes from the verb for divine election. *Eklego*, to choose, to select, to elect. Jesus is God's chosen elect Savior. We are God's chosen elect people, both of us selected and chosen by God. I can't help but say it, but God didn't look down the corridors of time and see, Oh, there's Jesus. He looks good. Let me, let me elect him. That's not what happened. He chose him "from before the foundation of the

world,” and chose the people that he would give to his son also from before the foundation of the world.

As if to put a punctuation of silence upon the point back in Luke chapter 9 again, Luke 9:36, “When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone.” Boy, that makes the emphasis, doesn’t it? Don’t look around for Moses. His purpose has been fulfilled. Don’t look around for Elijah. His ministry has been completed. They’ve done what they were designed by me to do, God says. They have pointed to Jesus Christ. Look no further. Listen to no one else.

Luke doesn’t tell us, but Matthew does, that Jesus had to help these men to recover from all this. Matthew 17, “When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and they were terrified.” I mean, if you just spoke as Peter spoke, hey, let me, let me treat Jesus, Moses, and Elijah as parallel and make them each a tent.

And then God said this. Like I’d be on my face, too. “They fell on their faces, they’re terrified. But Jesus,” I love this

tenderness, "Jesus came and touched them, saying, 'Rise, have no fear.' And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only." Such tenderness in the gentle touch of Jesus. Knowing our weaknesses, knowing our lack of clarity, knowing our ignorance, knowing our mistakes, our errors, our, knowing our sins. He's tender, helps these men recover.

In their mortal condition, these men could not have survived apart from the presence of Christ. In their mortal condition, they could not in their unglorified state, they could not have survived except Jesus is standing with them. He's enabling them, here, to survive the cloud of God's shekinah glory. They had, they had actually done what Moses could not do. They entered the cloud where no mortal had ever entered before, not even Moses.

So like Moses, they descended the mountain. Moses descended with the Law of God in his hands, a law that while revealing the righteousness of God, it was a law that condemns. But they descend the mountain, and they were accompanied by the one who fulfilled the Law and the Prophets. They were accompanied by the very embodiment of God's grace and God's truth, "For the law was

given through Moses," John 1:17, "grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

So verse 36 says, "They kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen." Why not? Because apart from the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, this spectacular display of glory would be nothing more than a spectacle. This dramatic scene would be nothing more than drama apart from the interpretation provided by the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The real meaning would be lost on people in a pre-resurrection time, so they waited. They waited until Jesus accomplished his exodus, which he would do in short order in Jerusalem.

Let's not forget that this whole scene is an answer to Jesus' prayer for his disciples. We've noted this before. That the disciples, prior to this, a week earlier, they'd heard some difficult sayings from Jesus. They'd heard some perplexing teaching from him about his resurrection, which meant his prior death, which meant his prior rejection. That, that didn't factor in for them. They heard about cross-bearing as the mark of discipleship, like the, the scorned cross. They were to carry one of those and follow him?

So Jesus asked the father to strengthen the faith of his disciples, to secure their confidence in him. And the father answered like this. He strengthened their faith by revealing the glory of Christ. He strengthened their faith by putting his stamp of approval on their, on his Son. He put his, his mark of approval, his imprimatur, on all that his Son was teaching them, saying, listen to him. So it's gone away from the look at him and now, listen to him, listen. He strengthened their faith by making this exclusive, helping them see that Moses and Elijah, they're serving a larger purpose, to point to Christ. Having done that, they've served their purpose. They've served their purpose.

That's no diminishment to Moses and Elijah. Them serving that purpose, it's the most glorious purpose any of us can serve, to point to Jesus Christ. And if we point to Jesus Christ, you know who we stand should to should with? Moses. Elijah. Peter. James. John. How about we spend our lives that way? Is that worth it? Have you ever wondered how Peter knew that the two men standing with Jesus were Moses and Elijah? Maybe he overheard something. Um, but according to how the



account is written, there really isn't much time between their sleep time and the time when the alarm went off and they woke up, and they're, the men are walking away. You don't really see any introductions. Now perhaps that happened, it's just not recorded. But to me this is the indication that Peter knew the identity of Moses and Elijah, he knew it supernaturally. That it came to him because of the Spirit of the Lord.

It's not so hard to believe, is it? I mean, Peter, John, James, they survived the overshadowing power of God's glory in the cloud of God's glory without veiling their faces, and they did so in their mortal bodies. Moses and Elijah are standing them in their, standing there in their glorified bodies able to be. Peter, James, and John, they're standing there, they're able to survive. Why? Because Jesus is standing there with them. That's supernatural, isn't it? He enabled them in their unglorified state to survive the presence of God, and that happened supernaturally as well.

Think about what that might mean for us in the reality of heaven. No need for introductions. No need to guess. No need to have a picture, a few pictures, you know, to look at and say,

Oh, oh there he is! We'll know each other's identities. We'll know that supernaturally. Just as we are fully known, we'll know. But also notice that while Peter in his unglorified state, he's interested in spending time with Moses and Elijah, he lacks clarity. We already talked about that, but notice by contrast how Moses and Elijah, in their glorified state, they're not so interested in knowing Peter and the disciples. When they come and visit, they want to talk with Jesus. They're centered on him. They're not saying, hey, Jesus, it would be really great if you'd make some introductions. You know, these apostles, they're going to have names on the foundations of the city! Moses and Elijah are, like, eh, let 'em sleep. They went straight to Jesus, talked with him, visited with him. Again, that's not an insult to Peter and the others. It's just a reality of Christ's superior glory.

When we're glorified, beloved, when, when everything is, when we see clearly. It's, going to heaven is not about seeing Grandpa again, as much as we love our grandparents. It's not about seeing other people that we miss. I mean, that will be there, we'll know them. We'll see them. Being in our glorified state, apart from sin, forever in the presence of God, it's

about God. It's about Christ. It's just another indication, here, that Christ is all we need. At the end of the day, no offense to one another, he's all we want.

We're not like Moses, who had put a veil over his face. Whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom. We all with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. This comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

So beloved, listen, if you want to look full on at the glory of Jesus Christ, go ahead and look. Go ahead and stare. It's not impolite. Gaze at him. He invites you to do so. The Father commands you to do so. The longer you look at him, the more you study him, the deeper you reflect upon him, the more you worship him, the more you will be "transformed into the same image, from one degree of glory to another. This comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." Let's pray.

Our Father, what glorious things of thee are spoken. What glorious things here you have revealed to us. In some ways, there's such simplicity that is account for so many questions we have that are, that remained unanswered. We don't understand how all this worked together, how, just even in the ontology of it. It really does baffle our minds. But Father, what you've taught us here, is quite simple. Look upon Christ. Listen to Christ. Hear him. The Lord Jesus Christ is one with you, Father, sharing all your full, divine glory and one with the Spirit. And the Spirit is the one who authored the entirety of Scripture.

So when you say to us, Father, "Listen to him," we're to listen to the Word. We're to see in Christ the Word incarnate, the very glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We're to hear in Jesus Christ your Word. Help us to listen well, to heed, to study, to understand and obey. Help us to find great delight in knowing him and knowing you through him. We thank you that by faith, because of your grace, we are found in him. We don't have a righteousness of our own, but a righteousness of God on the basis of faith. We thank you that you've loved us and sent your Son to die for us to bring us to you. It's in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen.