

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## LUKE 9:27-10:24

Usually, when you think of Israel, *the land of the Bible* - camels, and deserts, and donkeys, and Bedouin tents come to mind - **not ski slopes!** But Israel has a winter ski resort. On Mount Hermon, 60 miles north of the Sea of Galilee, at the border of Lebanon, and Syria, and Israel, the Israelis love to play in the snow.

Mount Hermon is over 9000 feet above sea level.

And it's a strategic site for Christians since it's probably where Jesus was transfigured in His glory.

There were two semesters in Jesus' teaching of His disciples. From the outset of His ministry, His emphasis was on **who He was, His identity.** And on retreat at Caesarea Philippi, He quizzed His men, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter got it right, "The Christ of God."

But that began the second half of their training which emphasized **where He was going - His destiny.** He was headed, **not to a coronation, but to a cross.**

And yet it's significant, that before Jesus takes His disciples to a *gory cross*, He first shows them *His future glory*. They'll see Jesus bloodied, and beaten, and bruised. It's vital they first see His splendor.

On the summit of Mount Hermon, at the site of today's skiing, Jesus braces His men for the rigors of the cross with a glimpse of His post-resurrection glory.

This is what Jesus is referring to when He tells His disciples in 9:27, “But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God. Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray.”

Caesarea Philippi was situated on the southern slope of Mount Hermon. After a time with His twelve disciples, He took Peter, John, and James mountain climbing. Together they ascended to the summit.

One year our tour group drove to the top of Mount Hermon. It was the off-season and no one was there.

It was majestic. It seemed as if the residue of God’s glory had lingered. On the mountaintop earth and heaven seemed to come together. Time bumped into eternity. *It was the same for these three disciples...*

For we’re told, “As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening.” For the previous 33 years of Jesus’ life, the glory of God was veiled in human flesh. Yet now Jesus lets His magnificence radiate through His humanity.

The brilliance of His *Godhood* burned through the veneer of His *Manhood* for the disciples to witness...

And what Peter, James, and John saw on the mountain that day, so impressed them that they talked about it for the rest of their lives. Years later in 2 Peter 1:16-18, Peter still recalls this moment on the mountain.

Verse 30 “And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.”

Moses represented the Law. Elijah the Prophets. Both appear to testify of Jesus.

And rather than *His identity*, they speak of *His destiny*. Moses and Elijah confirm His inevitable death.

*And imagine, the disciples are allowed to eavesdrop!*

“But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him.” Apparently, the three amigos almost sleep through the holy moment. Peter sees Jesus’ glory, wiping sleep from his eyes.

And if ever there was a moment to stand speechless this was it, *but not Peter!* It’s said, “There are two types of people in the world: those who have something to say and those who have to say something.” Peter was the latter type. He’s just got to open His mouth...

“Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah” - not knowing what he said.” “Jesus, this is so cool! Let’s pitch tents and stay right here!” He had no sense of the preparatory nature of what had occurred. He was caught up in the *moment* and had ignored the *mission* on Jesus’ mind.

Verse 34 tells us, “While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they

entered the cloud.” This was no ordinary weather system. God’s presence shrouded the summit.

“And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” It was a rebuke of Peter! “Peter, you should stop talking and start listening...”

And this is good advice for us all. God gave us two ears and one mouth because He wants us to do twice as much *listening* as *speaking*. Even when we pray, most of our time is spent *telling God* rather than *listening to God*. As believers, we need to “*Hear Him*”?

Verse 36 “When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.

Now it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a great multitude met Him. Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, “Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child. And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him.” As soon as Jesus and His star-struck disciples reach base camp, all hell breaks loose. They find a desperate dad and his demonized son.

So often in the wake of a mountaintop experience with God, Satan strikes back. Our enemy hates it when God reveals His glory, and the enemy tries to retaliate.

This father told Jesus, “So I implored Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.” Apparently, he was referring to the nine disciples who’d been left below.

Then Jesus answered and said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.” I’m sure Jesus still gets weary *bearing with* His disciples’ lack of faith.

“And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed him. Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father.” As a father myself, I can’t help but see this from the dad’s perspective. For years this man had watched his son go through these fits of madness.

The demon would seize him. His muscles would lock up and shake uncontrollably. The boy would flail away in pain and bruise himself. And there was absolutely nothing this dad could do - *but just watch and weep.*

I use to think it was *taxing* parenting babies - then *difficult* parenting teenagers. But by far, the toughest time in a child’s life to be their parent is when they’re grown, and on their own, and you have to sit on the sidelines and watch them go through bruising and excruciating experiences - *and there’s little you can do!*

Yet imagine the elation when Jesus “*gave the boy back to his father*” - *healed, free, healthy, happy.*

If you have a child who’s being harassed by the devil I’d encourage you to bring that child to Jesus in prayer. The Lord

might just give him back to you healed. Verse 43, “And they were all amazed at the majesty of God.”

“But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, let these words sink down into your ears...” The disciples were so caught up in the euphoria of all *they had seen*, Jesus was worried they would overlook what He was *about to say*.

Verse 44, “For the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men. But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying.” Instead of the truth sinking into their ears, it sailed through one ear and out the other. Messiah’s destiny - His betrayal and torture and execution - was so contrary to their expectations the mention of such things just didn’t register with them.

It reminds me of the woman who awoke and realized her husband was missing from bed. She found him in their baby’s room, standing over the crib. She studied his gaze... a mixture of awe, delight, amazement...

She thought, “*What a wonderful husband and father, staring at our baby, praying and pondering over our child.*” She threw her arms around his waist, and whispered to him, “*Honey, tell me, what are thinking?*”

The man replied, “I just can’t believe anyone can make a crib this sturdy for only \$49.95.” Well, likewise Jesus had some important truths to convey to His disciples, but sadly they were on a different frequency.



And it gets worse. They were not only dense to Jesus' intentions, they were also proud and selfish.

Verse 46, "Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest." Jesus is headed to the cross, and the disciples are jockeying to be boss.

"And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a little child and set him by Him, and said to them, "Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great."

Having coached years of Youth Baseball I've found most kids care less about winning or losing, and who makes All-Stars, and more about playing with their friends. Records and rewards are for parents, not kids. A child cares only because he sees a parent cares.

Jesus agrees. He says the greatest in God's Kingdom isn't the *adult*, but a **child**. A child's *purity of motive* and *absence of greed* ranks him as greatest in God's Kingdom. For a child, it's about playing the game the best he can, helping others, and *being on God's team!*

"Now John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us."

But Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side." Did you hear about the guy who went to heaven? An angel was giving him a tour when he saw a sign on a door. It said, "Entrance Forbidden." He asked, "*Why can't I enter that room?*"

The angel replied, "Because the Church of Christ meets in there and they think they're the only ones up here." Let's avoid sectarianism - that our group is the only right group. What God is up to in the world is bigger than any one group. *There is such a thing as sound doctrine, but in non-essential matters, we need to leave room to differ with one another.* Not everyone going to heaven will see every issue the same way.

"Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face." Jesus is now locked in. It's His last lap. His eyes are on the finish line. He's rolling toward the cross.

"And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem." The Samaritans were a half-bred race, *a mixture of Assyrian and Jew.* This created animosity between the folks in Samaria and Jerusalem Jews.

So when the Samaritans heard that Jesus was headed to Jerusalem, they ignored Him. They failed to roll out the red carpet and it ticked off His merry men.

"When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" James and John, want to torch the town of Samaria. This is where the brothers with hot tempers get their nickname, "Boanerges" or "Sons of Thunder."



“But (Jesus) turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of.”

Verse 56, “For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.” And they went to another village.” Notice, Jesus not only came to do God’s will, but to do it God’s way - *in the right spirit...*

These boys had a short fuse. They hoped to host a barbecue Elijah-style. *Use the Samaritans for beef tips.*

They had a concern for Jesus’ reputation, but no sense of His spirit. And this is a mistake we make...

Much damage is done under the banner of Christianity, by people who go out in Jesus’ name, but know nothing of His nature. You can’t represent Jesus if you don’t know His heart and His ultimate intentions.

And today, His goal is the same as it was then - not *revenge*, but *redemption*. Jesus’ goal has never been to beat His enemies, but to win them over as friends.

Commentator Bruce Larson makes a great observation on this verse. He writes, “The calling down of fire and brimstone still has appeal. Those churches who take a strong stand *against* all the evils of life are prospering. They are *against* sin, the devil, alcoholism, pornography, communism (make your list). People will flock to join the “*against*” churches - those with a negative thrust. It's much more difficult to attract a following for a positive program, one for God and for our neighbors. That's too ordinary and unexciting.”

And Larson is right. It’s easier to *call down fire from heaven* than to *reach out in love*. Condemnation is easier than

compassion. It takes less effort to burn a bridge than to look past their sin and care for their soul.

And remember, the Samaritans' sin was racism.

If anybody deserves a little fire from heaven it's a Samaritan supremest. If it was anything like today racial prejudice was the unpardonable sin. Yet, Jesus showed mercy on a town full of bigots and racists.

He came not to cancel folks, but to include them in His family. To represent Jesus we need to embrace His *"manner of spirit..."* And realize, *"The Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them."*

Verse 57 *"Now it happened as they journeyed on the road..."* And on this journey, Jesus encounters three would-be disciples. These men approach Him with legitimate excuses. Take note of Jesus' wise response.

First, *"Someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go. And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." Whenever we tour Israel we stay in 4 and 5 star hotels, eat gourmet food, and ride in an air-conditioned bus... but not Jesus!"*

The Lord roughed it... not because **physical comforts** are evil. Jesus never took a vow of poverty or proposed that we all should live a monastic lifestyle.

Jesus lived without creature comforts not because they're wicked, He just didn't want them cluttering up His life. He knew a man's quality of life has nothing to do with his stuff. We find joy in *spiritual* not *material* matters. Jesus refused to

get attached to this world, and He wants His followers to have the same attitude.

“Then He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.” At first, this seems harsh.

*Why would Jesus forbid a son from attending his father’s funeral?* Yet paying his respects wasn’t the issue. Jesus knew the only reason this son wanted to be at the funeral was to get his cut of dad’s inheritance.

This man’s issue was **financial security**.

He may’ve heard Jesus’ encounter with the previous fellow. He’s thinking, *“It’s ok if I don’t get rich following Jesus. I’ll just lean on my inheritance.”* He would follow Jesus, but with a back-up, a contingency, a security blanket. Jesus says, *“Let your siblings sort out dad’s inheritance. Don’t you worry about what you’ll get. Follow Me.”* If Jesus is Plan A, don’t trust a Plan B.

“And another (prospective disciple) also said, “Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.” But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” Here the issue is *urgency*.

Jesus isn’t against families or good-byes, but when the *Jesus train* leaves the station you’ve got to decide between the sentimentality of kissing mama goodbye or getting onboard? To follow Jesus you can't drag your feet, or look

over your shoulder, or **live in the past**, or worry about the “*what ifs*”... You’ve got to get onboard!

Farmers say you can never plow a straight furrow looking backward. You end up with waves, not rows. Your plowing gets crooked looking over your shoulder.

Likewise, you can’t live for Jesus living in the past...

*Past weaknesses* rob us of hope... *Past failures* undermine our faith... *Past affections* steal our passion... *Past attractions* subvert our focus... Even *past successes* create pride and lull us to sleep...

The point is not to live in the past, but the present.

Handle the past like a rearview mirror. An occasional glance is okay, even helpful. But focus on the rearview mirror and you’ve taken your eyes off the road. You’ll crash. It’s been said, “**Live with your back to the past, your hands to the plough, and your eyes to the future.**”

These men on the road teach us of three issues that get in our way of following Jesus - **present comforts, future security, and past preoccupations**. The solution is to make Jesus our *yesterday, today, and forever*.

Chapter 10, “**After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.**” Jesus is now moving south. He’s traveling from Galilee to the capital of Jerusalem. He commissions an advance team - 35 pairs of disciples.

Of course, the question arises, *why 70?* And I can think of several possibilities... **First**, Moses used 70 judges to help

him lead Israel... **Second**, the Jewish Supreme Court, or Sanhedrin, consisted of 70 rabbis...

But here's the more likely, in Genesis 10 "the table of nations," 70 names represent the number of people groups around the world. Jesus chose 12 disciples, because He came to reach Israel's 12 tribes. But here He chose 70, since He also came to reach the world.

And why Jesus dispatches His disciples two by two is a bit simpler... **There's safety in numbers.** Go with a friend and there's double the knowledge, double the wisdom, double the zeal, and double the accountability.

God didn't let the animals board the Ark on their own. He brought them aboard two by two. **And Jesus always sends out His disciples in pairs - it's called pair power!**

**"Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."**

Two thousand years later this is still true.

There's always a shortage of Christian workers. We need volunteers who'll help the church in its mission.

And Jesus tells us how to recruit that help... We can sponsor workshops, and training seminars, and Bible colleges... but the key to recruiting workers is to pray.

Verse 3, **"Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves."** The world in which we're to operate is a vicious, and hostile, and dangerous place. Expect opposition. Wolves will try to eat you alive.

## Be prepared to fight, but be careful how you fight.

We can't harden to our surroundings and become no better than our enemy. We need to fight evil with good - and hate with love - and ugliness with kindness.

And we should “Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road.”

Apparently, this mission was born out of a sense of urgency. Jesus knew it wouldn't last long. There was no need to take a lot of baggage - just travel light.

And He warns of cumbersome conversation. Oriental greetings, *like some Southern greetings*, lasted forever. There was meaninglessness, but obligatory chit-chat. Jesus wanted His men to avoid getting bogged down.

As servants of Jesus remember we're on a mission.

Verse 5, “But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you.”

The expression, “son of...” was a way of defining a person's nature. James and John were called “sons of thunder” because of their explosive temper. Jesus called the Pharisees “sons of disobedience.” Here, the phrase “son of peace” means a peaceful person.

So find a peaceful person, “And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house.” If fellow believers are willing to put you up don't visit a dozen homes holding out for the best accommodations. Be content and be grateful.



“Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you.” Don’t be picky!

“And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'” Notice, Jesus considered bodily healing a sign that *His kingdom had come - that God is in the house or on the throne - that God is ruling*. Healing is still a sign Jesus is among us.

“But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, the very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.” A laborer for God has to be able to handle rejection. And rejection prompts two reactions: either **feelings of failure** or **desires for revenge**.

The way to deal with both is by remembering that our responsibility is to simply provide folks an opportunity.

This is why you shake the dust off. Dusty shoes are a sign I did my duty. I went. You had an opportunity. **Wiping the dust means my responsibility is done.**

Verse 12, “But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city.”

And Jesus now mentions several cities that will be held responsible for the rejection of His kingdom...

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!” which means “**house of fishing**.” Bethsaida was a fishing village on the northern end of the lake where the Upper Jordan feeds into the Sea of Galilee.

Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum were the prominent cities on the lake during the time of Jesus.

And of the three, I love Chorazin. I always take our group there. It was built on a hill overlooking the lake.

It had a panoramic view, a perfect climate, fertile fields. It sat on a prosperous trade route. It was a city with all the advantages. But **with privilege comes responsibility**. And because it missed its opportunity to receive Jesus, today it's nothing but charred ruins.

Jesus says, "For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you." Tyre and Sidon were Phoenician cities on the Mediterranean coast. Mark 7 is the only recorded time Jesus visited either city.

Yet He spent the majority of His ministry between the three cities: *Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum*.

It was here that Jesus worked countless miracles. This why we call the area "The Gospel Triangle."

Jesus is teaching us *the severity of a person's or a city's judgment will be measured by the degree of their opportunity*. Again, *with privilege comes responsibility*.

*No one preached Jesus to the city of Sodom, Tyre and Sidon received only a minor witness, whereas for a season Chorzin, and Bethsaida, and Capernaum hosted the Messiah and His miracles on a daily basis.*

*So who's judgment will be greater?*

If Tyre and Sidon, or even Sodom, had been given the privileges of Chorazin - revival would've occurred in short order. Instead, its citizens rejected the gospel, and they'll end up in a hotter spot in hell as a consequence.

*And if that was true of Chorazin; then what about Capernaum? Verse 15, "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven..."* Capernaum was Jesus' headquarters. Probably twice as many miracles were done in Capernaum than in all other places combined.

Yet the city that was "*exalted to heaven will be thrust down to Hades...*" And lest we turn up our nose at Capernaum for their unbelief, *we need to take heed!*

CalvaryCSM is also a privileged bunch. *What are we doing with our opportunity?* Let's check ourselves.

For in verse 16, Jesus says. "*He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.*" To reject the messenger is to reject the One who sent Him. Beware!

And at this point, *The Seventy* head out.

How long they're gone we're not told, but when they return, verse 17 tells us, "*Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."* They were excited. They'd wrestled demons and won. They tag teamed with God to work miracles. *And they're returning with press clippings.*

But Jesus has to address a few misconceptions...

First, “Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

Jesus makes sure the disciples know their success had not been the result of their own power. The devils had fled because they met **the authority of Jesus**.

Understand the difference between **power** and **authority**... For 47 years, a petite, little old lady named Greta Coble was the crossing guard on Skyland Dr. between the SGHS parking lot and the school. She stopped traffic for students. Greta recently retired.

Amazingly, monster trucks and tractor-trailers came to a dead stop for this tiny lady. And they did so, not because of her power. She had **no** power. *They feared her authority*. They could easily plow her over, but she was authorized by a power greater than her own. Mess with Greta and you had to tangle with the Gwinnett PD.

And this explains how a mere disciple of Jesus can drive out a supernatural demon. No hairy, burly, gnarly demon fears a spiritually petite and powerless disciple.

We have *no power* of our own. But demons recognize *our authority*. For Jesus authorizes us to do business in His name. The Lord of glory has our back!

We lack power, but have great authority in Jesus!

And in verse 20 there’s another misconception Jesus straightens out, “Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

The Seventy returned excited about what *they had done for God*, but Jesus says they should've been thrilled over what *God had done for them*. Here's the real miracle, "*your names are written in heaven.*"

It should be no surprise to us that demons flee at Jesus' name. What should stun us is that a Holy God is willing to pardon sinners like us. *The source of our joy is not what we do for God, but what He's done for us!*

Verse 21 tells us, "*In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight."*

Jesus rejoices that the truths His disciples are living out were hidden from the religious scholars of the day.

Proud rabbis and theologians sat in darkness, while men with simple faith walked in the light of God's love.

It proves what's true even today - God reveals Himself to people with childlike faith. *He reserves His insights for humble hearts, not haughty minds.*

Jesus continues, "*All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.*"

Here's a statement with profound implications. Jesus is the sole gatekeeper to God. The Son has exclusive access to the Father. The only people who can truly know God are those

who come through His Son. No one who denies or by-passes Jesus can know God.

“Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it.”

The avalanche of miracles and revelation brought by Jesus would be the envy of prophets and kings. Holy men in OT times saw God and His wonders at a distance. A fog of sin kept them separated from God.

But Jesus brought God’s truth up-close and personal. His disciples didn’t know they’d been given front row seats to the mysteries of God. Spiritual babes were now more enlightened than the Hebrew prophets.

And this is still God’s way of allocating His blessings. It’s not *what* you know, but *Who* you know that counts!