



# CATHOLIC SCRIPTURE STUDY

Catholic Scripture Study Notes written by Sister Marie Therese, are provided for the personal use of students during their active participation and must not be loaned or given to others.

## SERIES I

### THE GOSPEL OF LUKE AND ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Lesson 12 Commentary Luke 9:51 - 10

Lesson 13 Questions Luke 11 and 12

### JESUS JOURNEYS TO JERUSALEM Luke 9:51 - 10

#### I. INTRODUCTION

This journey narrative is special to Luke. From 9:51 to 19:28, Luke gives sayings and events from another source in addition to Mark, whom he has been following. He gives this section a theological meaning rather than a straight geographical account, by linking every word and deed with the last journey of Jesus to Jerusalem, telescoping more than one journey from Galilee into Judea, omitting others, but pointing all emphatically to Jerusalem, the Holy City. The main point of all this is that it was the Will of God that Jesus suffer, die, and rise again in the Holy City. Jerusalem had a deeply religious meaning for Luke, which he probably learned from Paul, his leader. Two views of Jerusalem are given:

1. The city of the Rabbis, priests and the Pharisees: a culture of national, narrow interests.
2. The new Jerusalem of Jesus and the Church: a worldwide assembly of Jesus' followers, humble, prayerful people from every nation, who find salvation in the cross and in the glory of Jesus.

We need to ask ourselves: Is our religion narrowed down to those who "keep the rules," to a triumphalism that looks down on those not in our fold? Do we joyfully spread the faith, or just keep it?

Or, do we value the humble, prayerful life more than any other? Do we realize that persecution and the Cross save the world, not worldly success, nor a life of health and happiness for their sake, but, that when our grain of wheat dies, then it brings forth an abundant harvest of goodness and glory?

#### SOME PRINCIPAL THEMES IN THESE CHAPTERS

1. Sacrifices required for discipleship (Luke 9:57-62).
2. God's action in history—directing the simple ones (Luke 10:21).
3. Reliance on persevering prayer (Luke 11:1-13).
4. The supreme value of man's response to God's word (Luke 10:38-42).
5. The seriousness of refusing to repent (Luke 11:29-13; 11:27ff).

6. The sinfulness of hypocrisy (Luke 11:37 - 12:3).

Luke presents Jesus with a goal set clearly before His eyes: to go up to Jerusalem to suffer and die for others' salvation. Following Jesus' example and teaching will lead to suffering; but this suffering will lead to full consecration and glorious triumph! ("No cross, no crown.")

## II. GOING THROUGH SAMARIA

**A. Preparation (Luke 9:51).** Luke begins this major section with solemn words recalling the prophet Elijah before he was taken up into heaven in a fiery chariot (2 Kings 2:9-11). The expression "taken up" surrounds the journey to the cross with the light of glory. Luke uses the same words in telling of Jesus going up to heaven in the Ascension. He is clearly saying that the cross is the road to glory.

Next, we hear the sorrowful theme of the Suffering Servant, from Isaiah 50:7. "I have set my face like flint" says the Servant in Isaiah. "Jesus steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," writes Luke.

Jesus sent messengers before Him "to make ready for him." It is interesting that this phase of spreading the good news is in the Church's forefront today, with the title "pre-evangelization." This may have been, however, to arrange for Him to stay somewhere. The age-old enmity of the Jews of traditional Hebrew religion and these part-Jews through inter-marriage with pagans imported there after the Babylonian invasion, came forward here, and they rejected Jesus' coming (Luke 9:53) because "his face was set for Jerusalem."

John and James, whom Jesus called the "Sons of Thunder" asked if they could call down fire from heaven, much as Elijah had, but Jesus taught them and us non-resistance to rejection and ill-treatment, remarking that "the son of Man came

not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." and He took the quiet step of going to another village.

**B. Total Dedication (Luke 9:57-62).** Here follow three vocation stories:

1. Jesus describes His own poor life, while at the same time using the "Son of Man" title, (a "man" coming from the glory of heaven), implying that He wants followers who will follow Him in detachment and destined for glory.
2. He tells another would-be follower who asked that he first bury his father (perhaps meaning that he would follow Jesus after his father died) that the spiritually dead could bury the physically dead, but that following him should not be put off.
3. Then he told another that anyone looking back was not worthy of Him.

Do we fit any of these types? What do we learn for ourselves from these words?

## III. JESUS SENDS DISCIPLES ON MISSION (Luke 10:1-24)

**A. Instructions (Luke 10:1-16).** Only Luke mentions "seventy-two others" whom Jesus sent out. In Acts 1:15 and 21, he mentions "a hundred and twenty brothers gathered together: those who were of our company while the Lord Jesus moved among us." Luke must have found some of these and learned this in his "thorough following up all things that have occurred."

Luke shows Jesus ratifying the authority of those who lead His future Church. One difference is that He sent these out two by two, but the Apostles in Matthew's account, have the fullness, each in his own right.

In these instructions Jesus lays down for the Church the conditions for a journey to the cross

and glory: the utter dependence on God and on those whom they serve; their announcement of the closeness of the Kingdom, the reign of God over mankind, displacing the reign of Satan and his power; the peace and blessing they are to bring to homes; their rejection by some, acceptance by others, even in the same family, and the resulting division over Jesus and His call; the fate of cities who saw and heard Him and His deeds; and the declaration of His identity with those who announce Him; all prefigure the history of Christians.

**B. Results (Luke 10; 17-23).** The word joy comes here several times: the disciples' joy at seeing the amazing power their word had, through Jesus' name; Jesus' joy at seeing the fall of Satan at His transfer of power to His disciples whom He sends, as Matthew says, like lambs, like doves, into a violent world; and Jesus' own joy as He breaks out in vocal praise of His Father's revealing such tremendous truths to the simple of the earth, the humble and obedient to His word; and His own joyful mission of revealing the Father to mankind. And He, in the midst of all the joy, remembers to caution the disciples, and us, that our joy should be not so much in what we accomplish for Him, in our works, but that we are God's chosen ones that "our names are written in heaven."

Luke gives Jesus' words about the harvest His disciples will have, and His sad comment about the fewness of the laborers. His solution is one word: "Pray" (Luke 10:2). It is the Lord of the harvest who "sends forth laborers" and this saying of Jesus indicates that God depends on our prayers for the increase. Today, we are seeing a return to our former awareness of this need, in the magazines, newspaper articles, homilies, and workshops, on fostering vocations. And along with this, a fruit of the past years: is an awareness that vocations to the work of spreading the Gospel include all of us, lay, religious, and priests, and all should be prayed for and encouraged.

#### **IV. PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN (Luke 10:25-37)**

**A. The Lawyer Not Far from the Reign of God.** Mark tells the story of a "scribe" who came up and questioned Jesus about the "first of all the commandments." Luke tells the same story, adapting it to his Gentile community by changing scribe to "lawyer." Jesus asks the lawyer what the law says. The answer contains the "Shema", the Deuteronomy text recited everyday by Jews: "You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, your whole soul, your whole strength, and your whole mind" (Deuteronomy 6:5). Luke has the lawyer add to it a verse from Leviticus: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." It is thought that Luke adds to Mark's story in order to tell the parable of who our neighbor is.

At any rate, these words from the Old Testament, placed in the New Testament, and praised by Jesus, show Judaism at its best, and make us pause to examine how we love God. Is it with our "whole" self? The first three of the Ten Commandments relate to our relationship with God. This is first in our priorities. How many Christians do not put God first in their lives! Do we?

**B. "Who is My Neighbor" (Luke 10:25-37).** A Jew from Jerusalem, the capital of the nation, the religious center of all the Jewish race, a privileged resident, went to Jericho, one of the oldest cities in the world, and 800 feet below sea level (Jerusalem is 2500 feet above). There is a certain area of the road which goes through cliffs and caves. Robbers often inhabited these and assaulted passersby. This happened in Jesus' story here, and the man was left "half-dead," which may have brought fear to the priest and the Levite (a temple leader), for to touch a dead person was to be "unclean." At any rate, though these two represented the law, and know the law, they missed its deeper purpose, which is the law of love of God, self, and others. But the Samaritan, whom a good Jew would studiously avoid, whom all Jews despised as traitors by intermarriage with

pagans, and who worshipped in a temple outside of Jerusalem, overcame all resentment for such ill-treatment, and showed tender love and care for the one who needed him, though his enemy. Really, this uneducated half-pagan rose to the height of Jesus' own law of love: love your enemy.

Such a story was shocking to the Jews; that Jesus showed the Samaritan as hero, wounded their pride, and they felt rebuffed. We often are shown our failures and feel our pride hurt and ourselves put-down. The way we should use this is to take the point to heart and begin to recognize our fault and correct it. This is learning from this parable. Another thing to learn is that our neighbor is anyone in need, especially one whose need is made known to us. The Samaritan fulfilled the Old Law best by his universal charity, while the ritually right Jews did not.

**C. Another Story of How to Love God (Luke 10:38-42).** This was an actual event that Luke puts here to show that the whole Gospel is not contained just in loving service to others, no matter how important. Christian discipleship is first and foremost personal adherence to Jesus. There must be time to listen to His "word." Devotion to Him as Savior and Lord is the "one thing

required." Without prayer, loving service may or may not be authentic love of God.

Another interpretation is that Jesus loved Martha and knew that she loved Him, but that she was overly anxious about "many things" thus having no time to visit with Him. Not only that, but she expected and requested that Mary join her busy-ness, leaving Jesus. The "one thing is necessary," in this line of thought, would mean that only a simple meal of one dish was needed, not anxiety over many.

Still another interpretation is that in us is both a Martha and a Mary; one active and provident and aware of life around us; the other, more contemplative, seeking interior life, life of the Spirit. These two need balancing; we need both in our lives. We must plan daily to "sit at the Lord's feet and listen to his word." Do we think that attendance at Sunday liturgy is enough for our spiritual growth? Do we have enough humility to learn from other Christians who study and live the words of the Gospel, gathering three times a week for this? They do not have our Eucharist, but they feed themselves on the word of God more than many of us. As members of this Catholic Bible Community, let all of us continue as we have started in this program, and invite others, drawing them into such a love of God's word.

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**QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 13**  
**Luke 11 AND 12**

- Day 1 Read all the lecture notes and the scripture references.
- a. Underline anything that helped you in the section about Jesus sending disciples on mission (III A, B).

- b. What specific points in the lecture helped you?

- Day 2 Read Luke 11:1-13. Compare with Matthew 6:5-15.
- a. Give the verse or verses that help or challenge you most.

- b. Read Luke 11:14-28. What does Jesus claim in verses 21-23?

- c. In verse 28, how does Jesus refer to the real excellence in His mother?

- Day 3 Read Luke 11:29-36.
- a. How will Jesus be a sign of Jonah for His age?

- b. Read Luke 11:37-54. What does he say that the Pharisees and lawyers paid attention to? Do these tempt Christians today? Give an instance.

Day 4 Read Luke 12:1-12.

- a. What are the three sayings of Jesus here on suffering for our faith in Christ (verses 1-3, 4-7 and 8-12).
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- a. How do these sayings apply to ways the Lord may call you to be willing to lose your life (or an aspect of it) in order to save it?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. Read Luke 12:13-34. Our Lord calls us in these two parables to trust Him rather than money. As you meditate on them, list some applications to your life at work and at home.

Day 5 Read Luke 12:35-48. This passage teaches us much about what it means to be “servants” of God.

- a. What points in this passage help you understand what it means to be a servant of the Lord?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. Read Luke 12:49-53 and re-read Luke 12:8-9. Meditate on how you have, do, or may experience the division that sometimes results from following Jesus. Are you willing to share Jesus’ baptism of suffering?

Day 6 Re-read Luke 11:9-13, 12:10-12. What do these texts teach us about the role of the Holy Spirit in our Christian lives?