

## The Transformation of the Twelve

R12.2 January 2025 Blog

Since many have undertaken to compile an account of things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, it seemed fitting to me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it out* for you in an orderly sequence, most excellent Theophilus; so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

~ Luke 1:1-4 (NASB20) ~

What changed in the lives of Jesus' followers, those who physically walked with Him during His earthly ministry of three-plus years? Luke's Gospel gives us more than a glimpse into the incredible and amazing impact Jesus had on His followers. The change that occurred in them from the account documented through chapter 23 of Luke to chapter 24 is nothing short of miraculous. **They were forever changed, and profoundly so.**

Indulge me for a moment in a callous response – *So what?*

Now, seriously, I have read Luke countless times over the years, and I believe most of you have as well. Has it impacted me? Has it impacted you? Should it? Please read on...

You see, Luke wrote a gospel (a good news story) that tells the story of Jesus. Consider the transformation of the 12<sup>1</sup>, the 72 (Luke 10:1,17), and 120 (Acts 1:15) from the time they start following Jesus till His resurrection. They all witnessed Jesus. These 12, 72, and 120 witnessed:

- ⇒ Jesus filling the nets with fish (Luke 5:1)
  - Response of Peter: In fear he falls at Jesus' feet
- ⇒ Jesus healing the leper (Luke 5:12)
  - Response of the leper: Obeys Jesus' command
- ⇒ Jesus healing the paralyzed man (Luke 5:17)
  - Response of the crowd: Praising God in amazement
- ⇒ Jesus raising the widow's son (Luke 7:11)
  - Response of the crowd: Filled with awe they praise God
- ⇒ Jesus saving the apostles crossing the Sea of Gallilee by commanding the storm to cease (Luke 8:22)

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<sup>1</sup> The twelve obviously became the 11 when Judas betrayed Jesus.

- Response of the 12: Fear
- ⇒ Jesus healing the demon-possessed man (Luke 8:26)
  - Response of the people: Fear
- ⇒ Jesus feeding the five thousand (Luke 9:12)
  - Response of the crowd: Attempted to take Jesus by force and make Him king (John 6:15); many of His disciples left Him (John 6:66)
- ⇒ Jesus displaying His splendor like a bright flash of lightning with Moses and Elijah (Luke 9:28)
  - Response of Peter, James, and John: Fear
- ⇒ Jesus healing the demon-possessed boy (Luke 9:37)
  - Response of the 12: “Why could we not do it?”
- ⇒ Jesus healing the crippled woman (Luke 13:10)
  - Response of the synagogue leader: Condemns Jesus
- ⇒ Jesus healing the 10 lepers (Luke 17:11)
  - Response of the lepers: Only one thanks God
- ⇒ Jesus restoring the sight of a blind man (Luke 18:35)
  - Response of the man: Praises God
- ⇒ Jesus having risen from the tomb (Luke 24)
  - Response of the women: Fear
  - Response of the 11: Doubt, confusion, wonder
- ⇒ Jesus walking among them for 40 days and then ascending in the clouds (Luke 24, Acts 1)
  - Response of the 11: Worshipped Jesus, returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising God

### **Truths to Consider**

After being with Jesus for 3-plus years and witnessing all that Jesus did, they saw Jesus tried and killed by the rulers of Jerusalem and the Romans. One of their number betrayed Jesus and committed suicide. Their dreams of a ruling Kingdom were shattered only to see a miracle that no one could account for or understand. Jesus was killed and His body was laid in a tomb. They all witnessed this. They next went into hiding only to have Jesus resurrected and standing in their midst. They spent 40 days with Jesus as He outlined all that took place, GOD’s plan, and what GOD expected of them. What happened to these 12 men (minus Judas), these 72 men, these 120 followers (see Acts 1:15). They no longer doubted the truth of who Jesus is, they no longer viewed life from the earthly plane. Truth invaded their lives to the core. Their hopes were transformed from provision, safety, comfort, and health to an earnest hope of life with Jesus. Their ambitions of being

fishermen, doctors, lawyers, wives, mothers, leaders were replaced with desires of becoming humble servants of Jesus. Their pursuit of the needs for food, drink, clothes, homes were replaced with the pursuit of Jesus' kingdom. Their desire for wealth, power, and position was replaced with a desire to have a relationship with Jesus bound in fellowship with HIM. Their focus moved their hopes, ambitions, needs, and desires from the trappings of this world to the life-giving relationship with Jesus. Truth changed them from worry to peace. Truth forced them from pursuit of position to absolute surrender. Truth transformed them from leaders to followers.

### **Observations and Questions**

Let's make this personal. Imagine you witness someone being raised from the dead. You check his pulse and know for certain he is dead. Imagine you witness the wasted flesh of a leper restored before your very eyes. Imagine you see your life flash before you as you sit in a boat sinking amid a storm so severe that you know it is going to kill you. Finally, imagine you see a man brutally crucified on a cross, buried, and sealed in a tomb for 3 days. All that you know tells you that this is the end; there is no hope past what this world offers; your ambitions of being the greatest in the restored kingdom of Israel are shattered; your whole livelihood is destroyed after following a man for 3 years and now who is dead and buried; your dreams of ruling all the people with this man and not wanting for anything are wiped out. Just when all this sinks in, you encounter this same man standing in your midst indisputably alive from the dead. Then you eat, drink, and spend time with him for 40 days. This same man gives you the great commission and then you watch him ascend in clouds before your very eyes. GOD then gives you the indwelling Holy Spirit.

*Take a moment, slowly reread this paragraph, and then consider:*

- ⇒ Would this transform you?
- ⇒ Would this change what you value, what you hope in/for, what you desire, what you want?
- ⇒ If not, what would?

### **Application: Urgency or Complacency?**

Those closest to Jesus, these eyewitnesses experienced lasting transformation and lived their lives with a sense of urgency and purpose (see the Book of Acts, 2 Timothy, 2 Peter, etc.). The transformation in their lives was palpable as they set about carrying out the Great Commission. Consider the change in Peter, and later the undeniable conversion of Saul to Paul. These men became unstoppable, relentless in their pursuit of Jesus; complacency

was not in their vocabulary. The cares of this world did not exist for these men. Their encounter with the risen Jesus transformed them into Luke 9:23 men: “If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”

What about us? What about you? What about me? Consider these self-reflection questions:

1. For what do I hope?
2. What ambitions do I have?
3. What do I think I need, or what is it that I desire?
4. Have I encountered the Jesus who willingly submitted His will to His Father’s?
5. How well do I understand Jesus’ demand in Luke 9:23-26? (*please invest time here*)

January has nearly passed. Most people who made New Year’s Resolutions have already moved on to life as usual. Do you have a *Life Resolution* driven by a transformed heart? Let us not live lives of complacency, but I pray Lord Jesus that we are living our lives on this earth as people who are losing their lives for Your sake, denying our own desires, and taking up our crosses daily in pursuit of You. Time is short, opportunity abounds, lead us in faithful submission to Your perfect will. Amen.