

A Moment on the Mount with the
New Moses:
An Exegesis of Luke 9:28-36

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Introduction

The glorious narrative of the Transfiguration of Christ has a clear *prima facie* meaning and function in the life of Christ; namely, to affirm and illustrate that Jesus is glorious and supreme (cf. 2 Pet.1:16-18). However, it has been quite a different venture for exegetes to piece together the plethora of imagery and motifs in each account (Matt.17:1-9; Mark 9:2-10; Luke 9:28-36) to form a unified pattern of meaning for the whole event.¹ To be sure, each one needs to be understood in the context of each particular Gospel in order to discover the individual nuances present.² The subsequent exegesis will attempt to explore the likelihood of a Mosaic string that ties this event together given an examination of the Lukan account. More precisely, attention will be focused on the function of the passage as a key step in Luke's development of the "new" Exodus theme. It will be noted where the Lukan Transfiguration highlights the significance of Mosaic typology more than the other synoptic authors, even Matthew who is generally recognized for his strong Mosaic typology.³ With the contribution of Luke's material to those things already common to Matthew and Mark, it would seem plausible that the Mosaic motif provides the clearest paradigm for interpreting the event as a whole.

Context. The ninth chapter of Luke marks a significant advance in Jesus' discipleship of the twelve, as well as in the surfacing of the "new" Exodus theme.⁴ Before this time in Luke's

¹ "The Transfiguration is at once the commentator's paradise and his despair" (G.B. Caird, "The Transfiguration," *Expository Times* 67 (1956): 291). So Terence L. Donaldson, *Jesus on the Mountain: A Study in Matthean Theology* (JSNTSS; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1985), p.136 and David Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor: Prayer and Christology in Luke-Acts* (BSL; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), p.42.

² That being said, it is also important to look at the common elements in each Gospel. The Transfiguration contains many similar components. Walter Liefeld points out the common sequence: 1) Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah, 2) Jesus' charge not to tell others, 3) Jesus' prediction of His coming suffering, death, and resurrection, 4) His call to self-sacrificing discipleship, 5) Transfiguration, 6) A note about the disciples not telling anyone about the Transfiguration, 7) The Healing of the boy, and 8) A second prediction of Jesus' suffering ("Transfiguration," from Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall [eds.], *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992], p.834). Similarities in the Transfiguration are: a time designation, bringing of Peter, James, and John, a noticeable change in Jesus, appearance of Moses and Elijah, Peter's statement, coming of cloud, voice from cloud, fear of disciples, Jesus left alone, and disciples saying nothing. See David P. Moessner, "Luke 9:1-50: Luke's Preview of the Journey of the Prophet Like Moses of Deuteronomy," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102 (1983): 84-85 for characteristics of both continuity and discontinuity in the parallel accounts.

³ Cf. Dale C. Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), Terence Donaldson, *Jesus on the Mountain: A Study in Matthean Theology*, R.T. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), idem., *Matthew: Teacher & Evangelist* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1989), and W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (ICC; 3 Vols. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988-93)

⁴ The following is *pace* Jindřich Mánek, "The New Exodus in the Books of Moses," *Novum Testamentum* 2 (1955): 8-23, Susan R. Garrett, "Exodus from Bondage: Luke 9:31 and Acts 12:1-24," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52 (1990): 656-80, Moessner, p.575-605, Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), p.172-203, Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), p.352-5, Barnabas Lindars, "The Image of Moses in the Synoptic Gospels," *Theology* 58 (1955): 78-83, and

Gospel, Jesus was establishing a reputable, even famous, ministry. He got Himself thrown out of Nazareth (4:16-30), He was healing many, casting out the demons of many, and people were recognizing the power that came from Him (6:17-19). Since He called His disciples (5:1ff.), they had only been spectators and learners with the crowds.⁵ The twelve are sent out in 9:1-6, and endowed with the Spirit in order to “preach the kingdom of God and to heal” (vs.1).⁶ He sent them to do the very thing that he was doing and teaching them to do (4:43; 5:17; 6:19; 7:22; 8:1). In this way, their commissioning is identified with His Spirit-anointed mission (4:16-30). Through His anointing, Jesus not only claimed to be the “Messiah” described in Isaiah (cf. Isa.61:1ff.), but God Himself called Him the Son in whom He takes pleasure (3:22), referring to the “Servant of the Lord” in Isa.42:1ff. It is in the context of the “Servant songs” in Isaiah (40-66) that a high concentration of allusions are made to the “second” Exodus caliber of Israel’s redemption from exile.⁷ When Jesus quoted Isa.61:1-2, He said He was to “proclaim liberty to the captives...to set at liberty those who are oppressed”. This reference is linked to the “second” Exodus that God would perform by His anointed Servant.⁸ Therefore, as Jesus is preaching the forgiveness of sins, healing the sick, and casting out demons by the Spirit, He is bringing the “new” Exodus of the eschatological age. Thus, when He commissioned the twelve, they began

Robert E. O’Toole, “The Parallels Between Jesus and Moses.” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 20 (1990): 22-29

⁵ Green, p.356

⁶ Although it doesn’t explicitly say that He gave them the “Spirit,” this is inferred by “power” (cf. 4:16-21).

⁷ Cf. 40:3-5; 41:4,9,17-20; 42:13-16; 43:1-3,14-21; 44:2,7,27; 46:3ff.; 48:8,20-21; 49:8-12; 51:9-10; 52:4,11-12; 54:3; 55:12-13; 58:8; 60:2,19; 63:1ff. See G.P. Hugenberger, “The Servant of the Lord in the ‘Servant Songs’ of Isaiah: a Second Moses Figure” from P.E. Satterthwaite, R.S. Hess, G.J. Wenham, eds., *The Lord’s Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), p.124.

⁸ So Rikki E. Watts, “Exodus” from T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (eds.), *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), p.483. Others that understand this passage in the context of the “Servant Songs” to be referring to a “second” Moses or a “second” Exodus are Marshall, *Luke: Historian & Theologian*, p.124-128, Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority*, p.184-5, idem., *Images of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), p.82,112, Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), p.218, G.P. Hugenberger, “The Servant of the Lord in the ‘Servant Songs’ of Isaiah: a Second Moses Figure,” p.135, and, although less clearly, J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), p.500 (“the exodus God”). See also R.T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament: His Application of Old Testament Passages to Himself and His Mission* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1998), p.132-5, and Allison, *The New Moses*, p.68-71, 233-235 who identify the “Servant of the Lord” as the Messianic Deliverer. Most see the “release” in 61:1-2 as referring to the eschatological “year of Jubilee” (Lev.25:8ff.; cf. Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. [AB; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981], p.532-3, Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:53*. [BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994], p.406,410, Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997], p.212, Craig A. Evans, *Luke* [NIBC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990], p.75, and N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* [COQG; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996], p.294-5). Robert Stein, however, rejects this notion (*Luke* [NAC; Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992], p.157). If one sees the “Jubilee year” overtones here, for which there are strong links, it should be noted that it is patterned after the Exodus (Lev.25:38,42,55; cf. Jer.34:13-17), thus implying “second” Exodus imagery.

to partake of this “Messianic” function in inaugurated form.⁹ The mission of Jesus and His disciples began to spark the curiosity of Herod the tetrarch (9:7-9). Luke uses this very precisely to plant the seed of some encounter with Herod (23:6-12), and to set up the question of the identity of Jesus (9:18-20). People were saying that Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead, or Elijah, or one of the prophets of old (9:8). This was confusing to Herod because he had John beheaded, so he begins to want to see Him (9:9).

After the twelve returned from their mission, Jesus withdrew with them to Bethsaida (9:10). When the crowds caught wind of their location, they followed Jesus and He welcomed them (9:11). Toward the end of one day, the disciples wanted to send the people away because they were in a desolate place (ἐρήμῳ “wilderness”), but Jesus had an object lesson in mind. He made it an occasion to miraculously feed (at least) five thousand people from five loaves and two fish (9:12-17). This is reminiscent of what God did for Israel during the Exodus when He fed them manna and quail from heaven (Ex.16:1ff.; cf. John 6:14,30-33). Jesus had them seating by fifties, which amounts to about a hundred groups (comp. Ex.18:21,25 and Luke 9:15).

The next scene brings the reader right back to the seclusion of the disciples (9:18-20). Jesus used the foregoing events as a springboard for Peter’s confession. Luke here introduces prayer into the context to set up the following revelation.¹⁰ Jesus raises the question of His identity to the disciples (9:18). The disciples give a summary of the responses offered by many to that question, which are strikingly identical to what Herod had been hearing (comp. 9:7-8 and 9:19). Peter affirms that they think He is the Messiah (9:20). Jesus then “strictly charged” (ESV) them not to tell anyone. Moreover, He told them for the first time (at least as recorded by Luke) that He was going to suffer and die and be raised from the dead (9:21-22). His suffering and death are the grounds on which He wants them to tell no one. Jews are expecting a deliverance (or “exodus”) from Rome through the Messiah, but Jesus is telling His disciples that to be associated with Messiah is to be associated with death (9:23-27). He raised the stakes of following Him and began preparing them for suffering. It is how they respond to His suffering in this world that will determine how He will respond to them when He comes in glory (9:25-

⁹ This is parallel, although never explicitly linked, to Moses’ sending of the twelve spies (Num.13:1ff.).

¹⁰ See David Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor: Prayer and Christology in Luke-Acts*, p.34-41 who picks up on the “seeing” and “hearing” language in Luke’s writings and their connection to the prayer life of Jesus. “Through his prayer Jesus enables those for whom he prays to receive his true identity and to hear his teaching; he becomes the proper object of their spiritual aspirations and the authority to whom they listen” (p.41).

26). To strengthen their commitment, or for at least a few of them, He assures that some standing there would see this glory before they die (9:27).

Structure. In connection with the preceding context, Walter Liefield has suggested the following chiasm unfolding a common pattern:¹¹

- A Jesus' *identity* is stated by Peter (9:20)
- B Jesus *death* is stated (9:22)
- C His *future* coming in *glory* is stated (9:26)
- C¹ His *glory* is visibly demonstrated (9:29)
- B¹ His *departure* (=death) is discussed (9:31)
- A¹ His *identity* is affirmed by the voice from heaven (9:35)

One could also see the parallelism concerning prayer and revelation:

- A Prayer with disciples in seclusion (9:18)
- B Revelation of Jesus' suffering, death and glory (9:22)
- A¹ Prayer with certain disciples in seclusion (9:28-29)
- B¹ Revelation of Jesus' glory and death at Jerusalem (9:31-32)

The boundary markers of the Transfiguration in the Lukan account are quite deliberate. He transitions with his usual ἐγένετο δὲ¹² and structures the pericope with two subsequent uses of καὶ ἐγένετο (9:29,33). ἐγένετο δε orients the reader to a change of events and each καὶ ἐγένετο points the reader to the changes within the event. These markers correspond well with the subject matter so as to separate the visual (9:29-32) and the verbal (9:33-36). "Hook words"¹³ also play a role in dividing up the text, as they are harbingers to what will shortly follow (cf. 9:28c-29a; 32d-33a; 33h-41a; 35a-36a). The passage has three clear sections: Setting (9:28), Occasion (9:29-35), and Outcome (9:36).¹⁴

Exegesis of Luke 9:28-36

9:28 Ἐγένετο δὲ μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους ὥσει ἡμέραι ὀκτῶ [καὶ] παραλαβὼν Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην καὶ Ἰάκωβον ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι. The scene changes as Jesus takes Peter, John, and James with him up on a mountain¹⁵ to pray (προσεύξασθαι) . Luke is the only

¹¹ "Transfiguration," p.835

¹² So Bock, p.865

¹³ This concept has been popularized by George Guthrie in his work, *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis* (BSL; Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994). He also presents an overview of this in his "Cohesion Shifts and Stitches in Philippians," from Stanley E. Porter and D.A. Carson (eds.), *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek* (JSNTSS; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), p.36-59

¹⁴ See appendix for full semantical display.

¹⁵ It is uncertain which mountain is being referred to here. Both Matthew (16:13) and Mark (8:27) inform us that they were in the region Caesarea Philippi and it was a "high" mountain (Matt.17:1; Mark 9:2), making Hermon the logical choice (eight miles away). Liefield, however, has provided good arguments to support the plausibility of Meron, which "boasts" itself "the highest peak within Palestine proper" ("Transfiguration," p.835).

one who includes the prayer dynamic of the event, which he uses to conjoin 9:18-36 as a “seclusion” unit. Luke connects this passage with the previous dialogue by saying “after these things” (μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους). This most likely refers to 9:27, “there are some standing here who will not taste death until you see the kingdom of God” (ESV).¹⁶ It says here that Jesus took with Him Peter, John, and James up on a mountain (παραλαβὼν Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην καὶ Ἰάκωβον ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος). These three were obviously part of the twelve (5:1ff.) and serve as the best candidates for “some standing here”. Furthermore, lexical coherence is provided with the use of forms for δόξη and αὐτός together in the same order in 9:26 and 9:32. We are told that “about eight days” (ὡσεὶ ἡμέραι ὀκτώ) elapse before Jesus takes them up the mountain. This is different than Matthew and Mark who both record “after six days” (Matt.17:1; Mark 9:2). Some have suggested that this might have been changed to allude to the Feast of Booths, which took place on the eighth day after the Day of Atonement (Lev.23:33-44; 2 Mac.10:6).¹⁷ Others have suggested that it is an idiom for “about a week”.¹⁸ The latter seems reasonable, but it does not exclude the former.¹⁹ The fact that he even gave a time frame with respect to going “up on a mountain” with three disciples triggers thoughts of Sinai.²⁰ “Mountain” imagery was commonly identified with Sinai/New Moses typology.²¹ This concept is enhanced by the inclusion of the three, Peter, John, and James (comp. Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu in Ex.24:1) and the features that will soon follow (see below). The presence of the three is indicative of the forming of the “inner circle,” which began in 8:51 according to Luke, but may be implied by at the beginning of their

¹⁶ pace Green, p.376-7, Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), p.380, Evans, p.149, and Francois Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), p.373

¹⁷ Evans, p.150, Bovon, p.374

¹⁸ Fitzmeyer, p.797, Marshall, p.382, Bock, p.866, D.A. Carson, “Matthew” from Frank E. Gaebelin (ed.), *Expositors Bible Commentary* (Vol.8; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), p.384

¹⁹ Luke could perhaps just be more precise, as he is with other features in this account. Other “eight day” occurrences of significance are circumcision (Gen.17:12; Luke2:21) and the consecration of the temple (2 Chron.29:17; 1 Mac.4:59; 2 Mac.2:11-12). Even if one does see “Feast of Tabernacles” allusions, it serves to remind readers of the Exodus event (Lev.23:43). See Evans, p.151.

²⁰ So Liefeld, “Transfiguration,” p.839: “The variation between the six days in Matthew and Mark and ‘about eight days’ in Luke could well be due to the fact that Exodus 24:16 specifies a waiting period of six days but also mentions a seventh day when the Lord calls to Moses plus an unspecified time for approach and descent.” Davies and Allison, however, offer wise caution about reading too much into the “days”. In response to the idea of Mosaic allusions being embedded in the “six days” in Matthew they say, “But this demands too much. The story of Jesus’ transfiguration was interpreted by means of Sinai motifs, not simply created out of them. One cannot, therefore, expect all the parallels to be perfect” (p.694).

²¹ See Craig C. Broyles, “Moses,” *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, p.561 and Donaldson, p.142-3. Allison (p.174-5) notes that of the twenty-four occurrences of ἀναβαίνω + ὄρος in the LXX eighteen belong to the Pentateuch, most referring to Moses (Ex.19:2,12,12; 24:12,13,18; 34:1,2,4; Num.27:12; Deut.1:24,41,43; 5:5; 9:9; 10:1,3; 32:49).

call to follow Jesus in 5:1-11 in light of the absence of the other nine. Nevertheless, this verse launches the “surprise party” appearances of familiar OT/Mosaic motifs.

9:29 καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ προσεύχῃσθαι αὐτὸν τὸ εἶδος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἕτερον καὶ ὁ ἱματισμὸς αὐτοῦ λευκὸς ἕξαστράπτων. As was noted above, καὶ ἐγένετο marks a change that will take place within the event. The present articular infinitive ἐν τῷ προσεύχῃσθαι (“while praying”) defines the moment as one of communion with God (cf. Ex.33:12-23)²² As Jesus was in prayer, He underwent an unprecedented change of appearance (τὸ εἶδος...ἕτερον). Luke, like Matthew, points first to the change of Jesus’ face (προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἕτερον), drawing out the Mosaic parallel in Ex.34:29-35.²³ The use of εἶδος in association with δόξαν in vs.32 furthers the Sinaitic imagery absent in Matthew (Ex.24:10,17).²⁴ As can be expected, there is typological escalation, in that, Jesus radiates His own glory, whereas, Moses reflected the glory of God.²⁵ Jesus Himself is the Theophany, shining forth His glory (τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ), radiating from the inside out.²⁶ That Jesus’ “garments were glistening white” (ἱματισμὸς αὐτοῦ λευκὸς ἕξαστράπτων) supports this reading, ἕξαστράπτω being associated with the glory of God (Ez.1:4,7; Dan.10:6) and the glory of heaven (Luke 24:4; Acts 6:10-11). “White garments” (ἱματισμὸς λευκὸς) always represent the heavenly realm in Scripture, and connote the righteousness/purity of the one robed (Dan.7:9; Eccl.7:8; Matt.28:3; Acts 1:10; Rev.3:4-5; 3:18; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9,13-14; 19:14; comp. Ex.19:11 and Luke 9:29). Most agree that this is indeed a foretaste of the glory

²² “Luke not only adds the element of his version of the Transfiguration, he emphasizes its importance by mentioning it twice in succession” (Crump, p.42).

²³ *pace* Bock, p.867, Stein, p.284, Evans, p.150, Marshall, p.383

²⁴ Moessner, p.588

²⁵ Many who seek to minimize the new Moses typological connections in Luke 9:28-36, as well as Matt.17:1-8 and Mark 9:2-9, do so by exploiting the discontinuity with the Exodus/Sinai narrative. For instance, the “day” link is not exact, Moses brought the seventy elders along with Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, there are only a few, vague vocabulary matches, Moses reflected glory for longer periods and Jesus only shone once, Moses descended to tell what he had heard and the disciples do not say anything, and Moses heard lengthy discourses and the disciples hear a short affirmation. To focus on such dissimilarities is to miss the point of typology. In typology, the anti-type is always an escalation of the type, and parallels were never intended to be exact (cf. Rom.5:12ff.). Therefore, escalation is a critical factor when considering new Moses typology (above, p.5, fn.20). See also R.T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*, p.38-80, David L. Baker, “Typology and the Christian Use of the Old Testament,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 29 (1976): 137-57, and G.P. Hugenberger, “Introductory Notes on Typology,” from G.K. Beale (ed.), *The Right Doctrines from the Wrong Text: Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), p.331-34 for fair-minded approaches to the topic.

²⁶ “Luke’s point...is not that Jesus experienced an internal adjustment of some sort that led to his transformed appearance, but that his inner being was made transparent to those who accompanied him...The transfiguration scene, then, is primarily about legitimation, as Jesus’ glory, the glory that will be manifested upon his exultation, is proleptically unveiled” (Green, p.389). See also Fitzmeyer, p.799, Bock, p.867, Stein, p.284, Davies and Allison, p.695, and John Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34* (WBC; Dallas: Word Books, 1993), p.498.

that will be manifest after Jesus' resurrection and at His coming (9:22).²⁷

9:30-31 καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες δύο συνελάλουν αὐτῷ, οἵτινες ἦσαν Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἡλίας, οἱ ὀφθέντες ἐν δόξῃ ἔλεγον τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ, ἣν ἤμελλεν πληροῦν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ. The next “surprise” (ἰδου) encountered in the narrative is the appearance (οἱ ὀφθέντες) of two men (ἄνδρες δύο) “in glory” (ἐν δόξῃ),²⁸ Moses and Elijah (Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἡλίας), who were talking with Jesus (συνελάλουν αὐτῷ). Many explanations have been put forth to account for why these two premier OT figures are present here. Some think that Moses represents the Law and Elijah represents the Prophets, thus implying metaphorically the OT witness to Jesus (cf.24:27).²⁹ Although Elijah was not a writing prophet, and these two are never paired together to represent the OT witness, this view has weight, in that, the witness motif is clear with the bringing of the three (9:28) and the heavenly voice (9:35). Others think that these figures typify the prophetic office (Moses) and the eschaton (Elijah).³⁰ This also seems to be a good candidate as this implication can be drawn from the only other link of their names in Scripture (Mal.4:4-5). However, both of these views are resident and absorbed into the second Moses typology. Elijah is the greatest OT second Moses figure. The most significant parallels include:³¹ both part bodies of water (Ex.14; 2 Kgs.2), both experienced Theophany at Sinai/Horeb (Ex.24; 1 Kgs.19), both hid in a “crevice” as the glory of God went before them (Ex.33; 1 Kgs.19), God brought storm, wind, and earthquake to both (Ex.19,20; Deut.4,5; 1 Kgs.19), both asked God to kill them (Num.11; 1 Kgs.19), both were wanted killed (Ex.2ff.; 1 Kgs.19), both were opposed by Israel (Ex.16; 1 Kgs.18) both called down fire to consume their enemies (Num.16; 2 Kgs.1), both called Israel to slay the ungodly (Ex.32; 1 Kgs.18), both built altars at the feet mountains “according to the twelve tribes of Israel” (Ex.24; 1 Kgs.18), both spoke in their own names (Deut.5; 1 Kgs.17), both fasted for “forty days and nights” (Ex.34; 1 Kgs.19), both, after the killing of idolaters, went up a mountain to have their prayers heard (Ex.32; 1 Kgs.18), both are fed supernaturally by God (Ex.16; 1 Kgs.17), both were performing miraculous signs (Ex.7-14; 1 Kgs.17-18), both are called “servant of God” and “man of God” (Deut.34:5; Josh.1,9,11,14; 1

²⁷ Cf. Green, p.380, Stein, p.283, Marshall, p.383, Nolland, p.498, William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), p.318

²⁸ “Luke...devotes more attention to Moses and Elias than do Mark and Matthew. He emphatically gives them a high appreciation. It is only according to Luke that Moses and Elias appear in glory, so that the disciples present see not only the glory of the Lord, but their glory also” (Mánek, p.10).

²⁹ Stein, p.284, Evans, p.161, Bovon, p.376, Marshall, p.384, Broyles, p.561, Carson, p.385

³⁰ Bock, p.568, Nolland, p.499, Lane, p.319

³¹ Allison, p.39-45. See *Pesikta Rabbati* 4.2 for many more connections.

Kgs.18; 2 Kgs.1), and both had mysterious endings to their lives (Deut.34; 2 Kgs.2). The distinguishing feature that is unique only to Moses and Elijah in the OT is their anointing successors that receive their “spirits” (Deut.34; 2 Kgs.2).³² In turn, both successors (Joshua and Elisha respectively) model their mentors and escalate their ministries. In the same way, Jesus had already “anointed” His disciples in an inaugurated form, and they began to model him (9:1ff.). That pointed forward to the time when they will receive the Holy Spirit as He received the Holy Spirit at His baptism (cf. 3:21-2; 24:49).

Only Luke gives us the topic of discussion between Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. They were talking about Jesus’ “departure” (ἐλεγον τὴν ἕξοδον αὐτοῦ), “which was going to be accomplished in Jerusalem” (ἦν ἡμελλεν πληροῦν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ). The word ἕξοδον is used as a euphemism for death in Wisdom 3:2, 7:6, Sirach 38:23, Jos. *Ant.*4.189 and 2 Peter 1:14, and is likely its meaning here given the context (9:22,27). However, Luke had just used the standard word for “death” (θάνατος) in the previous pericope (9:27) and could have applied it here. It seems as though he had a different agenda regarding the precise nuance he wanted to bring out. Since Sinai/Moses typology pervades the scene, and Moses is indeed present, the use of a word like ἕξοδος would invoke much more than the thought of death.³³ After all, ἕξοδος is the word used to describe the “departure” (Exodus) from Egypt (Ex.19:1; Num.33:38; Heb.11:22), and “Jerusalem” is connected by Luke to “redemption” (2:23) and the beginning of the preaching of “the forgiveness of sins” (24:45-47).³⁴ Therefore, ἕξοδος signifies the death of Jesus as an act of salvation to loose those in bondage to sin, the new Exodus (cf. Acts 3:18-26; 13:27-41; “Jerusalem..fulfilled” [13:27], “everyone who believes is *freed* from everything which you could not be freed by the Law of *Moses*” ESV [13:38-9]). This understanding is suitable given the fact the Luke doesn’t disconnect the “mountain” from the “wilderness” (9:12 contra Matt.16:13).

9:32 ὁ δὲ Πέτρος καὶ οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ ἦσαν βεβαρημένοι ὑπνω· διαγρηγορήσαντες δὲ εἶδον τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς δύο ἄνδρας τοὺς συνεστῶτας αὐτῷ. The disciples are introduced to

³² This insight is from Gordon P. Hugenberger (unpublished class lectures, “Christ in the Old Testament” offered at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, January 2003).

³³ “May we venture to suppose that the word *exodus* is used here almost as a theological keyword?” (Lindars, p.130)

³⁴ “This verbal link, substantiated by the Sinai imagery in the account as a whole, leads us at the very moment of christological confession into traditions about the Exodus, the paradigmatic event of Israel’s liberation” (Sharon Ringe, “Luke 9:28-36: The Beginning of an Exodus,” *Semeia* 28 [1983]: 84). So Liefeld, “Luke” from Frank E. Gaebelien (ed.), *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), p.927, Randall E. Otto, “The Fear Motivation in Peter’s Offer to Build Τρεῖς Σκηνάς,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 59 (1997): 106, G.B. Caird, *Saint Luke* (WPC; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), p.132, Leon Morris, *Luke* (TNTC. rev.ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), p.188-9, Garrett, p.656-9

narrative after Luke sets the stage of the “transfigured” Jesus and His “glorified” associates. The attention was immediately focused on Peter (ὁ δὲ Πέτρος) and the disciples are not even named (οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ). Luke is the only one to record the disciples’ initial exhaustion and subsequent alertness. They were probably “tired” (ἦσαν βεβαρημένοι ὕπνω) because of their trip, and they might have already engaged in prayer with Jesus. However, the fact that they were “fully awake” (διαγρηγορήσαντες) when they saw Jesus is underscored by the sharp juxtaposition indicated with the placement of διαγρηγορήσαντες immediately proceeding βεβαρημένοι ὕπνω. Luke makes explicit the “witness” motif that was implicit in 9:28 by the “bringing” of the three (cf. Deut.19:15). Διαγρηγορήσαντες is a participle of attendant circumstance and should be translated as a finite verb, “But they became fully awake”. It was during a time of “peak” observation that the disciples saw the glory of Jesus (εἶδον τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ) and “the two men with Him” (τοὺς δύο ἄνδρας τοὺς συνεστῶτας αὐτῷ). As it has been stated before, δόξαν αὐτοῦ matches 9:26 and refers to the glory inherent in the Son of Man (cf. Dan.7:13-4 LXX; δόξα αὐτῷ) and implies that this is a glimpse of the kingdom (comp.Dan.7:14-5 and Luke 9:26-7).

9:33 καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ διαχωρίζεσθαι αὐτοὺς ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ εἶπεν ὁ Πέτρος πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν· ἐπιστάτα, καλὸν ἐστὶν ἡμᾶς ὧδε εἶναι, καὶ ποιήσωμεν σκηνάς τρεῖς, μίαν σοὶ καὶ μίαν Μωϋσεὶ καὶ μίαν Ἠλίᾳ, μὴ εἰδὼς ὃ λέγει. Again, καὶ ἐγένετο marks a transition within the event. The vision of the glorified Christ and His typological counterparts had begun to end as Moses and Elijah depart (ἐν τῷ διαχωρίζεσθαι αὐτοὺς) from Him (ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ). Their departure is anticipated in the previous verse, in that, their names are not even mentioned (they are minimized much like John and James). Luke’s addition of the articular infinitive ἐν τῷ διαχωρίζεσθαι connotes that Peter’s proposal to build “three tabernacles”(ποιήσωμεν σκηνάς τρεῖς) is in response to their leaving.³⁵ He thought that it was good to be there with them (καλὸν ἐστὶν ἡμᾶς ὧδε εἶναι),³⁶ and saw that as grounds for prolonging the experience.³⁷ It is interesting to notice that Peter directed His question to Jesus and not to the OT legends. He clearly identified Jesus as His superior (ἐπιστάτα), and yet he offered to build a “tent” for each one of them (μίαν σοὶ καὶ μίαν Μωϋσεὶ καὶ μίαν Ἠλίᾳ). It can be inferred by this offer, the

³⁵ So Marshall, p.385

³⁶ Compare LXX Num.11:18. See Davies and Allison, p.669. “The three disciples saw the glory of the three figures and were, in some way, taken into this divine world; thus Peter emphasizes that it is good here” (Bovon, p.377).

³⁷ So Marshall, p.386, Nolland, p.500

phrase μὴ εἰδῶς ὃ λέγει, and the subsequent rebuke that Peter was confused as to how He should respond to the scenario. On the one hand, people are saying that Jesus is perhaps Elijah (9:19), and Jesus had been identifying Himself with Moses in the feeding of the five thousand (9:10-16) among other things. On the other hand, he recognized that Jesus was the Messiah come to deliver Israel (9:20), distinct from Moses and Elijah (as he could perceive visually). In keeping with the spirit of what he just heard about the ἕξοδος of Jesus, along with the Sinai-like setting, his thoughts wandered back to the idea of wilderness “tabernacles”. Whether one sees this as referring specifically to the Tent of Meeting (Ex.33:7)³⁸ or the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev.23:33-44),³⁹ the common element of both is the wilderness/Exodus theme.⁴⁰

9:34 ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ἐγένετο νεφέλη καὶ ἐπεσκίαζεν αὐτούς· ἐφοβήθησαν δὲ ἐν τῷ εἰσελθεῖν αὐτούς εἰς τὴν νεφέλην. The Sinai imagery comes full circle with the occurrence of a cloud Theophany while Peter is talking (ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ λέγοντος).⁴¹ The Glory-cloud came (ἐγένετο νεφέλη) and “overshadowed” all of them (καὶ ἐπεσκίαζεν αὐτούς). The word ἐπεσκίαζεν is the same word used in Exodus 40:35 in a similar context where the Glory-cloud “overshadowed” the tent of meeting and “the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle”. Some object to the interpretation that all six figures entered (εἰσελθεῖν αὐτούς) into the cloud because the voice in vs.35 comes “out of the cloud,” apparently to speak to the disciples who are outside of it. In the Sinai parallel, however, we are told that Moses “entered the cloud” (εἰσῆλθεν Μωυσῆς εἰς τὸ μέσον τῆς νεφέλης; Ex.24:18), and yet the voice “called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud” (ἐκάλεσεν κύριος τὸν Μωυσῆν... ἐκ μέσου τῆς νεφέλης). Moreover, αὐτούς the subject of the infinitive ἐν τῷ εἰσελθεῖν is closely associated with ἐφοβήθησαν, denoting that

³⁸ Otto, “The Fear Motivation in Peter’s Offer to Build Τρεῖς Σκηνάς,” p.101-112

³⁹ Bock, p.870-872, Ringe, p.90, Stein, p.285, Evans, p.151

⁴⁰ So Evans, p.154, Green, p.383

⁴¹ See Meredith G. Kline *Images of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980) and Jeffrey J. Neihaus in *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), p.336-9. Both argue that Theophany begins in the Bible at Genesis 1:2 as the Glory-Spirit hovered over the waters in creation. Kline in particular makes the point that the Glory-cloud is a particular manifestation of the Spirit (p.15) as revealed at creation, leading Israel, at Sinai, and to the prophets (Neh.9:19-20; Isa.63:11-14; Hag.2:5). Furthermore, Neihaus argues that such a translation as “cool of the day” for Gen.3:8 is inadequate because of some recent light shed on the word (𐎢𐎽) by the Akkadian and other biblical texts which point to “storm” as a superior alternative (cf. Zeph.2:2) and thus the voice (𐎧𐎺𐎠) is “thunder” (p.155-159). A notable connection between the Spirit and the Glory-cloud in this verse is the use of the word ἐπισκίαζω in 1:35 to describe the Spirit “overshadowing” Mary in order effect the virgin birth.

entering into the cloud is what made them afraid.⁴² Only Luke records the disciples entering into the cloud, which again lends support to his proposed Mosaic bias.

9:35 καὶ φωνὴ ἐγένετο ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης λέγουσα· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἐκλελεγμένος, αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε. The voice (or maybe thunder; see fn.38 and John 12:29) coming out of the cloud (φωνὴ ἐγένετο ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης) links the Transfiguration with the Baptism of Jesus (3:21). Although shorter, the baptism of Jesus has very similar features. Jesus was in prayer as the Holy Spirit came upon Him, the Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form (εἶδει) like a dove, and a voice came from heaven saying, “You are my beloved Son; in you I take pleasure.” The words spoken are obviously rooted in the OT. “You are my beloved Son” (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου) is almost a quote from Psalm 2:7, “You are my son” (υἱός μου εἶ σύ) with the exception of “beloved” (ὁ ἀγαπητός), which may have a connection with Isa.41:8 (comp. ὃν ἠγάπησα with ἀγαπητός).⁴³ “In you I take pleasure” (ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα) is a strong allusion to Isa. 42:1 (“in whom My soul delights”) in which the Servant is said to have the Spirit upon Him. Here in the Transfiguration, Jesus was changed while He was in prayer, the appearance (τὸ εἶδος) of His face is altered, and a voice came from “heaven”. “This is my Son” reiterates Luke 3:22 and reflects LXX Ps.2:7. The voice also says, “My Chosen One,” which is almost a straight quote of LXX Isa.42:1 except the noun ἐκλεκτός is used there whereas the participle ἐκλελεγμένος is used substantively here. “Listen to Him,” (αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε) directly corresponds to αὐτοῦ ἀκούσεσθε found in LXX Deut.18:15, speaking about the “prophet” like Moses. For the Transfiguration, Matthew and Mark follow the direction Luke took in his baptismal account with the use of ὁ ἀγαπητός, although they include the Deut.18:15 quote. Matthew added ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα to express the Isa.42:1 allusion. Luke, however strengthened the “Servant” quote by using a cognate match (λεκτ-),⁴⁴ and his “Prophet like Moses” quote by changing the word order to line up with Deut.18:14.⁴⁵ Thus, following the logic of the Luke’s quotes, Jesus the “Servant” (implied by

⁴² *pace* Stein, p.286, Bock, p.873, Nolland, p.501. “The fear of death in the presence of the divine glory running throughout the accounts of the giving of the law on Sinai is something that cannot be sufficiently emphasized” (Otto, p.102).

⁴³ Bock, p.242-3. The connection could be with the wording, “my servant...whom I have chosen” which is repeated in Isa.42: 1 (“my servant...my chosen”) that is alluded to in the next phrase of the Father’s words to Jesus, as well as the “nations” language repeated in 42:1.

⁴⁴ This is the superior reading since ἀγαπητός has weaker support and it can account for the variant by an attempt to harmonize Luke with Matthew and Mark.

⁴⁵ So Bock, p.874

Isa.42:1; yea “Suffering Servant”⁴⁶ should be obeyed as the “Prophet” greater than Moses (implied in Deut.18:15ff.) because He is the “Son” of God (implied in Ps.2:7 quote).⁴⁷ This is God’s counter proposal to Peter’s offer about prolonging the moment. It likely served as a rebuke for wanting to equate Jesus with Moses and Elijah (offering them each one “tent”),⁴⁸ and for wanting to hold on to the “shadow” when they have the “substance”.⁴⁹

9:36 καὶ ἐν τῷ γενέσθαι τὴν φωνὴν εὐρέθη Ἰησοῦς μόνος. καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐσίγησαν καὶ οὐδενὶ ἀπήγγειλαν ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις οὐδὲν ὧν ἑώρακαν. Once again, Luke alone includes a circumstantial factor that the conclusion of voice (ἐν τῷ γενέσθαι τὴν φωνὴν) resulted in the Jesus being found alone (εὐρέθη Ἰησοῦς μόνος).⁵⁰ This is probably because Moses and Elijah were taken away by the cloud. As a point to Peter, this would have communicated that heaven/glory is their dwelling, not anything earthly. The time of Messiah had arrived and He was the escalated “Prophet like Moses”. Peter had been more worried about the departure of the types of Messiah than the departure of the Messiah Himself. By not including the charge of Jesus to remain quiet about what happened, Luke may have been emphasizing their immediate obedience to the voice, by telling no one (αὐτοὶ ἐσίγησαν) He is the Messiah (9:21).⁵¹

Conclusion

Set Toward Jerusalem. The ground that Luke lays in chapter nine, especially in the Transfiguration, sets the stage for the his central section (9:51-19:44), as well as for the rest of the book.⁵² The sending out of the twelve is recapitulated with the sending of the seventy in 10:1-12. Herod’s curiosity about Jesus’ identity anticipates their meeting at Jerusalem (23:6-12). The people’s misunderstanding of who Messiah should be, results in a enumeration of parables (12-19; cf.19:11). The Transfiguration reveals the agenda of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem in

⁴⁶ *pace* Marshall, p.388

⁴⁷ With both quotations from the Law, Prophets, and Writings and the witness motif, this could also be understood as the biblical confirmation of Jesus to the disciples.

⁴⁸ So Fitzmeyer, p.801, Stein, p.285

⁴⁹ So Fitzmeyer, p.803, Evans, p.154. “When Jesus, in circumstances strongly reminiscent of Exod 24 and 34, goes up on a mountain and is transfigured into light, the reader is to infer that history has come full circle, that the eschatological expectations of Judaism haven begun to find their fulfillment” (Davies and Allison, p.705).

⁵⁰ “Luke tightens the link between the voice and the new scene in which Jesus is quite alone: the aloneness of Jesus is an aloneness that is divinely orchestrated and used to understand the thrust of the words spoken to the disciples” (Nolland, p.502).

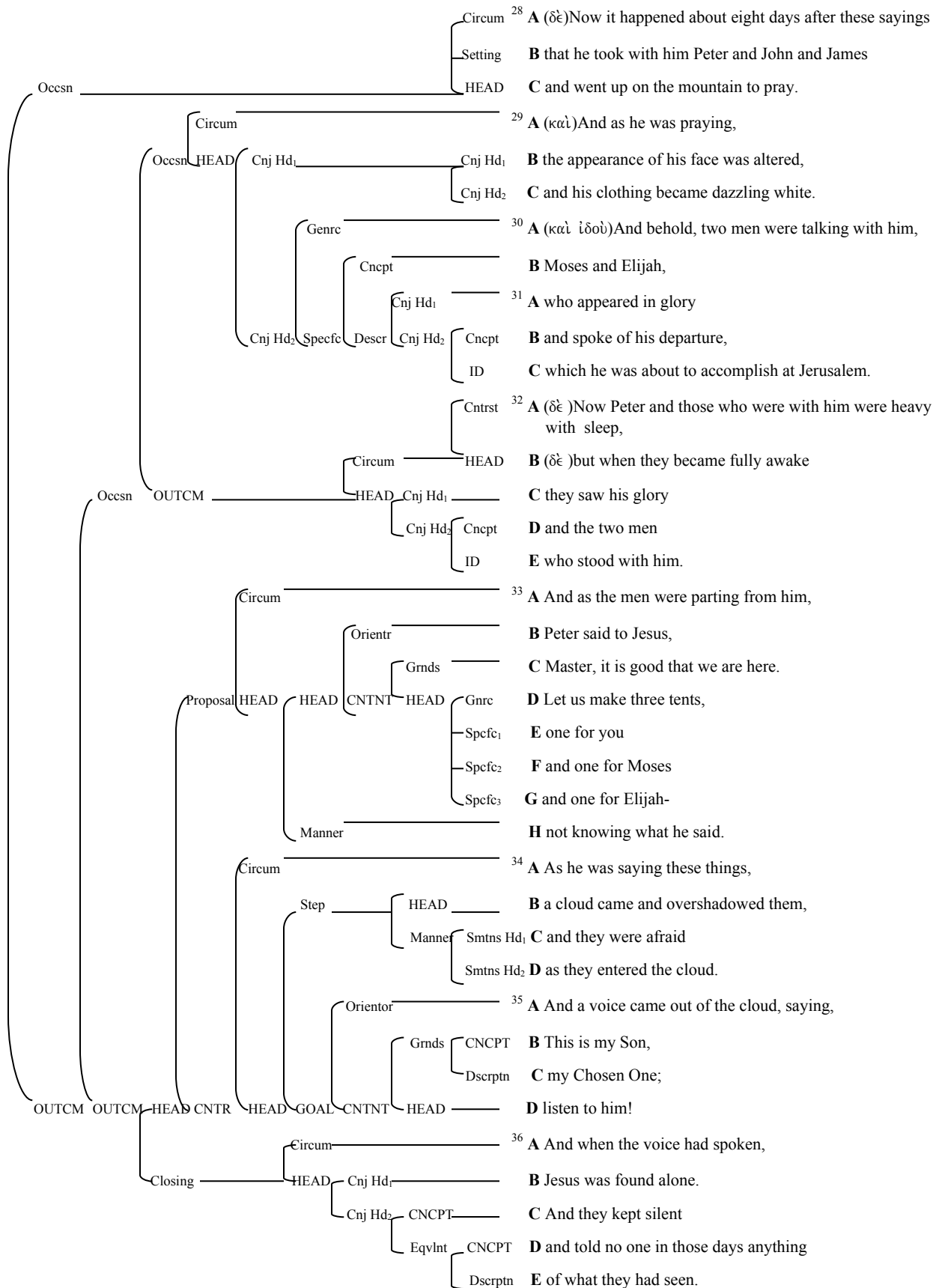
⁵¹ *pace* Lane, p.321

⁵² See Moessner, “Luke 9:1-50: Luke’s Preview of the Journey of the Prophet Like Moses of Deuteronomy,” p.575-60 and Garrett, “Exodus from Bondage: Luke 9:31 and Acts 12:1-24,” p.656-680

Exodus fashion (9:51,53; 11:14-23). It is after the new Exodus is accomplished in Jerusalem that the new Conquest can begin through the Spirit-anointed disciples (24:46-49; Acts).

The Mosaic String. The new Exodus theme in Luke best accounts for why there are so many Mosaic allusions in the Transfiguration account. Although OT motifs abound in the account in all three gospels, Luke's added dimensions help us see a reasonable paradigm that can string them together. New Moses typology can provide answers that cohere with the discipleship context, the witnesses present, the Exodus imagery, the mountain imagery, the talk of tabernacles, the time frame, Theophany, the allusions to Scripture, the superiority of Jesus, and the preceding context of each account. With sensitivity to this typology, we can gain a greater point of reference as to the specific ways the gospel writers presented Jesus as glorious and supreme.

Appendix



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