UNDERSTANDING LUKE'S TRANSFIGURATION ACCOUNT AS A PRAYER EXPERIENCE: A DETAILED STUDY OF MOTIFS

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Licentiate in Sacred Theology of the School of Theology and Ministry, Boston College

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April 2021

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis director Prof. Matthew S. Monnig, S.J. Ph.D. for his support throughout my research work. His words of encouragement during our meetings always gave me a new lease of life. My gratitude also goes to Prof. Thomas D. Stegman, S.J., Ph.D., who was the second reader of this work; his attention to detail contributed to improving the quality of this study.

Jack Siberski, S.J., M.D. was generous with his time as the proofreader of this study. His availability taught me a lot about service to one another. Thus, I am immensely grateful to him.

I would also like to thank members of the Faber Jesuit community, Boston College, for creating a conducive environment for my research. Their friendship made me less worried about how the pandemic might impact this study.

INTRODUCTION

The "transfiguration of Jesus" as a phrase that refers to an event in the New Testament is something that scholars have found both fascinating and puzzling. The fascination stems from the fact that the event is full of symbols that can be interpreted in various ways. Aaron Canty observes that "the Christian tradition, from a very early period, recognized in the transfiguration of Jesus an event of inexhaustible doctrinal and spiritual richness."[1] The puzzlement stems from the fact that it has been difficult to narrow down its meaning to a single element. In essence, the word "transfiguration" does not seem to adequately convey the rich symbolism of the event. As John Marsh puts it, "the symbolism of the transfiguration story is so pervasive that it has been the despair of commentators and at the same time a stimulus to their ingenuity."[2]

In the past, most studies on Jesus' transfiguration either focused on the question of the historicity of the narrative or on identifying its genre given the variety of motifs contained therein. More recently, scholars have given more attention to the latter and have endeavoured to highlight the differences between the three Gospel accounts. None of these studies, however, has attempted to initiate an analysis that treats the variety of motifs in Luke's transfiguration account as pointing to a prayer experience. In other words, no study has yet attempted to show how Luke's redaction of Mark's transfiguration account transforms other motifs in the account into aspects of Luke's teaching on prayer. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by using source and redaction criticism.

François Bovon's commentary on Luke's transfiguration account,[3] like many such commentaries, presents a lucid account of the various motifs that scholars have detected in

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[1] Aaron M. Canty, *Light & Glory: The Transfiguration of Christ in Early Franciscan and Dominican Theology* (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 1.
[2] John Marsh, ed., "Transfiguration," In *A Theological Word Book of the Bible,* ed. Richardson Alan (London: SCM Press, 1982), 268.
[3] François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2002), 371, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015054302800.

the narrative, but falls short of treating them as related. This study seeks to change that trend by highlighting the overarching nature of the prayer motif in Luke's account. Therefore, instead of interpreting the variety of motifs therein as an aggregate of competing ideas, this study will treat them all as serving a common purpose, which is prayer.

This study consists of three chapters, several subsections and a conclusion. Given that the arguments contained herein hinge on a particular way of interpreting some of the discernible motifs in Luke's transfiguration account, the first chapter will primarily set forth and discuss these motifs. However, it will be preceded by a brief discussion of what biblical motifs are as opposed to themes to help the reader to understand the sense in which motif is used in this study. The motifs that this study will discuss are: the mountain motif (v. 28), the prayer motif (vv. 28-29), the glory motif (vv. 31-32), the exodus motif (v. 31), the tent motif (v. 33), the cloud motif (v. 34), and the motif of a voice from the cloud (vv. 35-36). The discussion of those motifs will be guided by the works of various scholars who have reflected on this passage, particularly Bovon's. In this discussion, I will take account of the influence of the verses that precede the pericope under study (the pre-text) and those that follow (the post-text), as some motifs are derived from a perceived connection between the transfiguration account and the verses that frame it. This first chapter will conclude with the statement that a more precise understanding of how these motifs lead the reader to the theme of the narrative is needed.

The preceding statement partly introduces the goal of the second chapter, where the focus will be on reimagining the relationship between these motifs and on presenting them as hinting at the theme of prayer. This chapter will discuss in detail the grammatical structure of the phrases in which the prayer motif appears in Luke's transfiguration account (Luke 9:28-29) in an effort to highlight their significance. It will involve arguing that Luke's use of the infinitive of purpose, *εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι* (v. 28), to describe the purpose of the trip that

Jesus and his disciples made to the mountain of the transfiguration, and the depiction of Jesus as praying when he was transfigured before the disciples (v. 29) hint that this encounter is a prayer experience. The conclusion of this analysis will be that Luke expects the reader to interpret other motifs in this narrative in light of the prayer motif. To further highlight the significance of the prayer motif for Luke, this study will reimagine how Luke received and redacted Mark's transfiguration account and argue that Luke weaved together various motifs in view of prayer. In other words, Luke's redaction of Mark's transfiguration account was for the purpose of presenting Jesus' transfiguration as a prayer experience.

The third and final chapter of this study will focus on rediscovering two aspects of prayer in Luke's transfiguration account, which are anticipation and participation. Aspects of prayer, as conceived in this study, are features that Luke considers crucial to prayer. Anticipation points to the idea that prayer prepares one for future events, while participation represents the idea that those at prayer must get involved in that experience. Anticipation as used in Luke's transfiguration account refers to the foreshadowing of Jesus' passion in Jerusalem through the words of Elijah and Moses, while participation refers to the disciples' involvement in the prayer experience on the mountain of the transfiguration. In support of this new way of interpreting prayer texts in Luke, this study will demonstrate that in several parts of Luke's Gospel prayer provides space for anticipating life events. For instance, the time when Jesus counsels his disciples to anticipate temptations and pray to be delivered from them (Luke 11:4, 22:46), show the importance of anticipating challenges in the context of prayer. This study's discussion of participation as an aspect of prayer in Luke's transfiguration account will also involve arguing that Luke pairs the sleep motif, *ὕπνῳ*, with the participle *διαγρηγορήσαντες* (v. 32), to portray the disciples as overcoming the power of sleep and staying awake during the prayer experience on the mountain. Knowing that the disciples will fall asleep on the Mount of Olives later in his Gospel (Luke 22:45-46), Luke

chooses to introduce the sleep motif and the aforementioned participle to keep them awake this time. The other elements of the narrative that I will use to support the notion of participation in prayer are: Luke's description of how the disciples joined Jesus on the trip to the mountain, the fact that Jesus and the disciples do not have separate prayer intentions in this event – unlike in the Mount of Olives' scene – and the fact that the disciples witness and react to the glory on the mountain.

This study will argue that while "participation" and "anticipation" as aspects of prayer are discernible in all three Synoptic Gospels, Luke has transformed them into important aspects of prayer in his Gospel by using them in an account that he made into a prayer experience (the transfiguration of Jesus). In this third chapter, therefore, to rediscover two aspects of prayer in Luke's Gospel is to recognize the significance of the use of "anticipation" and "participation" in his transfiguration account.

It is remarkable that Luke's transfiguration account has received little attention in critical scholarship lately. Therefore, this study seeks, through its findings, to reposition his account in biblical scholarship.

CHAPTER 1: THE MOTIFS IN LUKE'S TRANSFIGURATION ACCOUNT

In this chapter, I will discuss the literary motifs in Luke's transfiguration account (9:28-36) to show how they contribute to the understanding of the passage. In the end, I will conclude that more precise understanding of how these motifs seek to lead reader to the theme of Luke's transfiguration account is needed.

This study's discussion of the motifs in Luke's transfiguration account will be guided by François Bovon's treatment of them in his commentary on Luke's Gospel.[4] However, before presenting these motifs, this study will first explain what it means by a "motif" and contrast it with a "theme." Afterwards, it will demonstrate how the literary context of the pericope under discussion has influenced scholars' search for motifs in Luke's transfiguration account and why it is important to justify the isolation of any motif in the surrounding context of the text under discussion. This chapter will conclude with a summary of its main points and a reiteration of the need to reimagine the motifs in ways that allow for the perceiving of the theme of the Lukan account.

1.1. What are Biblical Motifs? There is a tendency to treat the term "motif" as self-explanatory even though it is not the case. It is quite difficult to define what a literary motif is, given that it is easily confused with a "theme." Yet, the two terms are not synonyms. In James Morgan's essay on the function of motifs in biblical narratives, he observes that motifs are often confused with themes, but argues for the unique identity of motifs because of their progressive and cumulative force in a narrative.[5] He acknowledges that there are several definitions for motif but prefers the one that identifies it as a repeated element in a single literary work; he thinks that motifs are concrete (e.g. repeated objects, expressions) and themes are abstract (e.g. concepts, main ideas, values). His definitions may not be sufficiently

[4] François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50*.
[5] James M. Morgan, "How Do Motifs Endure and Perform? Motif Theory for the Study of Biblical Narratives," *Revue Biblique* (2015): 194.

detailed, but they bear testimony to his claim that with respect to motifs and themes, "there appears to be a consensus that they are distinct and explained over against the other."[6] In his *Handbook to Literature*, where he lists several important terms and facts in literature, C. Holman defines a theme as "a central or dominating idea in a work,"[7] and motifs as "recurr[ing] images, words, objects, phrases, or actions that tend to unify the work."[8] In a similar vein, biblical motifs are recurring images, words, objects, phrases, or actions that unify an entire text. Shemaryahu Talmon explains motifs in detail:

> They convey formative messages rather than factual information. The writers employ these conventions not merely as ornamentations of their accounts and narratives. They provide them deliberately as tools that are meant to assist their readers in reliving the intrinsic sentiments and reactions which inspired the individuals and collectives that had actually experienced the primal situations or conditions.[9]

While biblical motifs may not function exactly as tools for reliving the sentiments of those who actually experienced the primal situations or conditions in the Bible, given the controversy over the historicity of some biblical events, they certainly convey formative messages to the reader. Motifs enhance the reader's understanding and experience of a given narrative.[10] It is not unusual to use motif theory in the interpretation of biblical narratives, as it is also employed when interpreting other ancient narratives.[11]

In contrast to Morgan's definition that motifs unify a single literary work, biblical motifs unify the entire Bible, which comprises several literary works. Therefore, a biblical motif is understood through intertextuality. Its perceptibility in several biblical passages is important because it gives information about how the motif functions. Consequently, in Luke's transfiguration account, whatever is identified as a motif has to be understood in light

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[6] Morgan, "How Do Motifs" 198.
[7] C. Hugh Holman, et al, *A Handbook to Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1986), 502.
[8] Holman et al, *A Handbook*, 313.
[9] Shemaryahu Talmon, *Literary Motifs and Patterns in the Hebrew Bible: Collected Studies* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 5.
[10] Morgan, "How Do Motifs" 215.
[11] Morgan, "How Do Motifs." 195.

of how it is used in other parts of Luke's Gospel and, by extension, in other parts of the Bible.

There is both an objective and subjective dimension to identifying motifs in a text. Objectively, the motif's presence must call attention to itself to some degree, while subjectively, its perception depends on the reader's appreciation of it, whether intentionally or not.[12] Therefore, the identification of a motif can be neither unambiguously objective nor overly subjective. Both aspects must be held together when discussing motifs. In this chapter, the objective dimension of this search for motifs will hinge on the fact that these motifs appear in other biblical texts, both within Luke and beyond, thereby calling attention to themselves to some degree. The subjective dimension will be perceptible through the amount of space that this study devotes to a given motif. The question of the relationship between a theme and a motif has made some scholars wonder if a writer "first invents a theme and imposes upon it a motif, or vice versa."[13] Admittedly, there is no definitive answer to this question, but what matters is that motifs help to identify a pericope's theme.

Bovon's use of the term "motif" is in accordance with the above definition of biblical motifs, even though he does not define the term in question. Based on his writing on Luke's transfiguration account, it can be perceived that he treats motifs as recurring images that unify the Bible. Most importantly, he does not treat any motif in isolation but via intertextuality. Bovon identifies the following as motifs in Luke's transfiguration account: the appearance of the three figures (v. 30), the tent (v. 33), the mountain (v. 28), sleep (v. 32), and the cloud (v. 34).[14] The voice from the cloud (vv. 35-36) is another motif that this study will consider. It is worth noting that Bovon's treatment of the motifs in Luke's transfiguration account is not so much an attempt to identify the event's central theme as it is an attempt to

[12] Morgan, "How Do Motifs" 201.
[13] Jean-Charles Seigneuret, ed., *Dictionary of Literary Themes and Motifs* (NY: Greenwood Press, 1988), 19.
[14] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 373-376, 378.

present the intricate nature of the narrative. Unlike John Nolland who posits that the transfiguration narrative confirms the importance of listening to Jesus and the glorious outcome of suffering,[15] Bovon acknowledges the difficulty of understanding the event's theology, but admires the beauty of the narrative nonetheless.[16]

1.2. The Literary Context of the Narrative: The transfiguration of Jesus in Luke's Gospel appears in the same narrative sequence as in Mark (Mark 9:2-8) and Matthew (Matt 17:1-8):

> (1) Jesus is accompanied by Peter, James and John to the mountain (2) The appearance of Jesus changes (3) Moses and Elijah appear and speak with Jesus (4) Peter speaks to Jesus and avows that he would like to build three tents on the mountain for Jesus, Moses and Elijah (5) A cloud overshadows them (6) A voice speaks from the cloud and identifies Jesus as the Son of God (7) The voice then commands the disciples to listen to Jesus (8) At the end Jesus is alone with the three disciples.

The literary context of Luke's transfiguration account contributes to the understanding of the narrative. While there is no clear correlation between these surrounding events and Jesus' transfiguration, it is expedient to make connections between the transfiguration and the events that are in close proximity to it, given that biblical texts are not treated in isolation. With respect to the text under discussion (vv. 28-36), if *εγένετο δὲ* (v. 28) is understood as a transition term to mark the beginning of a new pericope,[17] Luke's narration of the event as taking place eight days "after these sayings" (v. 28) ties the account closely with the events that precede the pericope. The reason is that the reader needs to understand what "these sayings" refer to and how they relate to what follows, which is Jesus' transfiguration. Hence, the need to pay close attention to the preceding pericope.

To determine how the preceding pericope contributes to the understanding of the passage, it is important to avoid isolating any motif in the preceding pericope without

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[15] John Nolland et al., *Luke 9:21 - 18:34*, Word Biblical Commentary, ed. Bruce M. Metzger et al. (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2008), 497.
[16] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 373.
[17] Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 865.

justification. Many scholars have neglected this aspect of research in biblical studies. For instance, Bovon notes the proximity of Luke's transfiguration account to Peter's confession (Luke 9:18-22), and posits that Jesus' response to Peter's confession teaches the reader the importance of the suffering of the Messiah (9:23-24), thereby making the passion motif an important motif to anticipate in Jesus' transfiguration.[18] Evidently, here Bovon focuses on Jesus' response to Peter's confession, and not on the confession itself, which makes it understandable to anticipate a passion motif in the transfiguration account. However, if Bovon had focused on what Peter calls Jesus in his confession, "the Christ of God" (v. 20b), it would have made the search for a motif that presents Jesus as the Christ in Luke's transfiguration account justifiable. For example, Barbara Reid's perception of how Jesus' transfiguration is recounted focuses on this title. She, like many scholars, claims that Jesus' transfiguration in Luke's Gospel is an event that took place shortly after the incident in which Peter identified Jesus as *ὁ χριστός τοῦ θεοῦ* (Luke 9:18-20).[19] She does not explain why she chooses Peter's confession and not the preceding event that is closer to the transfiguration, which is Jesus' passion prediction (9:22). Furthermore, there are two discernible motifs in Jesus' passion prediction: the passion motif (vv. 22a, 23-25) and the glory motif (vv. 22b, 26-27). The reason is that Jesus does not only speak of his passion, but also of his glorification; the latter could also be interpreted as a prediction of the Parousia, because Jesus talks about people who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God (v. 27). Therefore, the diversity of discernible motifs in the pericope that precedes Jesus' transfiguration makes it important to exercise caution when connecting Jesus' transfiguration to the preceding pericope. In short, the exegete needs to justify the isolation of any motif in the preceding pericope.

[18] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 370, 373.
[19] Barbara E. Reid, *The Transfiguration: A Source- and Redaction- Critical Study of Luke 9: 28-36*, Cahiers de La Revue Biblique (Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie Éditeurs, 1993), 33, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002716588.

However, Bovon does not do that; he focuses on the passion motif in Jesus' passion prediction (vv. 21-27), apparently because it is easier to connect this motif to the exodus motif in Jesus' transfiguration, which points to the latter's upcoming suffering in Jerusalem. In Luke's account, the idea that Moses and Elijah were discussing Jesus' "exodus" in Jerusalem (v. 31) is a passion motif because it anticipates Jesus' crucifixion in Jerusalem. Therefore, the exodus motif has something in common with the passion prediction in vv. 43b-45. I will discuss the exodus motif in more detail when treating the motifs in Luke's account.

Thomas Weinandy's statement about Jesus' transfiguration account is an example of how to hold together the two motifs that are discernible in the passion prediction that precedes the transfiguration narrative (the passion and glory motifs); he argues that "Jesus' amplification that for him to be the Christ means that he must suffer, die, and rise from the dead is enacted in the Transfiguration."[20] Weinandy's statement is important because it treats the passion motif and the glory motif as working together, which helps him avoid isolating either of the motifs. While this interpretation has the merit of not isolating either of the motifs like Bovon did, it does not state exactly how the transfiguration account enacts Jesus' death and resurrection, given that they are separate events in Jesus' life.

It is necessary to exercise the same level of caution when determining how the passages that follow the transfiguration narrative contribute to the understanding of the latter. Luke's transfiguration account is immediately followed by a pericope that narrates Jesus' healing of a boy (vv. 37-43a). How this text connects to Jesus' transfiguration is not clear. In fact, its relationship with the transfiguration narrative is rarely discussed in detail by scholars.

[20] Thomas G. Weinandy, "Peter's Profession of Faith and the Transfiguration," in *Jesus Becoming Jesus*, *A Theological Interpretation of the Synoptic Gospels* (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2018), 227, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv176jw.13.

However, Bovon's statement about the context in which the boy's healing takes place hints at how he might have connected Jesus' transfiguration to this healing miracle:

> This small pericope is located between the proclamation of Jesus' glory (9:28-36) and the second prediction of the passion (9:43b-45). Who is Jesus? Who is he for humanity? These questions dominate chap. 9, along with the question that results from them: what is the human reaction to Jesus?[21]

In light of the relationship between Jesus' transfiguration and the healing of the boy, then, both events are examples of a search for Jesus' identity and people's reaction to it in Luke 9. Consequently, the identity of Jesus that is revealed in his transfiguration is his glory, while the identity that is revealed in the healing of the boy is Jesus' healing power. Bovon's interpretation of the goal of chapter 9 provides helpful information about Jesus' transfiguration. This has made it possible to connect the healing of the boy (vv. 37-43a) to Jesus' transfiguration. The pericope that follows this healing returns to Jesus' passion prediction (vv. 43b-45), which is easier to connect to the transfiguration narrative, given that both events have the passion motif in common.

The above analysis of the immediate literary context of Luke's transfiguration account shows that the transfiguration and surrounding pericopes are connected by the motifs of passion and glory. When determining the theme of Luke's transfiguration account in the next chapter, these motifs will play crucial roles in that process. Nonetheless, this study maintains that the isolation of any motif in the surrounding pericope of Jesus' transfiguration needs to be justified to allow for a richer analysis of the text.

The wider literary context of Luke's transfiguration account also contributes to the understanding of the passage. One such example is Jesus' baptism (Luke 3:21-22). Luke's account of Jesus' baptism shares some motifs with his transfiguration account, namely, prayer and the voice from heaven. These similarities strengthen the connection between

[21] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 382.

prayer and the voice from heaven in the transfiguration account. Luke's addition of the prayer motif to both events could be an indication that he perceives the voice from heaven as a response to Jesus' prayer. This certainly reveals Luke's affinity for prayer.

1.3. The Motifs in Luke's Transfiguration Account: As mentioned above, Bovon's commentary identifies some motifs in Luke's transfiguration account and treats them as such, but also discusses several other aspects of the narrative as motifs without stating explicitly that they are motifs. However, in what follows, this study will present and discuss most of the motifs that Bovon discusses with a view to showing how these motifs contribute to the understanding of the passage under discussion. I will discuss the motifs in the following order: the mountain motif (v. 28), the prayer motif (vv. 28-29), the glory motif (vv. 31-32), the exodus motif (v. 31), the tent motif (v. 33), the cloud motif (v. 34), and the motif of a voice from the cloud (vv. 35-36).

1.3.1. The Mountain Motif: The mountain motif evokes several biblical images and events, namely, prayer (Exodus 19; Luke 6:12), worship (Exod 24), Moses' transfiguration (Exod 34:29-35), and biblical theophanies (Exod 3; 19; 24).

***1.3.1.1. Prayer*:** The mountain motif evokes prayer in the Bible. Luke's transfiguration account is narrated as taking place on the mountain (v. 28), which is similar to the parallel accounts in both Mark (Mark 9:2) and Matthew (Matt 17:1). Bovon notes that "the motif of the mountain intimates an encounter with the divine, which is also the goal of prayer, mentioned in the text."[22] This is discernible in both Testaments. In the Old Testament, it was at Mount Sinai that the Lord called to Moses (Exod 19:3). It was also on the mountain that the Lord informed Moses that the outcry of the Israelites had been heard, and their redemption was close at hand (Exod 3:9-10). In the New Testament, Jesus is depicted as being in the habit of going to the mountain to pray (Luke 6:12; 9:28; 22:39). Jesus loved

[22] Bovon, *Luke 1* 374.

praying on the mountain so much so that he was willing to spend the whole night there praying to God (6:12). Luke's addition of the infinitive of purpose, *εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι*, to his transfiguration account (9:28) does not only associate the mountain with prayer; it also indicates that the reason for the trip to the mountain was to pray.[23] In addition, "Jesus was not merely seeking solitude; he also wanted to bring the feelings and thoughts of the disciples closer to the world of God. Jesus is thus using the evocative significance of the mountain."[24] Therefore, the mountain motif as used in Jesus' transfiguration is linked to prayer.

***1.3.1.2. Worship*:** The mountain motif also points to other mountain-related events in the Bible that are similar to prayer, namely, worship. While there is no denying that the mountain is the place of withdrawal for meeting with God,[25] the fact that the narration of Jesus' withdrawal in the transfiguration is more detailed than the usual prayer experiences on the mountain in Luke's Gospel seems to be an indication that Luke, and by extension, the parallel accounts in Matthew and Mark, compare Jesus' transfiguration to other mountain-related experiences in the Bible that do not function exactly as prayer.

The transfiguration can be compared to the experience of Moses, his three companions (Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu), and seventy of the elders of Israel on the mountain (Exod 24).[26] The Lord summons Moses to come up to him along with Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. The Hebrew word for "come up" is עָלָה (Exod 24:9), which is an indication that Moses and the rest would climb a mountain to meet God.[27] Nonetheless, a clear reference to a mountain is made later in the chapter (Exod 24:13). The reason for going to the mountain as indicated in the text is for worship (Exod 24:1), and the choosing of those

[23] Arthur A. Just, *Luke*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1996), 400.
[24] Werner Foerster, "ὄρος," in *TDNT* 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967), 485–86.
[25] Nolland et al., *Luke 9*, 503.
[26] Bovon also makes reference to this OT event, but does not elaborate on it. See Bovon, *Luke 1*, 374.
[27] This word has a religious connotation: it can be used in reference to a sacrifice to God. See Ernest Klein and Baruch Sarel, "עָלָה," in *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English* (London: Collier Macmillan, 1987), 472.

who would ascend the mountain with Moses closely aligns with Jesus' choosing of those "who had a position of special privilege within the twelve"[28] for the transfiguration experience. Any hope of reducing this encounter to a private prayer experience as understood in the New Testament (Luke 6:12) is dashed when one discovers that the encounter in Exodus involves eating and drinking with God on the mountain (Exod 24:11). Some authors have argued that eating and drinking was part of worship of God:[29] mountains were not simply perceived as serving the function of meeting with God in silence because in the early period of Israel's history, mountains like Mount Tabor were also the meeting-point of several tribal territories.[30] Therefore, it was not unusual to make the scene of an encounter between God and humans to appear festive. This explains the festive scene of God's encounter with Moses and seventy of the elders of Israel.

While the Synoptics, and Luke in particular, do not include eating and drinking in their narration of Jesus' transfiguration, they seem to have shaped the mountain motif like the worship scene in Exodus 24 by making the event more participatory and communal than the usual private prayer experiences of Jesus. This is achieved by depicting Elijah, Moses, and Jesus as engaging in a conversation. Luke takes it further by mentioning the content of the conversation, which is the "exodus" of Jesus in Jerusalem (9:31). Peter's awkward reaction to Jesus' change of appearance contributes to making the scene participatory. Therefore, it can be argued that the mountain motif portrays Jesus' transfiguration as a worship experience as depicted in the Old Testament, particularly in Exodus 24.

[28] David Wenham and A. D. A. Moses, "'There Are Some Standing Here....': Did They Become the 'Reputed Pillars' of the Jerusalem Church? Some Reflections on Mark 9:1, Galatians 2:9 and the Transfiguration," *Novum Testamentum*, (1994): 146, https://doi.org/10.2307/1561531.
[29] Bernard P. Robinson, "The Theophany and Meal of Exodus 24," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*, (October 1, 2011): 159, https://doi.org/10.1080/09018328.2011.608539.
[30] Hans-Joachim. Kraus, *Worship in Israel: A Cultic History of the Old Testament.* (Oxford, MA: Blackwell, 1966), 165, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001402975.

While the above interpretation of why Jesus' transfiguration contains a mountain motif may be critiqued, given the striking differences between worship in Exodus 24 and Jesus' transfiguration, it illuminates the Lukan transfiguration account. The differences between both narratives (Exod 24 and Jesus' transfiguration) could be due to creativity on the part of the New Testament writers who narrated the event of Jesus' transfiguration. As Bovon asserts, the reception of the Hebrew Bible "does not occur slavishly, but with creative power."[31]

***1.3.1.3. The Transfiguration of Moses*:** Another mountaintop experience that can be compared to Jesus' transfiguration is what is commonly known as "the transfiguration of Moses" (Exod 34:29-35). Moses' face became radiant as he came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the law. He had just spoken with the Lord, and was returning to the Israelites to inform them of the Lord's commands. Jesus' transfiguration may have been modelled after Moses' with respect to the change of appearance. Furthermore, the linking of the change of appearance in an encounter with God on the mountain reinforces the relationship between both events. Nonetheless, the differences between them cannot be ignored. Armand Puig i Tàrrech gives an apt description of this:

> Jesus descends from the mountain with his face unchanged: he has not spoken with God; rather, it is God who has spoken about him to the disciples after his appearance was changed. These observations lead us to the fundamental difference: if Jesus is to be compared with Moses, the comparison should not be with Moses the prophet who ascends the mountain but to the glorious, heavenly, Moses, who accompanies Jesus in his transfiguration. In fact, it is the three disciples who 'see' the transfigured Jesus (comp. Mark 9:2: 'before them'), just as Moses and those who accompanied him 'saw the God of Israel' (Exod 24:9-10).[32]

Therefore, if the idea that the transfiguration of Jesus was modelled after Moses' transfiguration is to be believed, it should also be believed that Luke and the other Gospels significantly modified Jesus' transfiguration with a view to narrating a different story, which

[31] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 374.
[32] Armand Puig i Tàrrech, "The Glory on the Mountain: The Episode of the Transfiguration of Jesus," *New Testament Studies* (April 2012): 155, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688511000373.

is the transfiguration of Jesus. In his study of rewritten prophecy in Luke-Acts, Lukan Bormann observes that Luke uses techniques of the "Rewritten Bible" to create new stories about Jesus and the apostles.[33] Bormann thinks that the reason why Luke creates new stories is to show that the events narrated in Luke-Acts are "as worthy as the primary history of Israel in which the great prophets played such an important role."[34] Therefore, it could be that Luke is creating a new story about Moses using the figure of Jesus in the transfiguration story. Nonetheless, for now, what matters is that Moses' transfiguration contributes to the understanding of the mountain motif in Jesus' transfiguration.

***1.3.1.4. Biblical Theophany*:** The difficulty with drawing close comparisons between Jesus' transfiguration and other mountain-related biblical events is reduced when one considers all the mountain experiences that involve an encounter with God as theophanies, irrespective of the intricacies of the stories. George Savran defines a theophany as "the appearance of the divine before a human audience,"[35] which makes it possible to list most biblical stories that involve a mountaintop encounter between the two spheres (the human and divine spheres) as theophanies. When this is applied to Jesus' transfiguration, it would mean that the depiction of the mountain as the space for the encounter between God and human beings makes it a theophany.

Another way that theophanies contribute to the understanding of the mountain motif is by combining the mountain motif with a select number of other motifs in the transfiguration account. For instance, it has been argued that Jesus' ascent of the mountain, the presence of the cloud, the voice from heaven, and his descent from the mountain show that the transfiguration account is built on the basis of the theophany on Mount Sinai (Exod

[33] Lukas Bormann, ed., "Rewritten Prophecy in Luke-Acts," in *Luke's Literary Creativity*, The Library of New Testament Studies (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2016), 143.
[34] Bormann, 143.
[35] George Savran, "Theophany as Type Scene," *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History* (March 22, 2003), 119–51.

24; 33-34).[36] In other words, the following motifs are seen as evoking theophanic scenes in the Old Testament: the mountain, the cloud, the voice from heaven, and the descent from the mountain. However, this comparison between Jesus' transfiguration and theophanic scenes has been critiqued by some scholars. For instance, Tàrrech argues:

> First of all, Jesus does not receive any revelation on the high mountain; rather, it is the three disciples who see the glory of the transfigured Jesus. The disciples are witnesses to what happens but do not undergo any transformation. They are simply recipients of a revelation about the identity of Jesus, and this revelation leads them to a profound understanding of the one whom they know only as teacher and healer. Jesus, moreover, is not taken up to heaven and does not experience a mystical rapture or make a heavenly journey (such as what Paul mentions in 2 Cor 12:2)[37]

Tàrrech's critique mainly draws attention to one aspect of Jesus' transfiguration that does not align with some Old Testament theophanies, namely, the receiving of a revelation on the mountain by the main character. Although he cites a New Testament passage, 2 Cor 12:2, a more detailed analysis of New Testament theophanies is needed to get a better sense of how Jesus' transfiguration differs from a theophany. Nonetheless, it cannot be ruled out that there are theophanies in the New Testament, even if they do not play out exactly as Old Testament theophanies do. With respect to drawing comparisons between Jesus' transfiguration and New Testament theophanies, it is worth noting that it has not always been well received:

> The extension of the term theophany to such New Testament events as the Baptism and transfiguration of Jesus (also called epiphanies) has been questioned as inappropriate because in orthodox Christian doctrine Christ himself in his whole life and work and death is the manifestation of God. The incarnation of Christ, however, may be seen as the ultimate and fullest form of divine manifestation in a whole spectrum of theophanies.[38]

Conversely, some authors, including Bovon, accept the use of the term "theophany" for events in the New Testament, but seem to argue that certain features must be present to

[36] Nolland et al., *Luke 9*, 492.
[37] Puig i Tàrrech, "The Glory on the Mountain," 159.

qualify the event as a theophany. The idea that certain themes should be present to qualify a New Testament narrative as a theophany is perceptible in the following critique:

> Luke could have had the disciples fall to the ground (like Paul in Acts 9:4), or cry out in fear (like John in Rev 19:10), or suddenly become blind (like Paul in Acts 9:8). These are typical consequences of a theophany. Here, in contrast, the tradition has Peter expressing his contentment about what has happened; too great a reaction of shock would have thus been mistaken here.[39]

The above critique does not consider the fact that "the human response to a theophany is perhaps the most complex and most varied of all the components of the theophany type-scene."[40] Therefore, it is difficult to establish a pattern in this regard. Furthermore, the critique raises two crucial questions: what are the criteria for identifying a theophany in the New Testament and how justifiable are they? There is no denying that it is easier to associate the term theophany to the Old Testament than to the New Testament, given the historical use of the term among scholars. However, when the term is applied to New Testament events, the criteria for such identification cannot be overly restrictive, otherwise, the term ceases to function as a borrowed term; in general, borrowed words are used with greater or lesser precision.[41] Consequently, it is problematic to speak of what a typical theophany is in the New Testament, given that typical theophanies are found in the Old Testament. When the word theophany is extended to New Testament events, some level of flexibility is required. Regarding the idea of ruling out the possibility of finding a theophany in the New Testament, it seems to be an extreme position for the following reasons:

> Theophanies are a structural element of every religion and are based, partly, on the effort to reinforce the religious credo of believers – the appearance of a god before the eyes of a human proves his existence and his power – and, partly, on the need of humans to reassure their faith, always seeking proofs.[42]

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[39] "Theophany" (Chicago, IL: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2007), 694.
[40] George W. Savran, *Encountering the Divine: Theophany in Biblical Narrative*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament (New York, NY: T & T Clark International, 2005), 90.
[41] Rhoda Rappaport, "Borrowed Words: Problems of Vocabulary in Eighteenth-Century Geology," *The British Journal for the History of Science* (1982), 27.
[42] Eleni Chronopoulou, "Inviting Gods: Cases of Theophanies in the PGM Collection," *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* (March 1, 2016), 23–43, https://doi.org/10.1556/068.2016.56.1.2.

Consequently, if Christianity is to be understood as a religion, then it has to discover a way of talking about theophanies with respect to the testament that narrates the life and teachings of its main character, Jesus, which is the New Testament. Therefore, theophanic scenes, both in the Old Testament, and the New Testament, illuminate the understanding of the mountain motif in Jesus' transfiguration.

1.3.2. The Prayer Motif: The prayer motif exists only in Luke's transfiguration account. As indicated above, Luke mentions that the reason for the trip to the mountain where the transfiguration took place was to pray (v. 28). He uses the infinitive of purpose, *εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι* (v. 28), to highlight this.[43] In Greek, the infinitive of purpose indicates the purpose or goal of an action; it answers the question "why" in that it looks ahead to the goal of the event.[44] Luke introduces the motif of prayer again by depicting Jesus as praying when his appearance changed (v. 29). This draws more attention to the prayer motif.[45]

Many authors, including Bovon, rightly observe that Luke's introduction of the prayer motif to Jesus' transfiguration is not unusual, given that Luke's Jesus takes prayer seriously, especially in decisive moments of his life:[46] it is only in Luke's Gospel that Jesus is depicted as "being baptized and *praying*" (3:21).[47] Luke is also the only evangelist who depicts Jesus as praying before the selection of the Twelve apostles (6:12), and before asking the latter to say who he is, which is followed by his first passion prediction (9:18). In addition, "when the disciples went to ask him [Jesus] to teach them how to pray, they found him 'praying in a certain place' (11:1)."[48] Therefore, the prayer motif is an important motif in Luke's Gospel.

[43] Just, *Luke*, 400.
[44] Daniel B Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics an Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament with Scripture, Subject and Greek Word Indexes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 590.
[45] Nolland et al., *Luke 9*, 491.
[46] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 374.
[47] E. Glenn Hinson, "Persistence in Prayer in Luke-Acts," *Review & Expositor* (2007): 725.
[48] Hinson, "Persistence," 725.

Its use in Jesus' transfiguration heightens its importance. This study will engage in a more detailed discussion of its significance in the next chapter.

The prayer motif in Luke's transfiguration account does not seem to point only to prayer, but also to Jesus' passion: "there is, finally, a curious, and hard to interpret, link to the Gethsemane scene of prayer (22:39-46)."[49] In that scene, Jesus urges his disciples to pray before withdrawing from them about a stone's throw to pray. This scene also shares the sleep motif with the transfiguration account, given that the disciples are portrayed as struggling to stay awake (9:32 cf. v. 22: 45), even though the use of *διαγρηγορήσαντες* in the transfiguration account portrays the disciples as "having stayed awake." This apparent link to the Gethsemane scene makes it possible to interpret the transfiguration account as an anticipation of Jesus' upcoming experience at Gethsemane, where he will climb the mountain with his disciples to pray again, but this time, in preparation for his crucifixion and death. However, this link with the Gethsemane scene does not mean that the prayer motif in Jesus' transfiguration is used in the same way as it is used at Gethsemane. Jesus prays about his upcoming suffering and death at Gethsemane, while the content of the prayer on the mountain of the transfiguration is debatable. Nonetheless, the link between both scenes seems to indicate that there is an anticipation of Jesus' passion and death in Luke's transfiguration scene.

1.3.3. The Glory Motif (vv. 31, 32): Luke's transfiguration account expresses the glory motif, especially with respect to the two figures who appeared with Jesus: Moses and Elijah (v. 31). Bovon rightly observes that Luke emphasizes the glory of Moses and Elijah (v. 31), and that of Jesus, as they spoke about Jesus' exodus (v. 32).[50] Unlike in Luke's Gospel, the glory motif is not clearly visible in Mark and Matthew, given that the word *δόξα* is missing.

[49] Nolland et al., *Luke 9*, 503.
[50] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 370.

It is only in Luke's account that this word appears. Nonetheless, the motif is still discernible in Mark's description of the appearance of Jesus' clothes (Mark 9:3) and in Matthew's description of the same appearance along with Jesus' face (Matt 17:2).

If 2 Peter 1:16-18 is considered an account of Jesus' transfiguration, then it can be argued that it contains the glory motif too. The letter states that Jesus received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice from heaven spoke (2 Pet 1:17). Admittedly, 2 Peter's description of the event differs in many respects from the transfiguration accounts in the Synoptics. The Synoptics also lack some features that feature in 2 Peter 1:17. The reason for the differences could be that the author of 2 Peter chose not to give a full narration of the event because he assumed that his audience was familiar with it.[51] However one chooses to account for the differences, what matters is that the glory motif is visible in 2 Peter 1:17 because of the use of the word, *δόξα*, thereby heightening the importance of this motif as used in Jesus' transfiguration. This motif cannot be neglected when searching for a central theme for Luke's transfiguration account, given that it is peculiar to Luke.

The glory motif also presents a challenge, given that it can be seen as attributing equal divinity to only not Jesus, but also to Moses and Elijah. The reason for this interpretation is that Luke's Gospel attributes *δόξα* to God: the word is used in the Lukan account of the birth of Jesus, where the angels are depicted as saying: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:14). In fact, the Lukan narrative uses many subtle ways such as this to present Jesus as divine:

> Although Luke does not tell his readers directly that Jesus is God/θεός, the possibility still exists that he shows this indirectly by means of his narrative. That is, if Luke characterizes Jesus in the same way he characterizes YHWH and if he calls YHWH 'God,' then he claims by means of this indirect characterization that Jesus is God just as YHWH is God.[52]

[51] Robert J Miller, "Is There Independent Attestation for the Transfiguration in 2 Peter?" *New Testament Studies* (October 1996), 620.
[52] Nina Henrichs Tarasenkova, *Luke's Christology of Divine Identity*, Library of New Testament Studies (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark US, 2016), 5.

As hinted above, the major problem with the claim that *δόξα* points to Jesus' divinity is that the word in question is extended to Moses and Elijah, which would imply that both figures are also divine. A way to resolve this problem is to argue that the use of *δόξα* for the three figures (Jesus, Moses and Elijah) is an indication that Jesus' transfiguration is centered on the receiving of glory by Jesus and the two men who appeared with him, and not on the divinity of those men. Nonetheless, this interpretation appears to treat the use of *δόξα* in Luke's Gospel lightly. Euan Fry's discussion of the use of "glory" in the New Testament sheds some light on this issue.[53] Fry argues that the word *δόξα* covers a wide range of meaning. Consequently, it is difficult for translators of the New Testament to render it in different languages. He notes that "in most other languages no single word is able to express its meaning in all of its various uses,"[54] and argues that in the New Testament, the Greek term is attributed to Jesus to highlight the glory of God that dwells in him. Fry also posits that this term is applied to Christians in Paul's letters, namely, in Romans 8: Here, Paul uses the term *δόξα* to talk about the future glory that Christians will share with Christ, which does not necessary mean that Paul equates Christians to God. Rather, it is an indication that the term can be extended to non-divine beings. Furthermore, the extension of the term *δόξα* to Moses and Elijah can be interpreted as heavenly *δόξα* (glory), given that both figures were believed to be in heaven, having ascended without tasting death (2 Esdras 6:26; of believers, John 8:52).[55] These interpretations suggest strongly that the extension of the glory motif to Moses and Elijah does not mean that those figures are divine like Jesus.

There are several other positions that are worth considering with respect to the glory motif. It could be argued that the motif in question indicates that Jesus' transfiguration is an

[53] Euan Fry, "Translating 'Glory' in the New Testament," 1976, 422–27, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/026009437602700405?journalCode=tbtd.
[54] Fry, "Translating," 422.
[55] Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Luke* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1984), 160.

anticipation of Jesus' future glory in God's kingdom. To that end, Nolland retells Jesus' transfiguration thus: "A week after the assurance of v. 27, a few privileged disciples get a precious glimpse of the glory that will be Jesus' in the kingdom of God."[56] This interpretation does not present the same difficulty that the divinity argument presents, given that it could be extended to the two men who appear with Jesus in glory by arguing that those men contribute to making the scene a depiction of Jesus' glory in the kingdom of God. This motif can also be used to support the argument that Jesus' transfiguration is an anticipation of his ascension (Acts 1:9-11):

> The phrase 'behold, two men' occurs again (v 10); their garments are as white as Jesus' had become (the whiteness and the shinning have been distributed between the figures at the tomb [Luke 24:4] and at the ascension, while both share a common term for garment[s]; the cloud is once again present.[57]

Like Nolland, Bovon also links Luke's use of the glory motif to Jesus' ascension, but does it through the passion or exodus motif: "Jesus' journey leads from Good Friday to Easter, and finally to the ascension."[58] Nolland's combination of the passion motif with the glory motif reveals that there is some degree of uneasiness with which some scholars treat the glory motif in Luke's account, given that it seems inseparable from the passion motif. In Thomas Martin's treatment of the glory motif in Luke's account, he observes that the text does not fully develop the glory motif.[59] This means that it might not be right to presume that Jesus' transfiguration only anticipates his ascension.

The glory motif has also been used to support the argument that the transfiguration is a misplaced resurrection account, even though this interpretation is controversial. Some authors are of the view that there is very little basis for such interpretation:

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[56] Nolland et al., *Luke 9*, 502.
[57] Nolland et al., 490.
[58] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 376.
[59] Thomas W. Martin, "What Makes Glory Glorious? Reading Luke's Account of the Transfiguration Over Against Triumphalism," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* (September 1, 2006): 10–11, https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X06068385.

> If it [Jesus' transfiguration] were to be displaced anything, then it would be displaced ascension account, but even this would involve a considerable reshaping of the account. While certainly now reported in the light of Easter faith, it is best to take the account at face value as relating to an experience of Jesus' earthly ministry.[60]

Nolland's idea that Jesus' transfiguration should be taken at face value as relating to an experience of Jesus' earthly ministry is commendable, given that any interpretation of the transfiguration that presupposes that the event was misplaced raises several questions that complicate the search for the significance of the event. One such question is regarding the relevance of analyzing the literary context of the event, given that it would be presumed that the event appears in the wrong place in the Lukan narrative.

The Apocalypse of Peter plays a role in the interpretation of the glory motif because it suggests that Jesus' transfiguration is an apocalyptic scene. Bovon is one of those scholars who are of the view that there is an account of Jesus' transfiguration in the Apocalypse of Peter, albeit narrated in the author's own words.[61] The Apocalypse of Peter discusses Peter's tour of heaven and hell, which is guided by the risen Christ.[62] The narrative is in a dialogue format and depicts Jesus as responding to Peter's questions about events that will take place at the end of the world. This work is dated to the second century C.E. Therefore, there is a possibility that the narrative was dependent on the Synoptics. In that case, Jesus' responses to Peter's questions could be seen as clarifications of concepts and ideas that Jesus had discussed in the Synoptics. For instance, in the Ethiopic text of the Apocalypse of Peter, the question about the significance of Jesus' use of the fig tree imagery is raised (Apoc. Pet. 2),[63] which implies that the events therein are comparable to Synoptic events. Therefore, in the Apocalypse of Peter, Peter's description of what he saw on the mountain where Moses and

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[60] Nolland et al., *Luke 9*, 502.
[61] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 372.
[62] Thomas J. Kraus, "Peter, Apocalypse Of," in *Brill Encyclopedia of Early Christianity Online* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2020), https://brill.com/view/db/eeco.
[63] For the texts of the *Apocalypse of Peter* that are used in this study, See Schneemelcher Wilhelm, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. H. Duensing, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1964), 663–83.

Elijah were appears to be a retelling and an attempt to clarify the event of the transfiguration as narrated in the Synoptics. In the Apocalypse of Peter, Peter is depicted as interpreting his experience of beholding the shining faces of Jesus, Moses, and Elijah as the Lord's revelation of the last days and of the resurrection (Apoc. Pet. 15-17). At the end of the vision, Peter reports that the heaven was shut (Apoc. Pet. 15-17), which marks the end of what has been revealed. When an apocalyptic vision is understood as a disclosure of something – and not simply as the final destruction of the world – the closing of heaven after Jesus' explanation of the event of his transfiguration marks the end of what has been revealed. [64] Consequently, the glory motif is used in the Apocalypse of Peter to portray Jesus' transfiguration as an apocalyptic vision. In other words, the use of the glory motif in the Apocalypse of Peter to depict an apocalyptic scene could be an indication that Luke's transfiguration account, which equally highlights the glory motif, is an apocalyptic vision.

Nonetheless, not every author shares the view that there is an account of Jesus' transfiguration in the Apocalypse of Peter. Benjamin Bacon, for instance, argues that the Apocalypse of Peter is not a version of the transfiguration story, given that the revelation in the former took place after Jesus' resurrection, while that of the latter as narrated in the Synoptics took place during Jesus' earthly ministry.[65] He, however, wonders whether in the original account of the transfiguration, the event took place after the resurrection of Jesus – as narrated in the Apocalypse of Peter – but was transformed into a pre-resurrection event in the Synoptics. Bacon's critique has the merit of presenting plausible arguments that can be used to either support or critique the drawing of comparisons between the Apocalypse of Peter and Luke's transfiguration account. Nonetheless, it seems that both events are linked; comparing

[64] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 372.
[65] Benjamin W. Bacon, "The Transfiguration Story: A Study of the Problem of the Sources of Our Synoptic Gospels," *The American Journal of Theology* (1902): 259n29.

them contributes to the understanding of Jesus' transfiguration, especially with respect to the significance of the glory motif.

Some scholars reject the idea that Luke's transfiguration account can be included in the list of those that can be compared to an apocalyptic image; Darrell Bock categorically states that "there is no apocalyptic image in Luke."[66] Conversely, Dorothy Lee argues that an apocalyptic image is perceptible in the transfiguration accounts in general; she gives a succinct description of the connection between OT apocalypse and Jesus' transfiguration:

> Apocalyptic is literally *theo*-logical in its orientation: it focuses on God and God's ultimate triumph. The vision on the mountain, in this sense, is eschatological, pointing forward not just to the resurrection and ascension but to the radiance of the end time and the final coming of Christ. It reflects Old Testament imagery, especially in Isaiah, of the messianic banquet at the end time (Isa 11:6-9; 25:6-10a). In the transfiguration, therefore, the reader's gaze is turned towards the dawning of God's future, bringing to an end the reign of evil, sin and suffering.[67]

Lee's approach to the controversy is enlightening. She shows willingness to detect clues of apocalyptic language in the transfiguration account using theology, while Bock seems to focus on fixed categories or a particular approach to identify an apocalyptic scene. If two apocalyptic scenes cannot be said to be the same, then it is important to admit that there are several ways to identify an apocalyptic scene in the Bible.

The above analysis of the many ways in which the glory motif in Luke's transfiguration account can be interpreted shows the importance of this motif in Luke's transfiguration account.

1.3.4. The Exodus Motif (v. 31): The "exodus" motif only appears in Luke's transfiguration account among the Synoptics. Luke reports that Moses and Elijah were speaking of Jesus' ἔξοδος, which is rendered as "departure" in the NRSV (Luke 9:31). This translation is appropriate because ἔξοδος is synonymous with departure.

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[66] Bock, *Luke*, 867.
[67] Dorothy A. Lee, "On the Holy Mountain: The Transfiguration in Scripture and Theology," *Colloquium* (November 2004), 151.

Luke's use of the word "exodus" would make anyone familiar with the Old Testament recall the centrality of the exodus motif in the life of the Israelites. First and foremost, the term recalls the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Over the years, the term took on new meaning in the lives of the Israelites, who began to use it as a point of reference for evaluating their relationship with God. This has prompted much research on the figural meaning of exodus in the Old Testament. In Richard Clifford's figural reading of this pivotal event, he identifies two aspects of it: liberation and formation.[68] He argues that the event, on the one hand, became a reminder of God's power to deliver the Israelites from slavery and oppression, and on the other hand, a symbol of God's commitment to form them into a new people.

While the above description of the use of "exodus" in the context of the Old Testament and the evolution of its usage over time allows for a deep appreciation of this biblical term, it does not give a clear indication of how Luke uses it in the context of Jesus' transfiguration. This raises a number of questions: firstly, if the term "exodus" alludes to liberation from slavery, how exactly does it apply to the context of the transfiguration? Secondly, if it alludes to formation, who is being formed in the context of Jesus' transfiguration? Bovon argues that the use of *ἔξοδος* in the context of Jesus' transfiguration is a euphemism for death, even though "it is entirely possible that he [Luke] also has in mind the fundamental experience of Israel, the exodus from Egypt."[69] Indeed, Luke's use of exodus in connection with Jerusalem (Luke 9:31) strongly suggests that Luke has Jesus' future passion and death in mind. However, it does not explain how this death relates to the fundamental exodus experience of the Israelites. This leaves some room for conjecture. A possible way to connect Jesus' upcoming death with the exodus experience of the Israelites is

[68] Richard J. Clifford, "The Exodus in the Christian Bible: The Case for 'Figural' Reading," *Theological Studies* (May 1, 2002): 345–61, https://doi.org/10.1177/004056390206300206.
[69] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 376.

to argue that Jesus' death liberates him from this world and, by extension, Israel. In other words, the use of *ἔξοδος* in the context of the transfiguration signifies that the Israelites would be liberated once again through the death of Jesus. While this interpretation may be contested, it is important to keep in mind that Luke expects the reader to attempt such interpretations. Richard Hays observes that most Old Testament references in Luke's Gospel are found in the speeches of the characters, and Luke does not comment on their meanings.[70] Hays thinks that the reason for the missing comments is that Luke expects the informed readers to interpret these texts themselves, and by so doing develop intertextual competence necessary to appreciate the nuances of the sort of narrative that Luke is spinning.[71]

A major challenge with the exodus motif lies in the fact that it seems to be in conflict with the glory motif, which, as explained above, is said to allude to Jesus' future resurrection or ascension. Some authors have combined both motifs (the death and glory motifs) and jointly interpreted them as hinting that Jesus' exaltation and death belong together as a single event.[72] While this interpretation is reasonable, given the proximity of the glory motif to the exodus motif where *δόξα* is first employed (v 31), the second use of *δόξα* suggests that the glory motif could be treated separately from the exodus motif: "they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him" (v 32b). Another problem with conflating the glory and exodus motifs is that it raises the question of why Luke chose to use two different terms that represent separate events in the life of Jesus in his transfiguration account. However, there is no good reason to presume that it is beyond the realm of possibility that Luke wanted them to be interpreted together. While some arguments with respect to the use of the exodus motif are more plausible than others, Luke's ability to creatively construct a complex narrative cannot be ruled out simply because of the difficulty to understand how exactly the glory motif relates

[70] Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2018), 275.
[71] Hays, *Echoes*, 276.
[72] Schweizer, *The Good News According to Luke*, 160.

to the exodus motif. In short, it could be that Luke intentionally combined both motifs to create a new meaning or treated them separately in a subtle way. Either way, the extent to which the motifs in his account relate to each other cannot be underestimated, given that Luke's account has links to several other parts of his narrative.[73]

1.3.5. The Tent Motif: After the disciples who went up the mountain with Jesus saw the three men (Jesus, Moses and Elijah) appear in glory, Peter said: "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" (v. 33). The Greek word for dwelling as used in the passage is *σκηνάς*. The term has been variously translated as tents, booths, tabernacles and shelters. While the NRSV renders it as "dwelling," this study prefers to refer to it as "tents," as it is easier to associate this term with a temporary shelter than the rest. This term, as used in the transfiguration accounts of Luke, Mark and Matthew, recalls the imagery of the Sukkoth in the Old Testament, which is also known as the Feast of Tabernacles. It is also what establishes the tent motif. Many scholars, including Bovon, acknowledge the existence of this motif in the transfiguration account.[74]

The Sukkoth has some things in common with Jesus' transfiguration in Luke's Gospel. This Old Testament feast, which the tent motif recalls, involved the dwelling in booths by the Israelites for seven days, and was followed by a solemn eighth day of holy convocation (Deut 16:13-15; Lev 23:42-43).[75] The number eight in this tradition aligns with Luke's reporting that Jesus' transfiguration took place eight days after a previous event, unlike Mark (Mark 9:2) and Matthew (Matt 17:1) who report that it took place after six days. Therefore, Luke's altering of the time that the event took place – as already mentioned – suggests that he had the Sukkoth in mind.[76] During the Sukkoth, the people dwelt in tents "in

[73] Nolland et al., *Luke 9*, 502–3.
[74] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 378.
[75] Frank L Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, "Tabernacles, Feast Of" (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005), http://rzblx10.uni-regensburg.de/dbinfo/einzeln.phtml?bib_id=ub_grw&titel_id=9650.
[76] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 374.

commemoration of their sojourn in the wilderness (Lev 23:42-43; cf. Neh 8:14-15)."[77] All three accounts of Jesus' transfiguration in the Synoptics mention Peter's desire to build three *σκηνάς* (tents) for the three men who appeared in glory.

The above comparison makes it possible to argue that Luke compares his transfiguration account to the Sukkoth. It implies that Peter wants to provide tents for Jesus, Elijah, and Moses to celebrate the Sukkoth on the mountain of the transfiguration. Admittedly, this interpretation is not limited to Luke's account, given that Mark and Matthew also have this motif in their transfiguration accounts. Nonetheless, this interpretation has been critiqued because the presumed link with the Old Testament tents is discordant with the "rude shelters that Peter might produce from the materials at hand on the mountain."[78] In my view, this critique is not strong, given that it does not seem like Luke is recounting the Sukkoth in the same way as it is recounted in the Old Testament. Another critique of the transfiguration's presumed link with the Sukkoth is by Bock. He argues that attempts to link Peter's action to the Sukkoth might be plausible, but generally require far too much reading into the text. [79] There is no denying that there is a link between Luke's transfiguration account and the Sukkoth. However, where the difficulty lies is in interpreting it in light of the New Testament, particularly the transfiguration.

Luke could not have used *σκηνάς* without knowledge of the feast that is associated with it, but may have used it in view of interpreting the feast in a new way. When using the Old Testament to understand New Testaments stories, namely, the transfiguration, it is important to engage in figural reading which involves being open to new interpretations of the Old Testament event.[80] It is important to reimagine this feast, which might involve seeing

[77] Cross and Livingstone, "Tabernacles, Feast Of."
[78] Nolland et al., *Luke* 9, 492.
[79] Bock, *Luke*, 871.
[80] Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 15.

Jesus as the new tent. In other words, if Peter interpreted his experience on the mountain in light of the Old Testament Sukkoth, it was because he did not realize that Jesus was signalling to him that a new tent had emerged, which is eschatological in nature because "the Festival of Booths at that time had assumed this eschatological perspective, and the glory of God was celebrated with special joy, being symbolized with special joy, being symbolized by an abundance of lamps. Judaism made a connection between the tents and the tent of the presence of God."[81] Put differently, "the context of the final day of the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles [is] seen in connection with the eschatological expectation of God's final 'tabernacling' with his people forever."[82] Therefore, the tent motif can be compared to the Sukkoth.

1.3.6. The Cloud Motif (v. 34): The cloud motif appears in all three accounts of Jesus' transfiguration in the Synoptics, but Luke's account has some peculiarities: in Luke's account, there is a close link between Peter's words and the coming of the cloud. This implies that the disciples are depicted as terrified as they entered the cloud (Luke 9:34). The association of God's coming in a cloud with fear on the part of those who experience it is not new, given that the Lord threw the Egyptian army into panic by appearing in a pillar of fire and cloud (Exod 14:24).

The significance of Luke's use of the cloud motif can be understood better when the use of this motif is examined both in the broader literary context of the Bible and in the Ancient Near Eastern context. In the Ancient Near Eastern context, the clouds held significance as associated with gods. For instance, the "cloud" appears in Ugaritic texts as a linguistic substitute for the proper name of the god, Hadad.[83] Similarly, the Old Testament associates the coming of the clouds with Yahweh's presence; Moses tells Yahweh that the

[81] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 378.
[82] Nolland et al., *Luke 9*, 491.
[83] Jeffrey Jay Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East*, Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 190.

surrounding nations "have heard that you, O Lord, are in the midst of this people; for you, O Lord, are seen face to face, and your 'cloud' stands over them and you go in front of them, in a pillar of 'cloud' by day and in a pillar of fire by night" (Numbers 14:14). In other parts of the Old Testament, the clouds and thick darkness surround the Lord (Psalm 97:2), and clouds are a hiding place for God (Job 22:14). In addition, the clouds sometimes form a barrier between God and God's people: Moses was unable to enter the tent of meeting because the clouds had settled on it (Exod 40:35). The use of the cloud motif in the Old Testament is not different from how it is used in the New Testament. In Luke's Gospel, for example, Jesus proclaims that the Son of Man will come in a cloud with power and glory, but the event will be preceded by apprehension and fear by the people (Luke 21:25-28). Those verses seem to reflect the language from Old Testament prophets, especially, Daniel (Dan 7:13). Therefore, the association of fear with the cloud motif is not limited to Jesus' transfiguration; it is used in other parts of Luke's Gospel to herald God's coming. With regard to Jesus' transfiguration, the fear motif is more prominent in Luke's account because Luke connects it with the arrival of the cloud, thereby presenting an account that is more human than the other Gospels.[84] It can be argued that "the fear that the disciples experience is fear of the divine presence."[85] Therefore, Luke uses the cloud motif to announce the coming of God.

Like other motifs that this study has already treated, the cloud motif could be interpreted in several other ways. Firstly, the cloud motif has links to a theophany, given that this motif, like lightening and smoke, accompanies theophanies.[86] Secondly, the cloud motif can also be interpreted as pointing to the Parousia:[87] Jesus' prediction of the coming of the Son of Man in the cloud (Luke 21:25-26)[88] presents the cloud motif as an anticipation of the

[84] A. Feuillet, "les Perspectives Propres à Chaque Evangéliste dans les Récits de la Transfiguration," *Biblica* (1958), 290.
[85] Nolland et al., *Luke 9*, 501.
[86] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 378.
[87] Reid, *The Transfiguration*, 9.
[88] Again, this language seems to reflect that of Daniel 7:13.

end time. It ties into I.H. Marshall's claim that the transfiguration is "an anticipatory vision of the glory of Jesus at his resurrection or his Parousia."[89] However, Reid disagrees:

> Clouds are never part of a resurrection-appearance story. To connect clouds with the resurrection presumes taking the resurrection and ascension as a unity. Furthermore, the cloud does not function in the transfiguration accounts as a vehicle for ascension. It does not come upon Jesus alone, and it does not transport him either to or from heaven. Rather, it is Moses and Elijah who have vanished after the cloud's disappearance, while Jesus remains behind.[90]

Reid's observation is helpful, but appears to stem from undue expectations about Luke's use of the cloud motif. She presumes that Luke would have matched his use of this motif in Jesus' transfiguration with that of the resurrection or ascension event if he had wanted to connect these events with each other. While Luke may not have had the resurrection or ascension of Jesus in mind when using the cloud motif, the fact that the motif in question evokes those events in the mind of the informed reader should not be overly scrutinized, because intertextuality is an indispensable aspect of studying Scripture. Nonetheless, Reid's claim that the cloud motif can be associated with the Parousia is plausible. Therefore, the cloud motif can be said to evoke the resurrection, the ascension of Jesus, and the Parousia. By so doing, the link between Jesus and the heavenly world is strengthened.

1.3.7. A Voice from the Cloud (v. 35): The voice from the cloud is an important motif in Jesus' transfiguration. This motif is present in all three accounts of Jesus' transfiguration in the Synoptics. My analysis of the cloud motif involved pointing out the identity of the voice from the cloud. It is widely held by scholars that it is God's voice. In his examination of the Christology and the genre of the transfiguration, Delbert Burkett concludes that the voice from heaven that identifies Jesus as God's Son in this scene is essentially the same voice that made the same pronouncement at Jesus' baptism, which is God's voice.[91] The Lukan version

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[89] I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 381.
[90] Reid, *The Transfiguration*, 9.
[91] Delbert Burkett, "The Transfiguration of Jesus (Mark 9:2-8): Epiphany or Apotheosis?," *Journal of Biblical Literature* (2019): 414, https://doi.org/10.15699/jbl.1382.2019.542353.

of the transfiguration substitutes Mark's "beloved" with "chosen." In Mark's account, it is: "This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him!" (Mark 9:7), while in Luke's account it is: "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him" (Luke 9:35). Matthew's account is the longest, given his inclusion of "with him I am well pleased" (Matt 17:5b). However, what matters for now is that in all three accounts of the Synoptics, Jesus is identified as the Son of God.

Even though Luke's modification of Mark's account with respect to what the voice says is minor, it plays a crucial role in helping the reader to understand the passage. Luke's use of the title, "chosen one," recalls Isaiah's use of the same title. In the Servant Song, Isaiah uses the title to describe a figure, whose identity is difficult to ascertain (Isa 42:1);[92] in that passage, "the chosen one" is described as the one in whom the speaker delights, and upon whom the speaker's spirit dwells. The reference could be the king's servant, or Israel, given the passage's apparent connection to the previous chapter, where the chosen one is referred to as a servant and Israel (cf. 41:8-9). Conversely, some scholars argue that the reference in Isaiah 42:1 is not obvious.[93] It seems to me that a plausible explanation of the identity of the "chosen one" in Isaiah 42 is that "the passage's concern is to describe a role and declare that it will find fulfillment."[94] In other words, the "chosen one" is the channel through which the will of the speaker is accomplished. Luke probably interpreted it in the same way when using the title for his transfiguration account, given that it is easier to apply this interpretation to the Lukan account than the ones that describe the "chosen one" as the king's servant or Israel. Therefore, when this study's preferred interpretation of the "chosen one" is applied to Luke's use of the same title in his transfiguration account, it can be seen as indicating that the will of the speaker, God, is fulfilled through Jesus. Furthermore, given that the speaker commands the disciples to listen to Jesus, it implies that it is the wish of the speaker, God, that everyone

[92] Richard B. Hays, *Echoes*, 245.
[93] John Goldingay and David Payne, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40–55* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 211–13, https://doi.org/10.5040/9781472556141.
[94] Goldingay and Payne, *A Critical*, 213.

listens to Jesus. However, this raises the question of what exactly Jesus is saying. This problem mainly stems from the fact that the right translation for *αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε* (v 35b) is not evident.[95] The phrase in question is a present imperative, and can be rendered in English as "hear/listen to him." In Greek grammar, the force of imperatives involves different nuances; in the case of a present imperative, the general force is to command the action as an ongoing process.[96] In this case, it would mean: "continue to listen to him!" However, the interpretation of this command cannot be limited to a general level, given that the context of its usage is not precise. This makes it necessary to recall that a present imperative looks at the action from an internal viewpoint; the command could be progressive, iterative, customary, or even ingressive-progressive (to begin and continue).[97] It is difficult to accurately render these commands in English. Nonetheless, however one chooses to translate *αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε*, it does not seem plausible to speak convincingly of any specific words of Jesus that this command addresses whether within the transfiguration narrative or in the Lukan narrative as a whole. For instance, Bovon claims that the voice from the cloud confirms Jesus' prediction that the Son of Man will undergo suffering, be rejected and killed, but will be raised on the third day (Luke 9:22).[98] While this connection is logical, it is important to note that the text does not make the connection explicit. Nonetheless, Luke could not have used *αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε* to confuse his readers. He assumes that the reader is able to make connections between this statement and the instructions of Jesus – both past and future. Most importantly, Luke expects the reader to perceive Jesus as the one through whom God's will is fulfilled. Hence, the command to listen to him.

1.4. Chapter Summary: This chapter sought to present and discuss the various motifs in Luke's transfiguration account to show that these motifs enrich one's understanding of the

[95] Just, *Luke*, 401.
[96] Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 485.
[97] Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 721.
[98] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 373.

narrative. This discussion opened with a brief analysis of what a biblical motif is and how it leads a reader toward a better understanding of a passage, especially Luke's transfiguration account. This analysis led to the examination of both the immediate and wider literary contexts of Jesus' transfiguration to highlight how these contexts influence one's search for motifs in the transfiguration. Hence, the need to study the pericope's surrounding contexts carefully. After listing the motifs that are discernible in the Lukan transfiguration account, this study demonstrated that these motifs can be interpreted in various ways because they evoke several biblical images and events both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. This led to the conclusion that while some motifs allow for interpretations that may result in ambiguities, they nonetheless contribute to the understanding of the narrative. Throughout this first chapter, there was a constant attempt to show how these motifs are related to each other and how they enrich one's understanding of the passage.

Despite the progress made thus far in illuminating Jesus' transfiguration through the discussion of motifs, there is still a need for more precise understanding of how Luke is leading the reader to the theme of his account, especially through the motifs that are unique to his account. This will be the goal of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: REIMAGINING THE MOTIFS

Despite the difficulty of knowing the author's intentions when putting motifs together in a text, interpreters can still evaluate how these motifs seek to lead readers, progressively and cumulatively, to understand various elements of the narrative.[99] As Aaron Canty notes, albeit using "themes" in place of "motifs:" "the story of Jesus' transfiguration unites a number of closely related themes in a short, dense, and very rich narrative."[100] Furthermore, these motifs can lead the attentive reader to the theme of the narrative. My reading of the combination of motifs in Luke's transfiguration account is that Luke wrote his narrative with the theme of prayer in mind. This chapter will argue that Luke's transfiguration account is a prayer experience, by proposing a new way of imagining the relationship between the motifs in Luke's account in a bid to show that they point to a prayer experience.

To that end, I will first demonstrate why the prayer motif is the overarching motif in Luke's transfiguration account, which implies that other motifs in Luke's account should be interpreted in light of the prayer motif. This will involve presenting Luke's addition of the infinitive of purpose, *εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι* (v. 28), and his depiction of Jesus as praying when he was transfigured before his disciples (v. 29), as indicators of the centrality of the prayer motif in the Lukan transfiguration account. Afterwards, I will interpret Luke's reception and redaction of the Markan transfiguration account in light of prayer to show the reader how the motifs in Luke's transfiguration account point to a prayer experience. It is worth noting that the following discussion is mainly a reimagination exercise. My expectation is that by the end of this chapter, it will become evident to the reader that the various motifs in Luke's transfiguration account unite around one theme, which is prayer.

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[99] James M. Morgan, "How Do Motifs Endure and Perform? 207.
[100] Aaron M. Canty, *Light & Glory*, 4.

2.1. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRAYER MOTIF IN LUKE'S ACCOUNT

Luke's transfiguration account uses the prayer motif in two ways: first, by indicating that the reason for Jesus' trip to the mountain with three of his disciples is for the purpose of prayer (v. 28), and secondly by introducing the idea that Jesus was praying when he was transfigured before his disciples (v. 29). The Greek phrases used in this regard are significant. The first is *εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι* (v. 28), which is rendered in English as "onto/on the mountain to pray." The second phrase is *ἐν τῷ προσεύχεσθαι* (v. 29), which translates in English as "while he was praying." In the following lines I will argue that these phrases, which have articular infinitives, shape the entire narrative into a prayer experience.

2.1.1. Understanding Articular Infinitives: Luke's use of articular infinitives in the first two verses of his transfiguration account necessitates a short investigation into how articular infinitives function in Greek grammar. Bovon does not pay close attention to this, as his only mention of Luke's use of infinitives in the passage under discussion is as a passing comment.[101] J.J. Janse van Rensburg pointed out many years ago that all the problems of New Testament Greek Grammar were not worked out in the nineteenth century.[102] Hence, the need to keep rediscovering the Greek grammar. To understand the articular infinitives that are used in Luke's transfiguration account, it is important to study the grammatical function of the phrases in which they appear, as it will allow for the rediscovery of the Greek grammar. This study identifies those phrases as prepositional phrases.

2.1.1.1. Prepositional Phrases: Two major positions are discernible on the question of how the prepositions, *εἰς* and *ἐν*, give meaning to the articular infinitives, *τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι* (v. 28), and *τῷ προσεύχεσθαι* (v. 29). Some grammarians think that the cases govern the prepositions with respect to meaning, while others think that the prepositions govern the

[101] François Bovon, *Luke 1*, 370, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015054302800.
[102] J. J. Fika Janse van Rensburg, "A New Reference Grammar for the Greek New Testament: Explotary Remarks on a Methodology," *Neotestamentica* (1993): 133–52.

cases with respect to meaning. I will argue that in such phrases, prepositions work in conjunction with the cases to give meaning to the entire phrase, although the primary meaning of the preposition in question should be considered first because of the spatial dimension that it adds to the meaning of the phrase.

The study of a prepositional phrase begins with the study of the primary meaning of the preposition in that phrase which is linked to the history of the development of prepositions. Admittedly, no class of words in Hellenistic Greek is more important than prepositions; and none are more imperfectly understood.[103] And yet, they must be studied especially when the meaning of a phrase is in doubt. Pietro Bortone posits that Greek prepositions were first understood in a concrete spatial sense before they evolved into non-spatial meanings.[104] He also argues that over the course of time, some prepositions became exclusively abstract in meaning, thereby making it impossible for them to reacquire their spatial meaning.[105] While Bortone's idea that prepositions were first understood in a concrete spatial sense is reasonable, the idea that some prepositions completely lost their spatial meaning over time does not appear to be true. As F. A. Adams observes, Greek prepositions are primarily suggestive of space irrespective of how they are used.[106] In other words, the spatial sense of a preposition is never lost. In fact, Adams gives an apt description of the role of space to language in general:

> Every person who grows from infancy to maturity comes silently into possession of feelings about space and its objects to which he may never give utterance – of which he may even be unconscious. These feelings seem to have no recognition, or very little, in the completed language. But in the formation of that language they have a work to do; they shape the speech, and, if by wise and patient questioning we can find what these feelings were, we make a gain in the study of the language.[107]

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[103] F. A. Adams, *The Greek Prepositions,Studied from Their Original Meanings as Designations of Space.* (New York, NY: 1885), iii, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t7gq6wh6z.
[104] Pietro Bortone, *Greek Prepositions: From Antiquity to the Present* (Oxford : NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), xii; cf. 52, 189, 302-3.
[105] Bortone, *Greek Prepositions*, 168.
[106] Adams, *The Greek Prepositions, Studied from Their Original Meanings as Designations of Space.*, 5.
[107] Adams, *The Greek* Prepositions, 2.

With respect to a prepositional phrase, the spatial dimension of the preposition tells us about the context in which the action is being performed. For instance, in Luke's transfiguration account, the preposition *εἰς* reveals to the reader that Jesus is "moving toward" *τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι* (v. 28), and not already on the mountain or static. Daniel Wallace rightly asserts that there are contexts in which the idea of motion cannot be pressed with *εἰς*, namely, in John's Gospel where the intimate relationship between Jesus and the Father is described: *μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρός*. The preceding phrase is rendered in English as "the unique One, God, who was in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18).[108] Wallace thinks that the interchange of *εἰς* with *ἐν* in Koine Greek, "coupled with the overwhelming force of static verb + transitive preposition"[109] suggests that there is no idea of motion in that clause. Nevertheless, the spatial dimension of *εἰς* is not hidden, as it shows that Christ's location is the bosom of the Father.[110] Therefore, the primary meaning of a preposition is its spatial sense.

In the case of Luke's transfiguration account, it is the notion of movement that is expressed with *εἰς*, which is the "movement toward" *τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι* (v. 28). When this notion of movement is combined with the infinitive in question here, *προσεύξασθαι*, the resultant meaning is an infinitive of purpose. This kind of infinitive states the goal of the trip to the mountain. Some scholars are of the opinion that the spatial dimension of a preposition is not sufficient for deciphering the meaning of a prepositional phrase; they think that other aspects of a preposition need to be considered as well.

In his book on prepositions and theology, Murray Harris states that "many prepositions denote three relations (local/spatial, temporal, figurative/ metaphorical/ abstract), which apparently developed in that order but, it seems, the primary representation is always

[108] Daniel B Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 360.
[109] Wallace, 360.
[110] Oladotun Paul Kolawole, "The Relevance of John 1:1-18 for Contemporary Christians," *Pharos Journal of Theology*, January 1, 2021, https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.1022.

local."[111] Consequently, when the meaning of a preposition that appears in a prepositional phrase is to be ascertained, he thinks that to ignore these other relations is to take lightly the meanings that prepositions acquired in the course of their historical development. It was in line with this conception of prepositions that he laid out the following procedure for determining the meaning of a prepositional phrase:

> (1) the primary meaning of the preposition itself (i.e., the local/spatial sense) and then its range of meanings when used with the particular case involved. (2) the basic significance of the case that is used with the preposition (3) the indications afforded by the context as to the meaning of the preposition (4) the distinctive feature of prepositional usage in the NT that may account for seeming irregularities.[112]

Harris' proposal is helpful, and this study will highlight some of those four aspects of a preposition that he finds important for determining the meaning of a prepositional phrase. However, the proposal appears to have some drawbacks, two of which are worth discussing here. Firstly, some scholars, namely Archibald Robertson, have questioned the relevance of searching for a basic or primary sense of a preposition. Secondly, Harris' proposal does not give prominence to the case idea[113] as some other proposals do, but to the preposition in the phrase. The following statement by Robertson addresses the above two issues:

> It is quite erroneous to say that *παρά*, for instance, means now 'from,' 'beside,' now 'to.' This is to confuse the resultant meaning of the preposition, case and context with the preposition itself. It is the common vice in the study of the prepositions to make this crucial error. The scientific method of studying the Greek preposition is to begin with the case-idea, add the meaning of the preposition itself, then consider the context. The result of this combination will be what one translates into English, for instance, but he translates the total idea, not the mere preposition. It is puerile to explain the Greek prepositions merely by the English or German rendering of the whole. Unfortunately, the Greeks did not have the benefit of our English and German.[114]

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[111] Murray J. Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament: An Essential Reference Resource for Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 29.
[112] Harris, *Prepositions*, 31.
[113] The case idea also means the case of the article.
[114] Archibald T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1980), 568.

Robertson's objection to the search for a basic sense of a preposition is logical, as words are best understood when used in context. Even Harris admits that there are instances when it is not always possible to trace a basic sense of a preposition, namely, when it is used figuratively.[115] Robertson's critique of the habit of confusing the resultant meaning of the preposition with the preposition itself is plausible. Nonetheless, this study's understanding of how to discover the primary meaning of a preposition differs from how Robertson conceives of it. The primary meaning of a preposition is discovered by determining the preposition's relationship with space based on its historical usage. For instance, to determine the primary meaning of *παρά*, one needs to find out if this preposition has been historically interpreted as suggestive of movement toward something, away from it, movement by something else or just static. While exceptions to a particular usage may exist, the general spatial sense of a preposition in history is what constitutes its primary meaning. It is this sense of space that allows the exegete to discover when a preposition has been wrongly translated in any context, given that prepositions never lose their spatial sense. In the case of the passage under discussion (Luke's transfiguration account), the primary meaning of *εἰς* is "movement toward" while that of *ἐν* is static. Those prepositions are consistently used in those senses in the New Testament.

With regard to the case idea, Harris objects to Robertson's support of the primacy of the case idea because in Hellenistic Greek, a case's meaning fades when governed by a preposition.[116] In this regard, Harris' position closely aligns with Wallace's, who makes a similar argument in support of the primacy of the preposition in a prepositional phrase:

> A proper grammatical method separates prepositional phrases from simple case uses. Whenever any of the oblique cases follows a preposition, you should examine the use of the *preposition*, rather than the case usage, to determine the possible nuances involved. The beginning exegete often has a tendency to treat the use of a case after a preposition as though there were no preposition present. That is, he or she attempts to

[115] Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament*, 30.
[116] Harris, *Prepositions*, 31–32.

> determine the nuance of the case rather than according to the categories for the preposition. This is imprecise exegesis for it assumes that the preposition does not alter how the case can be used. But in Hellenistic Greek, because of the tendency toward explicitness, the preposition increasingly gained independent value. Thus, the preposition does not just clarify the case's usage, it *alters* it.[117]

Wallace's above statement is an important point with respect to the development of preposition, but it minimizes the importance of the article's case in uncovering the total linguistic meaning of an articular infinitive when it appears in a prepositional phrase. In Denny Burk's words, to uncover the total linguistic meaning of an articular infinitive consists in "ascertain[ing] the semantic and syntactic value of each of its constituent parts and how each of these contributes to the total linguistic meaning of the articular infinitive."[118] While Wallace recognizes the importance of checking the case usage of an articular infinitive for a better understanding of the nuance involved, he still thinks that "you would err if you shut yourself up to the categorical *possibilities* of the naked case."[119] Harris does not go as far as Wallace in lessening the role of a case idea in a prepositional phrase, given that his methodology, as detailed above, advocates a multi-faceted approach to discovering the meaning of a prepositional phrase. Burk's critique of Wallace for arguing that a preposition can completely override the meaning of a given case is worth discussing. Burk argues in support of the primacy of the case idea: he points out that "the article is grammatically obligatory when an infinitive serves as the object of the preposition."[120] In other words, every infinitive that follows a prepositional phrase must have an article, otherwise semantic and syntactic ambiguities ensue.

In my view, these authors make important points that are relevant to the study of the role of the parts of a prepositional phrase, but do not go far enough in highlighting the

[117] Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 360–61.
[118] Denny Burk, *Articular Infinitives in the Greek of the New Testament: On the Exegetical Benefit of Grammatical Precision*, New Testament Monographs 14 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 3.
[119] Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 361.
[120] Burk, *Articular Infinitives in the Greek of the New Testament*, 77.

importance of interpreting the phrase as a unit. Harris and Wallace focus too much on the preposition, while Burk's attention is too centered on the case of the article. Burk's point that an article is grammatically obligatory in prepositional phrases does not seem to me like sufficient reason to posit that the article's case governs the meaning of the entire phrase. After all, if an article stood alone without other words, it would not make any sense. Therefore, the question of whether an article or a preposition governs a prepositional phrase neglects the importance of appreciating the meaning that is derived from the combination of a group of words.

I.T. Beckwith shows how meanings can be derived from combining a group of words. He does it with the construction, *εἰς + τό* and the infinitive, [121] which provides an example of how to interpret the prepositional phrase under discussion in this chapter as a unit. He compares the usage of εἰς + τό plus the infinitive with sources both within and outside the New Testament. He observes that many sources outside the New Testament used the construct, which he calls an idiom, as a unit to denote either of two meanings: (1) an *ecbatic* sense, which means the result of something that was aimed at, and (2) purpose.[122] Even with respect to the New Testament, several New Testament writers treat it as a unit. For instance, in Brook Westcotts' commentary on Hebrews 11:3b, where εἰς + τό appears, Westcott avers that, according to usage, it has no other sense than that of expressing the end.[123] However, this construct is frequently used in the New Testament to denote purpose: "for example, consider Rom. 1.11: ἐπιποθῶ γὰρ ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς, ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικὸν εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς ('For I long to see you in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you,

[121] I. T. Beckwith, "The Articular Infinitive with Eiς," *Journal of Biblical Literature* (1896): 155-167, https://doi.org/10.2307/3268839.
[122] Beckwith, "The Articular Infinitive," 155.
[123] Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews the Greek Text with Notes and Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1903), 355.

in order that[124] you may be established')."[125] Here, the construct, εἰς + *τό*, which is translated as a unit, is roughly equivalent to the meanings that *ἵνα* or *ὅπως* convey. Similarly, the prepositional phrases *εἰς τὸ ὅρος προσεύξασθαι* (v. 28), and *ἐν τῷ προσεύχεσθαι* (v. 29) can be interpreted as a unit without needing to demonstrate which word in particular governs their collective meaning. As Wallace clearly expresses: "too often prepositions are analyzed simplistically, etymologically, and without due consideration for the verb to which they are connected. Prepositions are often treated in isolation, as though their ontological meaning were still completely intact."[126]

2.1.1.2. The Role of an Article's Case: In this section, I will discuss the role of an article's case in a prepositional phrase to show that while it contributes to the meaning of the phrase, it works alongside other words to provide the total linguistic meaning of the prepositional phrase. Burk's analysis of articular infinitives will guide this discussion.

The first prepositional phrase in Luke's account, *εἰς τὸ ὅρος προσεύξασθαι* (v. 28), is an example of an accusative articular infinitive that follows a preposition. This construction is an articular infinitive despite the fact that *εἰς τό* are separated from the infinitive, *προσεύξασθαι*, by the noun *ὅρος*. In Hellenistic Greek, even when the *εἰς* + *τό* plus the infinitive construct is separated by other words, the phrase is still treated as an articular infinitive. Beckwith's discussion of articular infinitives supports this claim: he argues that the following passage in the Septuagint is an articular infinitive: *ὑπόδειγμα εἰς τὸ προθύμως ἀπευθανατίζειν*: "an example to die willingly" (2 Maccabees 6:28).[127]

Burk notes that the accusative preposition resembles the nominative case in that it primarily encodes a syntactic function, and not a semantic load;[128] it can only mark the

[124] The phrase, "in order that" is rendered as "so that" in the NRSV. Nonetheless, both translations denote the same sense.
[125] Burk, *Articular Infinitives in the Greek of the New Testament*, 99.
[126] Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 359.
[127] Beckwith, "The Articular Infinitive," 158.
[128] Burk, *Articular Infinitives in the Greek of the New Testament*, 97.

infinitive as the object of the preposition without encoding the semantic idea of "motion toward" or "extension." Conversely, some scholars, namely Robertson, argue that the accusative could denote "motion toward," thereby giving it a semantic idea .[129] I agree with J.P. Louw's position with respect to this argument; he states that accusatives are often with verbs of motion because they do not denote "motion toward."[130] When applied to the phrase under discussion (*εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι*), it would make us recall that there is a verb of motion before the phrase, which is *ἀνέβη*.

"…καὶ παραλαβὼν Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην καὶ Ἰάκωβον **ἀνέβη** εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι" (Luke 9:28b)

Therefore, the semantic idea comes from the preposition, *εἰς*. While Burk agrees that this lessens the importance of an article's case, he nonetheless believes that the article governs the meaning of the entire phrase. His main argument in support of this idea is that grammatical ambiguities result if the anarthrous infinitive were employed following a preposition.[131] However, there are no such cases in the New Testament; his argument in this regard is speculative. Greek words function together to give meaning.

Burk notes that there are several instances of accusative articular infinitives following the preposition *εἰς* in the New Testament, which indicate "motion toward," and often denote goal, end or purpose.[132] Similarly, Wallace argues that the following meanings result from an accusative articular infinitive when followed by the preposition, *εἰς*: purpose, result or expexegetical (rare).[133] This is certainly the case with *εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι* (v. 28). Luke combined the preposition that indicates motion, *εἰς*, with an accusative articular infinitive,

[129] Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 468.
[130] J. P. Louw, "Linguistic Theory and the Greek Case System," *Acta Classica* (1966): 73–88.
[131] Burk, *Articular Infinitives in the Greek of the New Testament*, 78.
[132] Burk, 99.
[133] Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 611.

τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι, to show that the purpose of Jesus' trip to the mountain with his disciples is to pray. While commenting on the meaning of this phrase, K.S. Han states that "in this verse, the infinitive 'to pray' is purposive."[134]

The second prepositional phrase in Luke's account, *ἐν τῷ προσεύχεσθαι* (v. 29), is an example of a dative articular infinitive following a preposition. Regarding the specific function of the dative article, Burk argues that "the dative article marks the infinitive as object of the preposition."[135] While this role of the article is important, there is no clear indication that the article's case alone governs the meaning of the entire phrase. In his treatment of the function of Greek cases, Gessner Harrison notes that dative cases when used in the ablative, as seen in the passage under discussion, mark the point of time at which an event occurs.[136] In such cases, it is often preceded by the preposition *ἐν*:

ἐν τῷ εἶναι αὐτοὺς (Luke 2:6): "While they were there"

ἐν τῇ στάσει (John 2:19-20): "Within three days"[137]

In the above translations, the phrases are treated as a unit to mark the time in the course of which something happens. Burk does not contest such translations. In fact, he mentions that the authors of the New Testament employ *ἐν* + the dative articular infinitive to specify the locative meaning, which can function figuratively either as a temporal or circumstantial location.[138] Burk also observes that "the majority of the temporal uses of ἐν τῷ plus the infinitive are concentrated in Luke's writings. The characteristic Lukan pattern is to employ ἐν τῷ plus the infinitive in conjunction with ἐγένετο to express the idea 'it came to pass when…'"[139] Arthur Just agrees with this thesis: "Luke is fond of the dative with ἐν (both

[134] K. S. Han, "Theology of Prayer in the Gospel of Luke," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, (2000): 683.
[135] Burk, *Articular Infinitives in the Greek of the New Testament*, 93.
[136] Gessner Harrison, *A Treatise on the Greek Prepositions and on the Cases of Nouns with Which These Are Used* (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott, 1858), 72, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009012334.
[137] Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament*, 119.
[138] Burk, *Articular Infinitives in the Greek of the New Testament*, 92.
[139] Burk, *Articular Infinitives*, 94.

present and aorist infinitive). The time is contemporaneous with the verb."[140] Therefore, meaning is derived from the combination of those Greek words and not by isolating any of them. When the temporal sense is applied to *ἐν τῷ προσεύχεσθαι* (v. 29), it would mean that Jesus was praying when the appearance of his face changed and his clothes became dazzling white. If the change of appearance, which prepared Jesus for the rest of the encounter on the mountain, was triggered by prayer, it means that prayer played a crucial role in Jesus' transfiguration in the Lukan account.

2.1.1.3. Translating the Articular Infinitives: Adams rightly observed that "language does not, in strictness of speech, express thought, it only suggests. It requires in its single words that the student use imagination and reflection. Without these he may learn the Dictionary and the Grammar, but he will not understand."[141] The grammatical study carried out thus far only laid the foundation for what I must use my imagination and reflection to complete, which is the translation of the two articular infinitives in question to reveal what Burk calls "the total linguistic meaning" of an articular infinitive.

The construction *εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι* (v. 28), reveals that Jesus' reason for going to the mountain is to pray, while *ἐν τῷ προσεύχεσθαι* (v. 29) tells the reader that the purpose of the trip is being accomplished; indeed, Jesus really wanted to pray. The spatial sense that *εἰς* denotes through motion makes it clear that prayer is not taking place at the moment, but will take place on the mountain. It is worth noting that this does not equate to saying that prayer is one of the many events that will take place on the mountain, but the main or only event that Jesus has in mind. This is the metaphorical sense that *εἰς* reveals in a phrase such as this, which Harris calls the "telic *εἰς*,"[142] while the temporal sense that *ἐν* denotes is static, which indicates that prayer is taking place at the moment. Therefore, the

[140] Just, *Luke*, 400.
[141] Adams, *The Greek Prepositions, Studied from their Original Meanings as Designations of Space.*, 4.
[142] Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament*, 88.

right translation for *εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι* is "on/onto the mountain to pray," while that of *ἐν τῷ προσεύχεσθαι* is "while he was praying." Consequently, Luke's repeating of the prayer motif using two significant articular infinitives, which he places at the beginning of the narrative, clearly signals that the entire event on the mountain should be interpreted in light of prayer.

I would like to propose a way of retelling the story in light of the prayer motif that I have closely examined in this chapter: Jesus' desire to pray on the mountain (v. 28), and his attempt to fulfil that desire (v. 29) led to an extraordinary prayer experience, which is identified today as his transfiguration (vv. 29b-36). Therefore, the significance of the prayer motif – as used by Luke – hinges on the fact that it transforms the whole mountaintop encounter into a prayer experience.

2.1.2. Luke and Prayer: The point about the significance of the prayer motif in Luke's transfiguration account can be highlighted further by reiterating Luke's affinity for prayer, and how his treatment of prayer in Luke-Acts differs from that of other Gospels, especially Mark's Gospel.

The fact that prayer is a characteristic feature of Luke's Gospel is perceptible even when statistics are employed. The word, *προσευχεσθαι*, which is the present infinitive middle/passive of the word that Luke uses in his transfiguration account (*προσεύξασθαι*), appears 19 times in Luke's Gospel and 16 times in Acts (totaling 35 times), as against 11 times in Mark, and 16 times in Matthew.[143] By word count, the other Gospels pale in comparison to Luke-Acts, and Luke's Gospel alone. Similar disparities are perceptible with respect to the noun, *προσευχή*. In Luke-Acts, *προσευχή* appears 12 times (3 times in Luke's Gospel and 9 times in Acts) in contrast to 2 times in Mark and Matthew respectively.

[143] Ozora Stearns Davis, "προσευχεσθαι," in *Vocabulary of New Testament Words, Classified According to Roots with Statistics of Usage by Authors.* (Hartford, CT: Hartford Seminary Press, 1893), 11, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100867578.

Admittedly, judgment about the significance of a word cannot be made solely on the basis of statistics. Nonetheless, statistics reveal a pattern that is beneficial for understanding an author better. With respect to the current topic, they reveal that Luke's decision to introduce his transfiguration account with a prayer motif is not arbitrary, as the author values prayer.

Mark's Gospel also shows an affinity for prayer, but not as much as does Luke's. In his essay entitled "Praying with the Gospel of Mark," Thomas Stegman rightly states that "an underappreciated facet of Mark's Gospel is his depiction of Jesus as pray-er,"[144] given that Mark places the instances of Jesus at prayer at critical points in the narrative. Stegman highlights and discusses the following important instances of prayer in Mark's Gospel: "Within the prologue (1:9-13), in his description of a representative day in Jesus's ministry (1:35-39), at a significant moment near the midpoint of the Gospel (6:46), at the beginning of Jesus's passion (14:32-42), and in the moments before his death (15:34)."[145] Admittedly, Luke's affinity for prayer cannot be fairly treated without acknowledging the contribution of Mark's Gospel, given that Luke used the latter as a source.[146] As Mark Goodacre notes, "Luke's admiration for Mark is clear, and it is not an accident that he appears to have built his own Gospel on the Marcan foundation."[147] Nonetheless, the theme of prayer is more prominent in Luke, and similar to Mark's Gospel, "in Luke, important thresholds are crossed in the context of Jesus' prayer."[148] Furthermore, the fact that there are three parables about prayer in Luke's Gospel is significant: they are the Parable of the Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:5-8), the Parable of the Unjust Judge or Persistent Widow (18:1-8), and the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (18:9-14). In fact, Stegman recognizes that "Mark does not list as

[144] Thomas D. Stegman, "Praying with the Gospel of Mark," in *Prayer in the Catholic Tradition: A Handbook of Practical Approaches*, ed. Robert J. Wicks (Cincinnati, OH: Franciscan Media, 2016), 129.
[145] Stegman, *Praying*,129.
[146] Here and throughout this study, the Two-Source hypothesis is presumed.
[147] Mark Goodacre, "Re-Working the 'Way of the Lord': Luke's Use of Mark and His Reaction to Matthew," in *Luke's Literary Creativity*, ed. Jesper Tang Nielsen (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 29.
[148] John Nolland et al., *Luke 9:21 - 18:34*, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Nelson, 2008), 503.

many instances of Jesus at prayer as, for example, Luke."[149] Therefore, the attention that the prayer motif has received thus far in this study is justifiable.

Luke alludes to prayer in various circumstances which, understandably, have led to various interpretations of the relationship between prayer and other biblical themes and motifs. It is therefore necessary to find ways of interpreting the relationship between prayer and other biblical motifs, even when they seem unrelated or in conflict with it as this study attempts to do. Joseph Fitzmyer has attempted to establish this link by arguing that the theme of "Christian discipleship" is related to prayer as presented in Luke-Acts.[150] He gives the following instances of prayer in Luke's Gospel as related to Christian discipleship: the infancy narrative of John the Baptist, where Zechariah learns that his prayer has been answered (Luke 1:13), Jesus' prayer during his baptism (3:21), Jesus' choosing of the Twelve (6:12), Peter's acknowledgement of Jesus (9:18), Jesus' transfiguration (9:28), Jesus' intercession for Peter at the Last Supper (22:32), Jesus' withdrawal from his disciples to pray on the Mount of Olives (22:41), and Jesus' prayer on the cross (23:46). In Acts, Fitzmyer cites the example of the disciples' gathering together to pray (Acts 4:24-31), and concludes with the statement: "In all of this [Luke-Acts] one notes Luke's concern to join to the disciples' ministering activity the need for ongoing communion with God himself. That has to be the source of vitality in the activity of the disciples."[151] In other words, the instances of prayer in Luke-Acts present prayer as an event that characterizes discipleship. Even when Jesus prays, it is to teach his disciples how to be good disciples. While Fitzmyer does not elaborate enough upon this relationship between prayer and discipleship, his work has the merit of showing that Luke's transfiguration account is an example of the connection between prayer and discipleship. Therefore, Luke's portrayal of Jesus as taking his disciples

[149] Stegman, "Praying with the Gospel of Mark," 129.
[150] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, ed., *The Gospel According to Luke: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, 1st ed, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 136–37.
[151] Fitzmyer, "Praying," 136.

to the mountain of the transfiguration to pray (Luke 9:28) shows that Luke considers this event as one of the events in Luke-Acts where Jesus' disciples are being familiarized with prayer.

2.2. REIMAGINING HOW LUKE RECEIVED AND REDACTED MARK'S TRANSFIGURATION ACCOUNT

Having demonstrated the significance of the prayer motif in Luke's transfiguration account, I will now propose a way of reimagining how Luke received Mark's transfiguration account in light of the Lukan prayer motif. The aim is to demonstrate that it is possible to think of the other motifs in the Lukan transfiguration narrative as being in conformity with the prayer motif.

The Two-Source Theory on which this study is based recognizes that Mark's transfiguration account is the most primitive of the Synoptic accounts. In fact, "the majority of scholars presuppose Marcan priority and Luke's dependence on Marcan tradition."[152] Therefore, this study will examine Luke 9:28-36 vis-à-vis Mark 9:2-8. Although in general, the Two-Source theory posits that a hypothetical collection called Q also served as a source for Luke's Gospel, this study will focus on Luke's modification of the Markan source with respect to the transfiguration, as the extent to which he modified other earlier sources, including Q, is difficult to ascertain. John March asserts that although Luke's account is more varied, it is unlikely he used any source other than Mark, and that Luke "is probably following his custom of rather free editorial re-writing."[153] Conversely, Bovon argues that "Luke may have known a special source in addition to Mark, or he may have known a pre-Markan text that diverges from the present form of Mark."[154] However, as already stated, this

[152] Barbara E. Reid, *The Transfiguration: A Source- and Redaction- Critical Study of Luke 9: 28-36*, Cahiers de La Revue Biblique (Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie Éditeurs, 1993), 33, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002716588.
[153] Marsh, "Transfiguration," 267.
[154] François Bovon, *Luke 1 :A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2002), 370, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015054302800.

study's focus will be on Luke's modification of Mark. My references to the parallels in Matthew's Gospel will serve the purpose of affirming the importance of a particular aspect of Mark's transfiguration account. The reason is that Matthew equally used Mark as a source in the composition of his transfiguration account. In other words, whatever Luke and Matthew have in common with respect to Jesus' transfiguration proves that both Gospels found it noteworthy.

2.2.1. Remarkable Similarities between Mark and Luke: The synopsis below highlights in bold key similarities between Mark's transfiguration account and Luke's. The focus here is not on verbal similarities but on what could either be categorized as motifs or ideas that both accounts have in common. I will discuss the significance of these similarities in the lines that follow the synopsis. This will involve (re)imagining why Luke chose to retain these aspects of Mark's transfiguration account in light of the prayer motif. This is not an attempt to imagine these aspects of Jesus' transfiguration exactly as Luke imagined them, but an effort to show that it is possible to interpret these common motifs or ideas in light of the prayer motif.

Mark 9:2-8	**Luke 9:28-36**	**Similarities**
2 Καὶ μετὰ ἡμέρας ἓξ παραλαμβάνει ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν **Πέτρον** καὶ τὸν **Ἰάκωβον** * καὶ **Ἰωάννην**, καὶ ἀναφέρει αὐτοὺς **εἰς ὄρος** ὑψηλὸν κατ' ἰδίαν μόνους. καὶ **μετεμορφώθη** ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν, 3 **καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ** * **ἐγένετο στίλβοντα λευκὰ** * λίαν οἷα γναφεὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς οὐ δύναται * οὕτως λευκᾶναι. 4 καὶ ὤφθη αὐτοῖς **Ἠλίας σὺν Μωϋσεῖ**, καὶ ἦσαν **συλλαλοῦντες τῷ Ἰησοῦ**. 5 καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος λέγει τῷ Ἰησοῦ· Ῥαββί, καλόν ἐστιν ἡμᾶς **ὧδε εἶναι**, καὶ ποιήσωμεν * **τρεῖς σκηνάς** * , **σοὶ μίαν καὶ Μωϋσεῖ**	28 Ἐγένετο δὲ μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους ὡσεὶ ἡμέραι ὀκτὼ * καὶ παραλαβὼν **Πέτρον** καὶ **Ἰωάννην** καὶ **Ἰάκωβον** ἀνέβη εἰς **τὸ ὄρος** προσεύξασθαι. 29 καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ προσεύχεσθαι αὐτὸν **τὸ εἶδος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἕτερον** καὶ ὁ **ἱματισμὸς αὐτοῦ λευκὸς ἐξαστράπτων**. 30 καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες δύο συνελάλουν αὐτῷ, οἵτινες ἦσαν **Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἠλίας**, 31 οἳ ὀφθέντες ἐν δόξῃ **ἔλεγον** τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ ἣν ἤμελλεν πληροῦν ἐν Ἰερουσαλήμ. 32 ὁ δὲ Πέτρος καὶ οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ ἦσαν βεβαρημένοι ὕπνῳ·	**1. Only three disciples accompanied Jesus to the mountain** **2. Jesus' appearance changed** **3. The appearance of Elijah and Moses** **4. The tent motif** **5. The experience is limited to the mountain**

μίαν καὶ Ἠλίᾳ μίαν. [6] οὐ γὰρ ἤδει τί ⁻* ἀποκριθῇ, *⁻ **ἔκφοβοι γὰρ ἐγένοντο**⁻* . [7] καὶ ἐγένετο νεφέλη ἐπισκιάζουσα αὐτοῖς, καὶ ⁻* **ἐγένετο φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης**· Οὗτός ἐστιν **ὁ υἱός μου** ὁ ἀγαπητός, ⁻* **ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ**⁻* . [8] καὶ ἐξάπινα περιβλεψάμενοι οὐκέτι οὐδένα εἶδον ⁻* **ἀλλὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν μόνον** μεθ' ἑαυτῶν⁻* .	διαγρηγορήσαντες δὲ εἶδον τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς δύο ἄνδρας τοὺς συνεστῶτας αὐτῷ. [33] καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ διαχωρίζεσθαι αὐτοὺς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ εἶπεν ⁻* ὁ Πέτρος πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν· Ἐπιστάτα, καλόν ἐστιν ἡμᾶς **ὧδε εἶναι**, καὶ ποιήσωμεν **σκηνὰς τρεῖς, μίαν σοὶ καὶ μίαν Μωϋσεῖ καὶ μίαν Ἠλίᾳ,** μὴ εἰδὼς ὃ λέγει. [34] ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ἐγένετο νεφέλη καὶ ⁻* ἐπεσκίαζεν αὐτούς· ἐφοβήθησαν δὲ ἐν τῷ ⁻* εἰσελθεῖν αὐτοὺς⁻* εἰς τὴν νεφέλην. [35] καὶ **φωνὴ ἐγένετο ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης λέγουσα**· Οὗτός ἐστιν **ὁ υἱός μου** ὁ ⁻* ἐκλελεγμένος, αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε. [36] καὶ ἐν τῷ γενέσθαι τὴν φωνὴν ⁻* **εὑρέθη Ἰησοῦς μόνος**. καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐσίγησαν καὶ οὐδενὶ ἀπήγγειλαν ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις οὐδὲν ὧν ἑώρακαν.	

***2.2.1.1. Reimagining the Idea that Three Disciples Accompanied Jesus to the Mountain*:** It is important to reimagine why Luke not only retains Mark's mountain motif, but also the idea that Jesus limited his transfiguration experience to only three of his disciples: Peter, James and John. In what follows, I will argue that Luke retained both aspects of Mark's transfiguration narrative because he deemed them relevant to the theme of prayer. Purpose is not only found in what an author adds to a narrative but also in what he or she retains from sources.

A basic element of prayer in the Old Testament that is carried over into the Gospels is the idea that prayer takes place in secret, and that the ideal place for this secret encounter with God is the mountain. I discussed the significance of the mountain as a place of encounter with God in the previous chapter. Since the significance of the mountain motif was

discussed in the previous chapter, this discussion will focus on secrecy. Secrecy with respect to prayer simply means that prayer takes place in private. Nonetheless, this does not necessarily mean that one has to be alone with God: it could be a private encounter between God and an individual (Exod 32:9-14) or a private encounter between God and a chosen few (Exod 24). Mark in particular takes notice of this aspect of prayer, and presents Jesus as regularly at prayer in isolated places: Jesus often withdrew from the people to pray (Mark 1:35; 6:46; 14:32). John Pilch contends that this habit of doing things in secret was in line with Jesus' Mediterranean background.[155] Even when teaching his disciples to pray, Jesus did it in private. The absence of a public teaching of the Lord's prayer in Mark's Gospel, unlike in Matthew's Gospel (Matt 6:9-13), is a case in point. Furthermore, the death of a fig tree shortly after Jesus had cursed it in Mark, which triggers an intimate and private discussion between Jesus and his disciples regarding prayer, supports this point (Mark 11:20-25). In this private encounter, Jesus tells his disciples that whatever they ask for in prayer with faith will be given to them.

It seems to me that Luke took notice of the link between prayer and secrecy; his account of Jesus' teaching of the Lord's prayer also takes place in secret in the context of an interaction between Jesus and one of his disciples (Luke 11:1-4), rather than in public as presented in Matthew. This, however, is not an indication that Matthew totally disregarded the secret character of prayer, as he clearly reveals to the reader that true prayer takes place in secret when he writes:

> And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who sees in secret will reward you (Matt 6:5-8).

[155] John J. Pilch, *The Cultural Dictionary of the Bible* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 134.

The Gospel writers, especially Mark and Luke, were attentive to the secret character of prayer as inherited from the Old Testament. Luke retained Mark's idea that Jesus chose only three disciples for the transfiguration experience on the mountain because he interpreted it as pointing to the secret character of a prayer experience. By adding the prayer motif to this restriction (Luke 9:28), Luke makes it easier for the reader to interpret this event as a prayer experience. This does not take away the character of worship as highlighted in the first chapter; worship in the Old Testament was not open to all after all (Exod 24:1).

2.2.1.2. Reimagining the Change of Jesus' Appearance on the Mountain: Another significant aspect of Mark's transfiguration account that Luke retained for the purpose of prayer is the aspect of the change of Jesus' appearance. There is a precedent for the association of a change of appearance with prayer in the Old Testament: Moses' appearance changed after he spoke with God on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:29). I discussed this experience in the first chapter under the heading of the transfiguration of Moses. Similarly, Mark depicts Jesus' appearance as changing as he encountered the Father on the mountain of the transfiguration (Mark 9:2-13). Luke, therefore, interprets this aspect of Mark's transfiguration account as pertinent to prayer.

Of course, the OT incident and the NT incident differ in some respects. For instance, Candida Moss notes with respect to the differences that "there is a significant difference in the subject of the illumination; in Mark it is Jesus' *garments* which radiate whilst in Exodus Moses' *face* is affected by the glory of the divine."[156] Moreover, unlike Moses, Jesus' illumination has no lasting effects on him, given that the latter descends from the mountain in the same form as he ascended it.[157] Moss is right about the difference in the subject of the illumination between Mark's transfiguration account and Moses' transfiguration. However, it

[156] Candida R Moss, "The Transfiguration: An Exercise in Markan Accommodation," *Biblical Interpretation* (2004): 73.
[157] Moss, 73.

is worth noting that this critique mainly affects Mark's account and not Luke's, given that the subject of Jesus' illumination in Luke's account extends to his face (Luke 9:29). Therefore, the fact that Luke's transfiguration account extends the subject of illumination to Jesus' face aligns his account closer to Moses' transfiguration than Mark's transfiguration account. Nonetheless, with respect to the duration of the illumination, neither Mark's account nor Luke's shows that Jesus' illumination had a lasting effect on him unlike Moses' transfiguration where his illumination had a lasting effect on Moses. In this regard, the difference between the Gospels (Mark and Luke) and Moses' transfiguration can be interpreted as a feature that the Synoptics preferred to modify to present the illumination that is derived from an encounter with God in a new way. In fact, in the Synoptics, the illumination from prayer is never depicted as having a lasting effect on the person at prayer.

In summary, the above argument highlights that Luke received the aspect of Jesus' change of appearance from Mark's transfiguration account as a tool that would support the theme of prayer in his own account, given that a change of appearance is associated with an encounter with God. Although the precedent for the association of a change of appearance with prayer in the OT, which is Moses' transfiguration, differs in some respects from how this association is depicted in Mark and Luke, it remains valid to make this association.

2.2.1.3. Reimagining the Motif of the Two Figures: The motif of the appearance of Elijah and Moses on the mountain of the transfiguration is difficult to explain with or without reference to prayer. As Bovon affirms, "the reason for their appearance and presence is not given."[158] This motif appears in all three Synoptic Gospels, and in keeping with this study's methodology, it can be said that Luke copied it from Mark. Bovon thinks that "the motif of the three figures is probably pre-Christian and left its traces already in the Gospels."[159] Within the Scriptures,

[158] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 375.
[159] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 373.

Elijah was expected to reappear as a forerunner of the Messiah (Malachi 4:5-6), and it seems that the same was expected of Moses. Moreover, both had conversed with God (Moses in Exod. 20, and Elijah in 1 Kings 19).[160] In Mark's Gospel, this expectation is perceptible, given the question of the disciples regarding Elijah shortly after the transfiguration (Mark 9:11-12), but a similar passage does not appear in Luke's Gospel.[161] However, this background information is not enough to explain the significance of the appearance of these three figures in Jesus' transfiguration account and its link with prayer.

It seems that Luke received the motif of the appearance of the two figures in view of modifying it, given his addition of the exodus motif to it, which is the content of Jesus' conversation with the two men (Luke 9:31). Mark's account could be partially blamed for this ambiguity because he does not specify the content of their conversation with Jesus. Luke's addition of the exodus motif minimizes the ambiguity, and it is in that way that Luke gives this mountaintop prayer experience a content. Furthermore, this is an example of Luke rewriting Scripture. A topic that Luke engages often in his rewriting of Scripture is prophecy.[162] By adding the content of the conversation between Jesus, Moses and Elijah (exodus in Jerusalem), he reminds the reader that Israel's prophets accomplish their mission in Jerusalem.[163]

Bovon, still grappling with the question of the significance of the appearance of the two figures, tries to divert attention from them by arguing that Luke's focus is on Jesus, and not on the figures who appeared with him, given that the narrative forgets these Old Testament figures.[164] While it is true that Luke, like Mark, focuses on Jesus, the claim that Luke neglects this motif is unfounded; rather, he modified it with the exodus motif, which in turn serves the

[160] Marsh, "Transfiguration," 268.
[161] The omission of the allusion to Elijah as the forerunner of Jesus in Luke is seen by some scholars, namely Adela Collins, as a Christian insertion after Luke was written. See Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Mystery of the Kingdom," in *Mark*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, A Commentary (1517 Media, 2007), 430, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvb6v7zz.27.
[162] Bormann, "Rewritten Prophecy In Luke-Acts," 125.
[163] Bormann, 131.
[164] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 372.

purpose of prayer. In other words, the exodus motif makes Jesus' upcoming passion in Jerusalem to be the focus of the prayer experience. This study will discuss the significance of the exodus motif in light of prayer in more detail later in this chapter.

2.2.1.4. Reimagining the Tent Motif: The tent motif can also be interpreted in light of prayer. Peter's longing to remain on the mountain made him suggest that three tents be built for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. This motif, which Luke inherited from Mark is almost as ambiguous as the appearance of Moses and Elijah, given that it recalls an Old Testament event (the Sukkoth) without clarification; there is no clear indication of the function of this allusion. Luke, like Mark, notes that Peter suggested it because he did not know what he was saying and was afraid (Luke 9:33; Mark 9:6). However, given Peter's willingness to prolong the experience, this fear cannot be placed on the same level as the fear that indicates that one perceives something else as dangerous. It is quite different from what Aaron and the Israelites experienced when they saw Moses after the latter's encounter with God: "When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were terrified to come near him" (Exod 34:30). In Peter's case, it looks more like an expression of excitement than of fear. As Bovon puts it, "the tradition has Peter expressing his contentment about what has happened."[165]

By alluding to the Sukkoth in his transfiguration account, Luke reminisces the prayerful celebration of the Sukkoth. During the Second Temple and rabbinic periods, the Sukkoth was a festal week with sacrifices, processions, fertility rites and other temple rituals.[166] Given that Luke's Gospel was written after the destruction of the temple, which was a time of uncertainty about how to celebrate this festival without the temple, Luke's mention of the Sukkoth in the context of prayer is his way of adapting the Sukkoth to a new

[165] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 376.
[166] Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, "Introduction," in *A History of Sukkot in the Second Temple and Rabbinic Periods* (Brown Judaic Studies, 2020), 1, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvzpv502.6.

context as many Jews at the time did. In his analysis of the evolution of the Sukkoth, Gabrielle Anna Berlinger observes:

> In 70 AD, the destruction of the central sacred site of the faith, the Second Temple, demanded an adaptation to changing conditions of life, which resulted in the transformation of Temple worship into written religious law. The evolution of performance into text sustained Jews in their scattered settings. The later development of distinctive, individual practice based upon written law helped to ensure the survival of Jewish religion and culture.[167]

Therefore, the tent motif in Luke's transfiguration account is an example of how the Sukkoth transitioned into texts and took on new meaning. The author expects the reader to think of the sacrifices, processions, fertility rites and other temple rituals that are associated with the Sukkoth, but in the context of prayer as conceived in his Gospel.

2.2.1.5. Reimagining Why the Event is Limited to the Mountain: Luke did not see the need to prolong the mountaintop experience because prayer, as conceived in the Gospels, and in other New Testament books takes place within a time frame. Moss' observation about the illumination of Jesus proves that the prayer experience ended on the mountain: "Jesus' illumination has no lasting effects on him and he descends from the mountain in the same form as he ascended it."[168] The limiting of Jesus' transfiguration to the mountain is probably the easiest aspect of the event to explain in light of prayer. In the New Testament, there is usually a report of when prayer ends or an allusion to its duration. For instance, Luke's report that Jesus spent the whole night in prayer to God (Luke 6:12-16) reveals that even though prayer may be prolonged, it does come to an end. This applies to the glory that accompanies prayer. With respect to that of Jesus' transfiguration, "the link which connected them [those on the mountain] with the unseen world was forthwith snapped."[169] Phrased differently, those

[167] Gabrielle Anna Berlinger, "Translating Text: Sukkot in Bloomington, Indiana," in *Framing Sukkot*, Tradition and Transformation in Jewish Vernacular Architecture (Indiana University Press, 2017), 27, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1zxxzm0.6.
[168] Moss, "The Transfiguration," 73.
[169] Marsh, "Transfiguration," 268.

on the mountain of the transfiguration have experienced the beauty and glory of a unique prayer experience, and it was time to go.

2.2.2. Remarkable Differences between Mark and Luke: There are remarkable differences between Mark's transfiguration account and Luke's, which nonetheless play a crucial role in the study of how Luke transformed his own account into a prayer experience. It will mainly involve reimagining why Luke uses certain motifs that are unique to his account. The conclusion of this section will be that Luke did it for the purpose of transforming his account into a prayer experience.

However, this probe will not involve discussing all the verbal dissimilarities between Luke' transfiguration account and Mark's, but will focus on isolating the differences that this study deems remarkable, and making the case for a prayer experience. My discussion of these differences will not involve the prayer motif, given that my discussion of its significance earlier in this chapter reveals the difference that it makes in Luke's account, unlike in Mark's account where it is missing. The remarkable differences that this study will discuss in the lines that follow are: the exodus (*ἔξοδος*) motif, the glory (*δόξα*) motif, the sleep motif, and Luke's omission of the word, *μεταμορφόω*, which appears in both Mark and Matthew.

2.2.2.1. Reimagining the ἔξοδος Motif: As already stated in this study, the exodus motif only appears in Luke's account. This motif, which relates to the motif of the two figures who appeared in glory (v. 31), connects Luke's transfiguration account with Jesus' upcoming passion.

When this motif is reimagined in light of the prayer motif, it would mean that Luke wants Jesus' prayer experience at this pivotal point in his narrative to have Jesus' upcoming passion in view. Seeing that Mark's report that Elijah and Moses were talking with Jesus does not clearly allude to Jesus' upcoming passion (Mark 9:4), Luke adds the exodus motif and specifies that the "exodus" in question will be accomplished (*πληρούν*) in Jerusalem

(Luke 9:31), thereby achieving his objective of making Jesus' upcoming passion the focus of this prayer experience.

The word *πληρούν* does not appear in Mark's account, unlike in Luke's. Luke uses it to indicate that Jesus' death in Jerusalem is an important event that must take place. This word is used in other parts of Luke's Gospel to foreshadow an important event. For instance, at the beginning of Luke's Gospel, the future indicative passive of this word, which is *πληρωθήσονται*, is used on the occasion of the angel Gabriel's announcement of the birth of John to Zechariah; the angel told the latter that he will not be able to speak until the message about the birth of John is "accomplished" at the right time (Luke 1:20b).

While the exodus motif also recalls the exodus event in the Old Testament, Luke's use of it suggests that what is more in view is Jesus' upcoming passion and not the OT event because he specifies that the "exodus" will take place in Jerusalem. This interpretation aligns Jesus' transfiguration with the passion predictions that appear in its literary context both in Mark and Luke.

The above interpretation raises the question of why Luke wants his transfiguration, which I describe as a prayer experience, to allude to Jesus' upcoming passion. The literary context of the transfiguration seems to give a clue to Luke's motivation. As mentioned above, Mark's transfiguration account is framed by two passion predictions. Therefore, Luke may have seen these predictions as hinting that Jesus' transfiguration, which he also perceives as a prayer experience, should focus on Jesus' upcoming passion. The Gethsemane scene in Mark's Gospel (Mark 14:32-42) appears to be the event after which Luke modelled the passion aspect of his transfiguration account. There is no denying that Mark's Gethsemane scene shares some striking similarities with Luke's transfiguration account:

> (1) Both scenes open with a report of Jesus' intention to pray with his disciples (Mark 14:32; Luke 9:28). (2) The same three disciples accompany Jesus silently to the prayer scene. (3) Both scenes report that the disciples are struggling to stay awake during the prayer experience (Mark 14:37, 40-41; Luke 9:32). (4) The commentators

in both scenes report that Jesus has his upcoming suffering in view (Mark 14:34; Luke 9:31).

Therefore, Luke shaped his transfiguration account into a prayer experience with the intention of helping the reader to anticipate Jesus' upcoming death in Jerusalem.

Luke's redaction of Mark's Gethsemane scene in the composition of his own passion narrative further reveals that Luke sees a correlation between Jesus' transfiguration – which is a prayer experience – and Jesus' upcoming passion. Mark's Gethsemane scene depicts Jesus as going to a garden to pray with his disciples in anticipation of his arrest and crucifixion (Mark 14:32-36). It is the case in Luke's Mount of Olives scene (Luke 22:39-46). However, unlike Mark who situates this sorrowful scene in a garden, Luke situates his specifically on the mountain (the Mount of Olives), thereby matching the mountain motif of his transfiguration scene (Luke 22:39 cf. 9:28).[170] The following are other similarities between the Mount of Olives scene and Jesus' transfiguration in Luke's Gospel: the intention to pray is expressed (Luke 9:28 cf. 22:40-41), a heavenly figure appears as Jesus is praying (Luke 9:29-30 cf. 22:42)[171] and the sleep motif is present (Luke 9:32 cf. 22:45-46). These similarities show that Luke read Jesus' sorrowful scene back into his transfiguration.

Therefore, Luke introduced the exodus motif into his account to make the focus of Jesus' prayer in this event his upcoming passion.

2.2.2.2. Reimagining the δόξα Motif: The *δόξα* or glory motif gives a heavenly ambiance to the prayer experience on the mountain of the transfiguration. In the following lines, I will argue that the function of the glory motif is to make the scene of Jesus' transfiguration fitting for the appearance of the heavenly figures, Elijah and Moses, who have come to discuss

[170] Unlike Luke's account, this sorrowful scene in Mark and Matthew do not take place on the mountain, but in Gethsemane, which is the foot of the mountain (Mark 14:32-42; Matthew 26:36-46).
[171] This is in reference to the angel that came to Jesus and gave him strength. Although not all textual authorities attest to this in the Mount of Olives scene, its relevance to the present study makes it worth mentioning.

Jesus' passion in the context of prayer. It follows that the glory motif does not stand in opposition to the exodus or passion motif, but complements it in this prayer scene.

The glory motif is represented by the two mentions of *δόξα* in the account: in the first instance, it is used in reference to Elijah and Moses, who appeared in glory (Luke 9:31), while in the second instance it is used in reference to the fact that Peter and his companions saw the glory of Jesus, Moses and Elijah because they had stayed awake (v. 32). It is worth noting that those two instances appear after the prayer motif, which is the central theme of Luke's transfiguration account. Therefore, the glory motif in those instances is understood better when interpreted in the context of prayer. To that end, the glory motif's function is to confirm that the two figures who have come to discuss with Jesus in this prayer scene are heavenly figures. As Nolland puts it, "these figures appear in glory because they appear from heaven."[172]

It is not surprising that Luke connects the glory motif with the passion motif by making the content of the conversation between the heavenly figures Jesus' upcoming passion, given that both motifs have traditionally been associated with each other. Reid observes that in Christian tradition, from at least as early as Mark's Gospel, the transfiguration and the agony in the garden – which represented the glory and passion motifs respectively – were associated, forming a striking diptych.[173] Similarly, in his essay where he details the relationship between Jesus' transfiguration and his agony in the garden, Anthony Kenny argues that "the climax of the revelation of his [Jesus'] glory was the transfiguration; and the climax of the revelation of his humiliation was the agony in Gethsemane."[174] This indicates that scholars have perceived that there exists a relationship between Jesus' passion and his glory. However, what they have not been consistently perceiving is that Luke

[172] Nolland et al., *Luke 9*, 499.
[173] Reid, *The Transfiguration*, 40.
[174] Anthony Kenny, "The Transfiguration and the Agony in the Garden," *CBQ* (1957): 444.

connects both motifs in one event, which is Jesus' transfiguration. Luke achieves this by using the glory motif to prepare the scene for the discussion of Jesus' passion: Moses and Elijah appear in glory with Jesus and begin to talk with Jesus about his upcoming passion.

Luke maintains the above union under the prayer motif. Given that the prayer motif is the overarching motif in Luke's transfiguration account, other motifs in the account function in conjunction with it. Therefore, there is a connection between the glory, passion and prayer motifs. This connection becomes more visible when Luke's transfiguration account is seen as a prayer experience in which Jesus' upcoming passion is discussed in the presence of heavenly figures who appear in glory with Jesus. The death of Stephen in Acts is another example of where Luke unites the glory, the passion, and the prayer motifs all in one scene (Acts 7:54-8:2). The glory motif is perceptible when Stephen looks toward heaven and sees the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56), the passion motif appears when the crowd rushes together against Stephen to kill him (vv. 57-58), while the prayer motif closes the narrative as Stephen prays for his persecutors (vv. 59-60). Actually, in this scene, the prayer motif is perceptible from the beginning of the narrative till the end. From the time when Stephen is depicted as filled with the Holy Spirit and gazing into heaven till the end of the narrative where he forgives his persecutors as he prayed, the prayer motif is discernible. This bears testimony to Luke's ability to weave together the three motifs in one narrative as he did in Jesus' transfiguration.

Therefore, in Luke's transfiguration account, the prayer motif helps interpret the presence of the glory motif and other motifs because it is in the context of prayer that the heavenly figures appear in glory with Jesus.

2.2.2.3. Reimagining the Sleep Motif: There is a link between the sleep motif and the prayer motif. Reid makes a thought-provoking point with respect to Luke's addition of the sleep motif: "The strangeness of the reference to the disciples' sleeping and waking betrays another

redactional seam in the narrative. Sleeping and waking are inexplicable details in the context of the transfiguration story."[175] Admittedly, it is astonishing that Luke introduces the sleep motif into his account, given that Mark's account neither includes it nor gives the impression that it should be there. Bovon contends that the sleep motif was suggested to Luke by Mark's Gethsemane account (Mark 14:37-42).[176] The comparisons that I drew earlier between Jesus' transfiguration and the Gethsemane scene established a connection between these two events (the transfiguration and Jesus' agony). Therefore, it is possible that Mark's Gethsemane scene was the inspiration behind the inclusion of the sleep motif in Luke's transfiguration account. In fact, at the time of the composition of Luke's Gospel, details of the Gethsemane scene and details of Jesus' transfiguration could easily pass from one to the other in the transmission of the tradition.[177]

Despite the connection between the Gethsemane scene and Jesus' transfiguration, Luke was not retelling a passion scene in his transfiguration account; he had other theological concerns[178] namely prayer. Therefore, the sleep motif that he introduces does not serve the purpose of retelling Jesus' agony but supports the prayer motif. In Luke's transfiguration scene, the disciples do not seem to be deep asleep or asleep as we would normally talk about sleep. The grammatical structure of the verse where this motif appears (v. 32) gives the impression that Luke is pointing to what we would describe today as hypnosis, given that people in antiquity perceived sleep and dreaming as a means of being near the divine.[179] Bovon gives an apt description of both the grammatical structure in question here and how the sleep motif in this narrative differs from the one that is discernible in the Gethsemane scene in Mark:

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[175] Reid, *The Transfiguration*, 40.
[176] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 376.
[177] Reid, *The Transfiguration*, 41.
[178] Kenny, "The Transfiguration and the Agony in the Garden," 452.
[179] Albrecht Oepke, "καθεύδω," in *TDNT* 3, 1965, 431–33. See also "ὕπνος" in *TDNT* 8, 1972, p. 545, for Horst Balz's discussion of sleep in antiquity.

> Usually, scholars think of two phases: the disciples are first overcome by sleep and may only observe the glory after they awaken. This is psychologically and narratively improbable. In contrast to the guilty disciples of Gethsemane (Mark 14:37-42), the disciples have not fallen asleep, but are almost weighed down with sleep (*βεβαρημένοι*). *Διαγρηγορήσαντες δέ* ('but since they had stayed awake,' probably adversative) tells the reader that the disciples have nevertheless remained awake (one should not overlook *δια-*; at no moment do they lose their consciousness).[180]

It is unlikely that Luke introduced the sleep motif with *διαγρηγορήσαντες δέ* to portray the disciples as failing to stay awake during this event as they were at Gethsemane. Based on his knowledge of Mark's Gethsemane scene, Luke knows that the right time to depict Jesus as disappointed with his disciples for failing to stay awake and pray is near the end of Jesus' life. In the meantime, Luke deems it important to show that the disciples are capable of overcoming sleep to engage in prayer by introducing this motif into Jesus' transfiguration. Therefore, I find Bovon's explanation of the sleep motif plausible; the disciples stayed awake and participated in this prayer.

2.2.2.4. The Omission of μεταμορφόω: While every detail in Luke's redaction of Mark matters, Luke's omission of *μεταμορφόω* is particularly striking. There is confusion about what the term "transfiguration" as used when recalling a particular event in the Synoptics, denotes. The confusion surrounding the value of this term heightens when one realizes that Luke does not actually use the term that Mark uses to convey the importance of the transformation to which this event seems to allude: *μεταμορφόω* (Mark 9:2). Rather, he replaces it with *τὸ εἶδος*, which limits the change to Jesus' face and clothes (Luke 9:29). I will argue that Luke substitutes Mark's *μεταμορφόω* for *τὸ εἶδος* because he wants to draw attention to something else, which is the prayer motif.

[180] Bovon, *Luke 1*, 376–77.

Fleming Revell argues that *μεταμορφοῦμαι* alludes to a Christian's thoroughgoing metamorphosis of character.[181] This makes it understandable for the reader of Mark's account, who is presumably Christian, to focus on this word. By focusing on this word, the reader connects Jesus' transformation in this scene with his or her own transformation, particularly with respect to character. Paul uses the same word to talk about the transformation of a Christian into the image of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18). This links *μεταμορφοῦμαι* with the word that is habitually associated with a change of character in the New Testament, *μετανοέω*. Matthew was aware of the importance *μεταμορφοῦμαι* in the formation of Christian character. Hence his decision to retain it in his own transfiguration account (Matthew 17:2).

However, Luke replaces this word with a word that only alludes to external appearance, *εἶδος*, to minimize the link with transformation that Mark's Gospel highlights, and instead draw attention to a motif that he not only adds but repeats in his own account, which is prayer. The word, *εἶδος*, is used in the New Testament in reference to appearance. Earlier in Luke's Gospel, he uses it to refer to the form in which the Holy Spirit descended during Jesus' baptism (Luke 3:22). It is used in John's Gospel in the context of Jesus saying that no one has seen the Father's form or *εἶδος*.[182] Paul also uses it when he tells the Corinthians that the followers of Christ do not walk by sight or *εἴδους* but by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7). In all those instances, there is no clear indication that the word denotes something other than appearance as *μεταμορφοῦμαι* does. Having limited the change that took place on the mountain of the transfiguration to appearance, Luke then adds and repeats a motif that he finds worth highlighting in the first two verses of his account, which is prayer (Luke 9:28-29). Therefore, this study posits that Luke limited the change that took place on

[181] Fleming H. Revell Company, ed., "Transformation," in *The Revell Bible Dictionary* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co, 1990), 989.
[182] Even in this passage, it is in the context of hearing and seeing that the word in used. See Gerhard Kittel, "εἶδος," in *TDNT 2* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967), 374.

the mountain of the transfiguration to external appearance because he wants the reader to focus on the aspect of prayer in this narrative.

By replacing Mark's *μεταμορφόω* with *εἶδος* and repeating the prayer motif in the first verses of his account (9:28-29), Luke succeeded in presenting his own account as something other than a transformation experience, namely, a prayer experience.

2.3. CHAPTER SUMMARY: This chapter has been about reimagining how Luke received and redacted Mark's transfiguration account with a view to presenting the prayer motif as the central theme of the Lukan narrative. I began this exercise by demonstrating, using Greek grammar and personal reflection, the importance of the prayer motif. This involved positing that the meaning of a prepositional phrase, which is the form in which the prayer motif appears, is derived from the entire phrase and not from a particular word. This led to the conclusion that the prepositional phrases in question in Luke's transfiguration account present the entire narrative as a prayer experience, thereby making it appropriate to read other motifs in the narrative in light of the prayer motif. To further highlight the significance of the prayer motif in Luke's transfiguration account, this study demonstrated that Luke has an affinity for prayer and uses the prayer motif more often than the other Gospels. Therefore, it is understandable that Luke adds this motif to his transfiguration account. During this study, I also demonstrated that the content of the prayer experience on the mountain of the transfiguration is Jesus' upcoming passion because of Luke's addition of the exodus motif to his narrative. This study also highlighted the significance of the similarities and the differences between Mark's transfiguration account and Luke's own account to show that the details in Luke's account collectively serve the author's goal of presenting Jesus' transfiguration as a prayer experience. While other interpretations of Luke's transfiguration account are possible, this chapter posits that Luke shaped his account into a prayer experience.

CHAPTER 3: REDISCOVERING TWO ASPECTS OF PRAYER IN LUKE

Having argued in the previous chapter that Luke's transfiguration account is a prayer experience, I will now demonstrate how this perspective helps the reader to rediscover therein two aspects of prayer in Luke's Gospel, namely anticipation and participation. While those aspects of prayer exist in other Lukan prayer passages – as this study will show – the interpretation of Jesus' transfiguration as a prayer experience draws attention to them; it also confirms that the passage in question is a prayer passage. However, given that those categories (anticipation and participation) are new in Lukan scholarship, the discussions of this chapter will begin with a study of the difference between anticipation and a category in Lukan scholarship that might be confused with anticipation, namely, the concept of "promise and fulfilment."

This chapter will consist of three major steps: first, a discussion of the difference between "anticipation" and "promise and fulfilment" with respect to prayer in Luke's Gospel: I will argue that anticipation is the appropriate term to use to denote an aspect of prayer in Luke's Gospel that points to the possibility of foreshadowing future events in the context of prayer. Secondly, an illustration of how to discover aspects of prayer in Luke's Gospel will follow. The goal of this illustration will be to help the reader to understand the concept of "aspects of prayer" and how Luke's treatment of prayer reveals them either implicitly or explicitly, particularly the two aspects in focus in this chapter. This discussion will involve citing Lukan passages on prayer that highlight some aspects of prayer. The Lukan passages in question are: the Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8), the Parable of the Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:5-13), Jesus' private prayers before Peter's confession and on the Mount of Olives (Luke 9:18; 22:39-46), and the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14). The discussion of those passages will show that Luke reveals aspects of prayer in

varied ways. Thirdly, this study will then focus on how anticipation and participation as aspects of prayer can be rediscovered in Luke's transfiguration account.

By the end of this chapter, the reader will become more aware of the importance of interpreting the Lukan transfiguration account as a prayer experience because of the concepts of anticipation and participation, which provide a fresh perspective on prayer in Luke's Gospel. As with previous chapters, this chapter will conclude with a recapitulation of the arguments contained herein.

3.1. HOW PROMISE AND FULFILLMENT DIFFER FROM ANTICIPATION:

"Promise and fulfilment" as categories in Lukan scholarship will not adequately convey the idea that "anticipation" conveys with respect to prayer. The reason for this is that "promise and fulfilment" in Lukan scholarship were not coined specifically for prayer passages, but for Lukan passages that point to the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies. Conversely, this study uses "anticipation" specifically for Lukan prayer passages.

Paul Schubert's seminal essay entitled *The Structure and Significance of Luke 24*[183] is widely recognized as an influential work that laid the foundation for what is known today as promise and fulfilment, although he used "proof and prophecy" at the time. In it he develops an idea laid down by H.J. Cadbury in *The Making of Luke-Acts*, which is that Luke-Acts is pervaded with the motif of divine guidance and control.[184] Unlike Cadbury who treats the entire Luke-Acts corpus, Schubert's essay focuses on Luke 24. In that essay, Schubert discusses the three resurrection scenes in that passage, namely, the discovery of the empty tomb, the Emmaus account and Jesus' appearance to his disciples, and concludes that Luke links the three scenes together with the same theme, namely, the "proof from prophecy" that

[183] Paul Schubert, "The Structure and Significance of Luke 24," in *Neutestamentliche Studien Für Rudolf Bultmann*, 1957, 176, 165–86.
[184] Henry Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (London: Macmillan, 1927), 303–5. For Schubert's allusion to Cadbury's book see "The Structure and Significance," 165n1.

Jesus is the Christ.[185] By the time Fitzmyer's Anchor Bible Commentary[186] was published, it had become customary to use the term "promise and fulfilment" in reference to Luke's idea that Scripture is being fulfilled through the birth and ministry of Jesus. Of particular interest to Fitzmyer was Luke's use of the Greek word *πληρούν* in the infancy narrative (Luke 1:5-2:52). Nonetheless, to date, no Lukan scholar has used promise and fulfilment specifically for prayer passages in Luke, given that the term already encompasses a wide range of topics in the Bible.

By contrast, anticipation, which is a new term in Lukan scholarship, is being used specifically in this study in reference to prayer. It can be defined as an aspect of prayer that indicates that prayer can function as a tool for foreshadowing future events. Unlike promise and fulfilment, anticipation is not necessarily linked to the fulfilment of an Old Testament prophecy. Furthermore, the use of this term is specifically for prayer passages in Luke's Gospel, although it could apply to similar passages in Acts. A more detailed discussion of anticipation is given in the next section. What is important to note for now is that, in this study, anticipation is the preferred term for indicating that prayer can function as a tool for foreshadowing future events, which are not necessarily fulfilments of OT prophecies.

3.2. HOW TO DISCOVER ASPECTS OF PRAYER IN LUKE'S GOSPEL: An aspect of prayer can be defined as an element of prayer that is highlighted in a passage about prayer, which provides information about how Luke understands prayer in his Gospel. It is through an aspect of prayer that Luke teaches the reader the right attitude to have to pray effectively.

Luke devotes attention to prayer throughout his entire Gospel, and no single passage reveals all the aspects of prayer. One or more aspects of prayer are revealed through direct statements in some passages, while in others, a close reading of the passage is required to

[185] Schubert, "The Structure and Significance of Luke 24," 173–77.
[186] Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 292–93.

discover the aspect of prayer that is being revealed or emphasized. While it is plausible to argue that Luke constantly associates certain concepts and activities with prayer, he is also constantly presenting prayer in new ways by varying the contexts. Therefore, no two prayer passages in Luke's Gospel are identical. Even when an aspect of prayer is repeated, it is being repeated in a new way. Hence, the need to study closely the passages that teach lessons about prayer in Luke to discover or rediscover the aspects of prayer that are being highlighted therein. In the following lines, I will demonstrate how to (re)discover aspects of prayer in Luke's Gospel using the following passages: The Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8), the Parable of the Friend at Midnight (11:5-8), and the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (18: 9-14).

3.2.1. The Parable of the Persistent Widow: The Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8) is an example of a passage that highlights an aspect of prayer directly by its focus on persistence. The parable begins with a clear statement that points to the lesson of the parable, which is unusual for a parable in Luke: "then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1). Obviously, Jesus is not teaching his disciples about a kind of prayer, but an important feature or aspect of every prayer: persistence. Jesus begins with the lesson of the parable because of Luke's interest in prayer.

Jesus' teaching about persistence in prayer in this passage is not only direct but full of vivid imagery because Luke wants to drive home the point about this aspect of prayer. Glenn Hinson's analysis of this parable draws attention to its vivid imagery:

> The Judge in the first is not, by the farthest stretch of the imagination, the *archetype* of God but the *anti*type. By contrasts with the loving father of the parable often identified by the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), he was a flinty character who 'neither feared God nor cared for a human being' (18:2). So when the widow approached with her plea for vindication, he initially refused. This widow, however, had a reputation as a persistent nag who would keep returning. So he did some further cognition. 'Because she will keep pestering me, I had better vindicate her lest she keep coming and blacken my reputation' (18:4-5). Jesus, therefore, draws an argument from minor to major. If a hard-bitten judge such as this one will cave in to the widow's persistence, will not God, the Loving Father, heed the pleas of God's

> own when they cry out to God 'night and day'? The answer is obvious. 'I tell you that God will vindicate them pronto!' (18:8).[187]

Luke could have modelled the judge's character after that of the father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son or after that of the Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:5-8) and still made the point about persistence in prayer. Nonetheless, at this point in his narrative, he deems it important to talk about persistence in a new and more persuasive way. His portrayal of the judge as ruthless and the one in need as undeterred shows the extent to which a disciple must persevere in prayer. While this parable highlights the same aspect of prayer as the Parable of the Friend at Midnight, it does it in a new way. It is in this way that Luke helps the reader to rediscover perseverance as an aspect of prayer.

3.2.2. The Parable of the Friend at Midnight: The Parable of the Friend at Midnight (11:5-8) is an example of a Lukan passage on prayer that has both an implicit and direct teaching on prayer. The aspects of prayer that are revealed therein both implicitly and explicitly are confidence and perseverance.

There is a connection between this parable and the context in which it appears. This parable follows Jesus' teaching of the Lord's prayer at the request of his disciples (11:1-4). Therefore, it can be seen as Jesus' attempt to provide more detail about how prayer works. The parable draws the disciples' attention to the persistent attitude of someone who makes a request of a friend at midnight until the friend yields to his demands. Jesus follows-up with a command to his disciples to ask for what they want because their requests will be granted (vv. 9-10). The connection between this parable (vv. 5-8) and the subsequent command (vv. 9-10) is not difficult to establish: Jesus wants the person at prayer to pray with confidence and also persevere in prayer. Therefore, the aspects of prayer that are being revealed and emphasized in this parable – both implicitly and explicitly – are confidence and perseverance.

[187] E Glenn Hinson, "Persistence in Prayer in Luke-Acts," *Review & Expositor* (2007): 722–23.

Jesus presents them as crucial to prayer. At the end of the passage, he reiterates the point about confidence in prayer: "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (v. 13). In short, the one who prays has to pray with the expectation of receiving an answer.

Unlike the Parable of the Persistent Widow, which appears later in Luke's narrative, here Jesus teaches perseverance in prayer in a less poignant way. A possible explanation for Luke's tone at this point is that the intensity of Luke's teaching on prayer increases as the narrative progresses. It is for this reason that even when two passages on prayer emphasize similar aspects of prayer, they do it in different ways.

The idea that the Parable of the Friend at Midnight is a passage on prayer has been critiqued, thereby making it seem unnecessary to talk about aspects of prayer in connection to this parable. Ernest Eck's social-scientific reading of this parable leads him to the conclusion that the parable tells the story of an alternative world wherein neighbours are generous with each other, and that the lesson of the parable is that when neighbours do not act as neighbours, then nothing of God's kingdom becomes visible.[188] Eck attributes the misreading of the parable for a teaching on prayer to scholars' preoccupation with the literary context of the parable. He contends that the "literary context in Luke is secondary and that the integrity of the parable should be delimited to Luke 11:5-8."[189] In my view, Eck minimizes the significance of the literary context of a parable in Luke's Gospel. Other passages in Luke's Gospel offer helpful insight for understanding the significance of the literary context of a parable. For instance, in the passage where the Parable of the Sower appears (Luke 8:4-15), Jesus gives a detailed explanation of the parable later in that passage (vv.11-15). To choose

[188] Ernest van Eck, "When Neighbours Are Not Neighbours: A Social-Scientific Reading of the Parable of the Friend at Midnight (Lk 11:5–8)," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* (April 11, 2011): 1, https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v67i1.788.
[189] Eck, "When Neighbours," 1.

not to pay attention to this explanation, which belongs to the parable's literary context, is to choose not to understand the parable better. The same reasoning is applicable to the Parable of the Rich Fool (12:13-21), given that the parable's literary context explains Luke's reading of it.[190] In fact, Jesus' subsequent instruction on anxiety and his return to the subject of wealth (vv. 22-34) shows the attentive reader that the rich fool was condemned by God because he was anxious about the future and was not generous with his wealth. Another important point that Eck does not take into consideration is that the passages on prayer in Luke's Gospel are generally brief and require the reading of the surrounding context for a better understanding of the passage. In his study of the prayer passages in Luke's Gospel, David Crumps makes a similar observation:

> The particular challenge facing a study such as [prayer passages in Luke] this is the fact that over half of the prayer notices in Luke's gospel (3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 19:18, 28f; 11:1) are simply editorial comments, containing no explicit information as to either the content or the significance of Jesus' prayer in that circumstance. But does this mean that no conclusion can be drawn about the import of these prayers? No. Luke had a reason for including these editorial statements, and while there may be little or no explicit information given, there is a great deal of implicit information readily available. Immediate context, the relationship to surrounding events, narrative structure, the recurrence of thematic elements and the distribution of such editorial comments throughout the framework of the complete story all provide important evidence for drawing reasonably secure conclusions about the meaning of such notices.[191]

Therefore, Eck's delimitation of the Parable of the Friend at Midnight to Luke 11:5-8 is ill-informed. Indeed, this parable is about prayer. Therefore, it reveals aspects of prayer, namely, confidence and perseverance. Luke does not have to state categorically that he is teaching about prayer using this parable before the informed reader perceives it.

3.2.3. Jesus' Private Prayers: Jesus' private prayers are examples of passages that do not allow for an easy detection of the aspects of prayer that are being emphasized therein.

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[190] David B Gowler, "The Enthymematic Nature of Parables: A Dialogic Reading of the Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:16-20)," *Review & Expositor* (2012): 201.
[191] David Michael Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor: Prayer and Christology in Luke-Acts*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1992), 13–14.

Nonetheless, they point to various aspects of prayer. In the following lines, I will present Jesus' private prayer before Peter's confession as pointing to anticipation (Luke 9:18) and Jesus' private prayer on the Mount of Olives (Luke 22:39-46) as pointing to both anticipation and participation.

The various contexts in which Jesus is depicted as praying in secret suggests that Luke points to more than secrecy as an aspect of prayer in those contexts. For instance, the depiction of Jesus at prayer before Peter's confession (Luke 9:18) suggests that this prayer prepared Jesus for the revelation of his identity by Peter. Therefore, it can be said that the aspect of prayer other than secrecy that is revealed in this passage is anticipation; prayer prepares Jesus for important events, namely, the revelation of his identity. In addition, Jesus' private prayer before choosing the Twelve can also be seen as pointing to anticipation as an aspect of prayer, given that the choosing of the Twelve was a pivotal moment in the life of Jesus' ministry. Admittedly, unlike persistence, anticipation as an aspect of prayer in those contexts is less visible to the reader. Only a close reading of the text allows the reader to discover this aspect of prayer. A major reason for this challenge is that in those passages, as I already mentioned above, the content of such prayers is missing.[192] This implies that Jesus could be praying about issues that are unrelated to the events that surround the context of those prayers. O.G. Harris does not see the lack of content as a problem because, in his view, prayer in Luke-Acts serves a common purpose notwithstanding the context of usage: "[Prayer] serves as an important way in which the divine plan of salvation is made known…Luke believes that through prayer God has guided the ministry of Jesus and the course of the early Church."[193] While Harris' interpretation gives a helpful overview of prayer in Luke-Acts, it wrongly assumes that Luke is not concerned with what is being

[192] Robert J. Karris, *Prayer and the New Testament*, Companions to the New Testament (NY: Crossroad Pub, 2000), 58–59.
[193] O. G. Harris, "Prayer in Luke-Acts: A Study in the Theology of Luke" (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1966), 221.

revealed about the content of those prayers through the various contexts in which such prayers appear in Luke-Acts. There are various contexts in which Jesus is depicted as being at prayer in Luke's Gospel because Luke wants each of those contexts to reveal or help the reader to discover or rediscover an aspect of prayer. It is for this reason that Max Turner rejects the notion of an overarching theme for prayer in Luke-Acts; he contends that "the texture of Luke's portrait of prayer is too exotic to sum up in any epigram."[194] Therefore, with respect to a prayer without a specific content, the aspect of prayer that is being freshly revealed or emphasized is only visible through its literary context. The literary contexts of Jesus' private prayers before Peter's confession and the choosing of the Twelve suggest that anticipation, and not just secrecy, is being freshly revealed in those passages.

The context of Jesus' private prayer on the Mount of Olives (Luke 22:39-46) reveals the importance of an aspect of prayer that is often neglected: participation. Jesus reprimands his disciples for failing to stay awake to pray. This shows that he expects them to take part in this prayer on the mountain. Although he withdraws from them about a stone's throw to pray privately, it is his expectation that they participate in the prayer experience from where they are. Therefore, by reprimanding the disciples for not staying awake to pray, Luke highlights the importance of participation as an aspect of prayer.

3.2.4. The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector: The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (18:9-14) is a passage on prayer that has an implicit teaching on prayer, which is humility. While Luke tells the reader that the parable is directed at those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt (v. 9), the use of a prayer scene to illustrate this issue makes this parable a source of an implicit teaching on prayer. Furthermore, given that this passage is preceded by a parable on prayer (the Parable of the Persistent Widow), it is understandable to perceive the passage as revelatory of an

[194] Turner, "Teach Us to Pray," 75.

aspect of prayer. Nonetheless, there is a significant difference between both passages with respect to their reference to prayer. The verb, *προσεύχομαι* (to pray), which occurs at the beginning of both parables (18:1 and 18:10), does not serve exactly the same function in them: in the first instance, it constitutes part of the introduction to the parable and provides the key to interpretation, but in the second it is part of the parable itself.[195] It is for this reason that this study deems it appropriate to describe the second parable as giving an implicit teaching about prayer, rather than an explicit one.

In this prayer scene, the attitude of the characters shows the importance of humility as an aspect of prayer. The Pharisee prides himself on not being like thieves, rogues, adulterers and even the tax collector who is standing far off from him. Conversely, the tax collector prays with humility asking for God's mercy. At the end of the parable, Jesus commends the tax collector for humbling himself before God but condemns the Pharisee for his self-righteousness. The tax collector, therefore, becomes the figure with whom the reader identifies. The moral that is derived from this parable is humility, and it cannot be disconnected from prayer. This moral is the aspect of prayer that Luke highlights in this parable.

Parables give rise to different interpretations. Any aspect of prayer that is discovered in a parable cannot be said to be the only possible interpretation. Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that Luke has placed parables in different contexts for a reason. Therefore, to ignore a parable's literary context when interpreting it is to overlook an essential feature of that parable. It is also important to note what Pheme Perkins observed about parables in the Gospels: "a popular title may not be a complete or even appropriate description of the literary

[195] François Bovon and Donald S. Deer, "The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (18:9-14)," in *Luke* 2: *A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51-19:27*, ed. Helmut Koester (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2013), 542, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvb9370g.41.

or theological points in a given story."[196] Therefore, the exegete must read the parables closely to understand the various lessons that can be drawn from a parable. It is as a result of such close study of a parable that this study posits that the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector gives an implicit teaching on prayer, which is the value of praying with humility.

The various aspects of prayer that have been highlighted thus far reveal how important it is to study a prayer passage closely to perceive the aspect of prayer that Luke is emphasizing therein. While it might be easier to perceive aspects of prayer in the above parables than in Jesus' private prayers, the discovery of aspects of prayer in a passage requires a careful study of the passage in question. The same effort is required to discover the aspects of prayer that are in Luke's transfiguration account.

3.3. REDISCOVERING ASPECTS OF PRAYER IN JESUS' TRANSFIGURATION: Having explained how to discover aspects of prayer in Luke's Gospel, I will now discuss two aspects of prayer that can be rediscovered in Luke's transfiguration account. The two aspects of prayer in question are anticipation and participation. Luke presents them in a new and insightful way in the story of the transfiguration.

3.3.1. Rediscovering Anticipation: Anticipation is an aspect of prayer that is being freshly revealed in Luke's transfiguration account. In the previous chapter, I argued that Luke presents the entirety of Jesus' transfiguration as a prayer experience, and that is determined by the exodus motif specifying the content of the prayer (9:31). Therefore, anticipation as an aspect of prayer here points to the discussion about Jesus' upcoming suffering in Jerusalem. Neither Luke nor the characters in the scene explicitly state what the lessons are; it is up to

[196] Pheme Perkins, *Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 106–7.

the attentive reader to perceive anticipation as one of the aspects of prayer that are being highlighted in the passage.

It is worth reiterating that no two passages on prayer in Luke's Gospel present an aspect of prayer in exactly the same way. Hence, the need to be open to discovering anticipation in Jesus' transfiguration in a new way. While the discovery of anticipation as an aspect of prayer in Jesus' private prayers before Peter's confession and the choosing of the Twelve is based on their literary contexts, that of the transfiguration is based on the content of the narrative. Nonetheless, the idea that Jesus' prayer on the mountain of the transfiguration has a content is not shared by some scholars. Karris, for example, lists Jesus' transfiguration as a prayer passage that only mentions Jesus at prayer without specifying the content of the prayer.[197] In my view, this perspective fails to recognize the grammatical force of the prayer motif at the beginning of the transfiguration account (vv. 28-29), given that it does not only trigger the change in Jesus' appearance but transforms the entire narrative into a prayer experience. Therefore, every detail that follows the prayer motif up until the end of the encounter on the mountain (v. 36) should be considered as part of the content of the prayer. Geir Otto Holmås' comment on the relationship between the prayer motif and the rest of the encounter summarizes well the point that this study has been making in this regard:

> The transfiguration is explicitly said to occur during Jesus' prayer (9:29). Grammatically, it is possible to understand Jesus' prayer in 9:29 as a catalyst to the change of Jesus' appearance only, but this is scarcely the most natural way to understand the syntactical relations of the text. We are probably meant to see all the numinous event in 9:28-36 as taking place in the setting of prayer.[198]

If Jesus' prayer did not end with the change of his appearance but continued till he and his disciples left the mountain, Karris' designation of this prayer as "content-less"[199] is wrong.

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[197] Karris, *Prayer and the New Testament*, 59.
[198] Geir Otto Holmås, *Prayer and Vindication in Luke-Acts: The Theme of Prayer within the Context of the Legitimating and Edifying Objective of the Lukan Narrative*, Library of New Testament Studies (New York, NY: T & T Clark, 2011), 96.
[199] Karris, *Prayer and the New Testament*, 62.

While Luke might be revealing various aspects of prayer in this passage, this study focuses on the one that it judges central, which is the anticipation of Jesus' death in Jerusalem. Similarly, Reid states that "Luke considered Jesus' mission to be the subject of his prayer at the transfiguration."[200]

Luke uses anticipation in the transfiguration event to portray Jesus as one who is aware of his future fate. This is not surprising, given that prayer in Luke's Gospel provides the space where the present meets the future as the one at prayer accepts God's plan. Other passages in Luke's Gospel can be used to elucidate this point. For instance, it is in the context of prayer that an angel announced a future event to Zechariah, which was the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:13-20). The angel Gabriel does not only foretell the birth of Zechariah's son, but also foretells his mission and gives instructions regarding his way of life:

> He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before birth he will be filled with the Holy Sprit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the Spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. (vv.14b-17).

The above information that the angel provides in the context of Zechariah's prayer shows the important role that anticipation plays in prayer.

It is also worth noting how Luke uses Scripture to foretell John's mission. The angel tells Zechariah that John's mission will be modelled after that of Elijah. The informed reader who understands how powerful Elijah's mission was in the Old Testament will not fail to realize that this mission has to be applied to a new context, which is John's. A similar use of Scripture with respect to anticipation is discernible in Jesus' transfiguration because Luke has recourse to Scripture to explain Jesus' upcoming passion.[201] He does so using the word

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[200] Barbara E. Reid, "Prayer and the Face of the Transfigured Jesus," in *The Lord's Prayer and Other Prayer Texts from the Greco-Roman Era*, ed. Mark Harding and Mark Christopher Kiley (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994), 47.

[201] François Bovon and Donald S. Deer, "A New Passion Prediction (18:31-34)," in *Luke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51-19:27*, ed. Helmut Koester (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2013), 575, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvb9370g.44.

"exodus" (v. 31). While this word anticipates Jesus' death in Jerusalem, it also recalls the exodus event in Scripture. However, as with the foretelling of the birth of John, the reader realizes that the concept of "exodus" has to be applied to a new context, which is Jesus' upcoming suffering and death in Jerusalem. As Nolland argues with respect to Luke's use of "exodus" in this context, "it is surely, however, an excess to embrace in 'exodus' the whole saga of deliverance from Egypt through to possession of the promised land."[202] Therefore, even when Scripture recounts a past event in the context of anticipation, the interpreter's emphasis should be on the future event that is being discussed. Furthermore, in the midst of these revelations, the one at prayer has to accept his or her fate. Zechariah's doubt shows that he failed to accomplish his role as the person at prayer. Hence, the reason the angel made him dumb (Luke 1:20). Conversely, in the transfiguration, Jesus does not doubt the veracity of what is being revealed to him through the mouths of the heavenly figures because of his awareness of his fate.

In Jesus' transfiguration, the function of prayer in pointing to future events (anticipation) serves not only Jesus but also his disciples. Jesus' disciples are present at this scene because Luke wants to prepare them for their own suffering, given that their master's suffering portends their own suffering. It is for this reason that when Hays discussed the role of suffering in Luke's Gospel, he affirmed that it is not only part of Jesus' reality but also of that of his followers.[203] The instruction from the voice from heaven to the disciples to listen to Jesus (Luke 28:35) can be seen as an invitation to the disciples to model their lives after Jesus, which involves accepting their own "exodus" when it is time. Luke does not portray the Twelve as passive observers of the life of Jesus, but as people who are eager to imitate their master by learning, for instance, how to pray and heal like him (Luke 11:1; 9:40).

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[202] John Nolland et al., *Luke 9:21 - 18:34*, Word Biblical Commentary, ed. Bruce M. Metzger et al. (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2008), 499.
[203] Richard B Hays, *Echoes*, 277.

Therefore, at the transfiguration, as the suffering of Jesus is being anticipated by the heavenly figures, the disciples' own suffering is also being anticipated. Joel Green pushes this argument further by claiming that the transfiguration is primarily for the disciples because Luke wants them to anticipate Jesus' suffering.[204] Green's effort to draw attention to the presence and role of the disciples at this event is commendable, given that they will eventually be witnesses and guarantors of the continuity of Jesus' teachings, particularly his suffering.[205] Nonetheless, Green takes the role of this revelation in Jesus' life lightly. Anticipation as an aspect of prayer here also serves the purpose of helping Jesus to reflect more deeply on his upcoming death in Jerusalem. It is for this reason that Jesus continues to pray about it even after the transfiguration: on the Mount of Olives, Luke says: "in his [Jesus'] anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground" (Luke 22:44). It shows that Jesus continued to reflect on his upcoming death till his death on the cross. While there is no denying that Jesus longed to do the will of the Father, his human nature made it necessary for him to learn how to conform his will to that of the Father.[206] Therefore, anticipation as an aspect of prayer in Jesus' transfiguration helped both Jesus and his disciples.

The rediscovery of anticipation as an aspect of prayer in Luke's transfiguration account has implications. One of them is that it strengthens the connection between prayer and future events in the life of Jesus. By rediscovering anticipation in Jesus' transfiguration, the reader realizes that Luke wants prayer to be seen as an experience that allowed Jesus to discuss his future mission with heavenly figures. It is for this reason that Jesus is depicted

[204] Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1997), 380.
[205] Holmås, *Prayer and Vindication in Luke-Acts*, 98.
[206] Thomas G. Weinandy and John C. Cavadini, "Jesus' Agony, Arrest, and Trials," in *Jesus Becoming Jesus: A Theological Interpretation of the Synoptic Gospels* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2018), 324, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv176jw.17.

again on the Mount of Olives as asking the Father to take "the cup" from him and was being comforted by an angel (22:39-44).

3.3.2. Rediscovering Participation: Participation is another aspect of prayer that is implicit in Jesus' transfiguration, which refers to the disciples' involvement in the prayer experience on the mountain of the transfiguration. As I briefly discussed in the previous chapter, participation in this pericope is mainly with respect to the disciples staying awake during the mountaintop experience: "Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; 'but since they had stayed awake,' they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him" (Luke 9:32b). Nonetheless, there are other elements of the story that point to the disciples' participation in this experience.

Participation in prayer, which refers to the disciples' involvement in Jesus' prayer, is rarely associated with the Gospels because Jesus is the one who is mainly depicted as being at prayer, and not his disciples. Even when the disciples are portrayed as being at prayer, it is not in the same way as Jesus is portrayed. There are two significant prayer passages in Luke's Gospel that can be used to discuss prayer with respect to the Twelve: Jesus' teaching of the Lord's prayer to his disciples (Luke 11:1-4) and the failure of the disciples to stay awake on the Mount of Olives (Luke 22:45-46). In the first passage, the disciples only receive instructions on how to pray, while in the second they are portrayed as incapable of praying like Jesus or participating in prayer. These passages, like many others in Luke's Gospel (for instance, 10:2), make it difficult to think of the disciples' role in prayer beyond the level of receiving instructions and observing what Jesus is doing. Bovon's two-part division of Luke's transfiguration account closely follows this pattern:

> The first part of the event, the transfiguration and the conversation with Moses and Elijah (vv. 29-31), is to be *seen*; but the second part, with the divine voice (vv. 34-35), is to be *heard*. The group of three disciples sees the glory of the other group of three, and hears the heavenly voice; both of the disciples' reactions (vv. 32, 36) are structured symmetrically counterpart is Peter's odd suggestion (v. 33). The structure

> that results should not be seen as a static chiasm, but as a dynamic process from a supernatural sign (vv. 29-31) to its divine interpretation (vv. 34-35).[207]

The above description does not only portray the disciples as somewhat passive, but the reader as well. Evidently, the major roles for both the disciples and the reader are seeing and hearing. However, Nolland gives the disciples a more active role:

> Jesus goes up the mountain to pray; Jesus' prayer leads to transfiguration…the disciples, thus far kept out of view, apart from the initial mention of their accompanying of Jesus, are now grafted into the scene as having (barely) managed to be witnesses to the action to this point; with their re-introduction, the perspective moves from that of the experience of Jesus to that of the experience of the disciples; as the visitors prepare to leave, Peter tries to prevent the termination of the heavenly vision; he is answered not by Jesus, but by the enveloping cloud.[208]

Nolland thinks that the disciples are kept out of view at the beginning of the encounter but reintroduced later to become the center of the experience. This is certainly a more optimistic view of the disciples' role than Bovon's. Although this study shows preference for Nolland's interpretation of the role of the disciples, it deems it insufficient because participation as an aspect of prayer in this scene deserves more attention.

The first barrier to gaining a better insight into the role of the disciples in this prayer experience is a preconceived notion of how one can participate in a prayer experience. As I stated earlier in this chapter, no two prayer passages in Luke's Gospel are identical. Therefore, it is important to think of the transfiguration as pointing to a new way of understanding prayer, including the aspect of the disciples' participation. To better understand the extent to which the disciples participate in this prayer experience, it is helpful to compare this scene with that of the Mount of Olives, where they fail to participate. In the table below, the highlighted texts represent the role of the disciples in both scenes:

The Disciples on the Mount of Olives	**The Disciples at the Transfiguration**

[207] François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2002), 371, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015054302800.
[208] Nolland et al., *Luke 9*, 497.

(Luke 22:39-44)	**(Luke 9:28-36)**
39 He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; **and the disciples followed him**. **40 When he reached the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not come into the time of trial."** **41** Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, **42** "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done." **43** Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. **44** In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. **45** When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, **46** and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial."	**28** Now about eight days after these sayings **Jesus took with him Peter and John and James**, and went up on the mountain to pray. **29** And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. **30** Suddenly **they saw two men**, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. **31** They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. **32 Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake**, **they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.** **33 Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said.** **34 While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud.** **35 Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!"** **36** When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and, in those days, told no one any of the things they had seen.

In the table above, most of the highlighted texts appear on the side of the transfiguration story. It shows that the disciples have a larger role in the prayer experience of the

transfiguration than in that of the Mount of Olives. In the following lines, I will discuss these differences in detail.

3.3.2.1. On How the Disciples Joined Jesus: How the disciples joined Jesus in the transfiguration scene is different from that of the Mount of Olives. In the Mount of Olives scene, the disciples are depicted as following Jesus to the mountain (22:39), while in that of the transfiguration Jesus is the one who takes them to the mountain (9:28). The difference in vocabulary with respect to how the disciples arrived at those prayer scenes is significant. Luke's use of *παραλαμβάνω* in his transfiguration account instead of *ἀκολουθέω* is an indication that the disciples are more involved in the prayer scene of the transfiguration than in that of the Mount of Olives.

3.3.2.1.1. Contrasting ἀκολουθέω with παραλαμβάνω: Before Jesus and his disciples left for the Mount of Olives, Luke states that "…the disciples followed him [Jesus]" (22:39). The word "follow" as it appears in the Greek text is *ἠκολούθησαν*, which is the aorist indicative active of *ἀκολουθέω*. This Greek word (*ἀκολουθέω*) is common in the New Testament and is usually associated with following Jesus. Nonetheless, I will limit my analysis of this word mostly to the context of Luke's Gospel. Below are some examples of its usage in Luke's Gospel:

Greek	**English**[209]	**Context**	**Bible Citations** (Luke)
ἀφέντες πάντα ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ	…having left all, they followed him	The call of the first disciples	5:11b
Ἀκολούθει μοι	…follow me	The call of Levi	5:27b
καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν, καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι	…And let him take up his cross and follow me	The value of suffering with Christ	9:23b

[209] The English translations in this column are mine.

εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς ἕτερον Ἀκολούθει μοι	He then said to another: "follow me!"	The would-be followers of Jesus	9:59
καὶ δεῦρο ἀκολούθει μοι	…then come follow me	Jesus and the rich ruler	18:22b
ὁ δὲ Πέτρος ἠκολούθει μακρόθεν	…and Peter was following from afar	Before Peter denies Jesus	22:54b
Ἠκολούθει δὲ αὐτῷ πολὺ πλῆθος τοῦ λαοῦ	A great multitude of people were following him	The crucifixion of Jesus	23:27a

The following conclusion can be reached about the various contexts in which *ἀκολουθέω* is used in the above table: Firstly, in the contexts where Jesus is the one extending the invitation to others to follow him, the command could either be accepted or declined. The rich ruler's decline of the invitation (18:22) reveals this usage of the word. Secondly, the word could denote total commitment in one context and partial commitment in another. Peter's following of Jesus before denying him later in the narrative is a case in point (22:54b). Kittel's assertion that the use of this word with respect to a disciple implies participation in the fate of Jesus[210] does not consider exceptions like Peter's denial of Jesus toward the end of Jesus' life. Thirdly, *ἀκολουθέω* is not used in Luke's Gospel to unambiguously denote closeness between two parties. For instance, the multitude that "followed" Jesus on his way to his crucifixion is unidentified (23:27a). The fact that they are unidentified, unlike in Matthew's account which gives the names of some of them (Matthew 27:55-56), reduces the chances of establishing a close connection between them and Jesus. Phrased differently, when the word *ἀκολουθέω* is used to denote that people are following Jesus, it does not necessary mean that Jesus has a personal relationship with them. In fact, in the New Testament, the term *ἀκολουθέω* is never applied to a relationship with God.[211] This shows that despite its

[210] Gerhard Kittel, "ἀκολουθέω," in *TDNT* 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967), 214.
[211] Gerhard Kittel, "ἀκολουθέω," in *TDNT* 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967), 213.

association with discipleship, *ἀκολουθέω* never became the ideal word for describing a close relationship between two parties. Therefore, it is not odd to notice that Luke uses this word in reference to how the disciples joined Jesus on the Mount of Olives: *καὶ ἐξελθὼν ἐπορεύθη κατὰ τὸ ἔθος εἰς τὸ Ὄρος τῶν Ἐλαιῶν ἠκολούθησαν δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ οἱ μαθηταί* (Luke 22:39). The disciples "followed" Jesus to the mountain for no particular reason and without Jesus' invitation, thereby making it possible for Luke to depict them as reluctant partakers of that prayer experience.

By contrast, *παραλαμβάνω* is used in contexts where a close relationship between two parties is being established, namely in the one between Jesus and his disciples en route to the mountain of the transfiguration: *καὶ παραλαβὼν Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην καὶ Ἰάκωβον ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι* (Luke 9:28). Luke says that Jesus initiated the action: he took the disciples with him, which is different from being followed by them as seen in the Mount of Olives scene. The Greek word that is used in reference to Jesus' act of taking the disciples with him to the mountain of the transfiguration is *παραλαμβάνω*. This term means "to take to one-self" when used with a personal object, and "to take into a fellowship" when used with a material object e.g. "to take over an office"[212] In both cases, the word denotes a close relationship between two parties. This shows that from the start, Luke establishes a close relationship between Jesus and his disciples in view of the prayer experience on the mountain; both parties remain closely connected till the end of the experience. The same word is used in the parallel accounts of both Mark (Mark 9:2) and Matthew (Matthew 17:1). They were aware that Jesus' transfiguration is a close encounter between Jesus and his disciples on the mountain.

There are several passages in Luke's Gospel that support this interpretation of *παραλαμβάνω*:

[212] G. Delling, "παραλαμβάνω," in *TDNT* 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967), 11.

Greek	**English**[213]	**Context**	**Bible Citations (Luke)**
…καὶ παραλαβὼν αὐτοὺς ὑπεχώρησεν κατ᾽ ἰδίαν εἰς πόλιν καλουμένην Βηθσαϊδά	…And having taken them, he withdrew by himself into a town called Bethsaida	Before the feeding of the five thousand	9:10b
τότε πορεύεται καὶ παραλαμβάνει ἕτερα πνεύματα πονηρότερα ἑαυτοῦ ἑπτά…	Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself…	Jesus' teaching on evil spirit	11:26a
ἔσονται δύο ἀλήθουσαι ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, ἡ μία παραλημφθήσεται ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα ἀφεθήσεται	There will be two grinding together, one taken and the other left	Jesus' teaching on the coming of the kingdom	17:35
Παραλαβὼν δὲ τοὺς δώδεκα εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς…	Having then taken the Twelve aside, he said to them…	Shortly before the third passion prediction	18:31a

In the above table, *παραλαμβάνω* is used to denote closeness or intimacy. Before the feeding of the five thousand, Luke uses this word to depict Jesus as taking the disciples closer to himself (9:10b). The word is used in Jesus' teaching on evil spirits in reference to how evil spirits rearm (*παραλαμβάνω*) and return to their former human hosts (11:26a). The idea of taking up more spirits denotes closeness given that evil spirits begin to function as one before returning to their former hosts. With regard to Jesus' teaching on the coming of the Son of Man, *παραλαμβάνω* depicts the taking of one of two people who are in bed (18:31a). The act of taking someone in the context of the end times is certainly a close encounter. Therefore, the use of *παραλαμβάνω* in Jesus' transfiguration shows that Jesus is bringing the disciples closer to himself for a prayer experience on the mountain, and they will remain close to him till the end of the encounter. The word *ἀκολουθέω* would not have been able to convey this degree of closeness.

[213] The English translations in this column are mine.

3.3.2.2. The Disciples Had No Separate Prayer Intention: In the transfiguration scene, the absence of a command to the disciples to pray for a specific intention, unlike in the Mount of Olives scene (Luke 22:40), shows that all those on the mountain of the transfiguration participated in one prayer.

Jesus' transfiguration does not indicate that Jesus distanced himself from the three disciples who were with him on the mountain in any way. The event on the mountain took place without a comment about the exact position of the disciples, thereby allowing for their placement in proximity with Jesus, which is in keeping with the initial intention of Jesus to keep them close to himself as expressed by the word *παραλαμβάνω.* This makes it possible to extend Jesus' prayer on the mountain to the disciples who were with him there. Conversely, on the Mount of Olives, Jesus instructs his disciples to pray that they may not fall into temptation, which is different from his own intention to be spared the crucifixion (22:40 cf. 22:42). If Jesus' prayer intention is different from that of his disciples, it creates a mental distance between both parties. Furthermore, Jesus' withdrawal from his disciples about a stone's throw to pray (v. 41) widens the gap between them. What comparing the initial verses of both scenes shows is that the disciples participate more in the prayer scene of the transfiguration than in that of the Mount of Olives.

3.3.2.3. The Disciples Witnessed the Glory on the Mountain (vv. 30-36): The transfiguration scene depicts the disciples as active participants in the glory that is revealed on the mountain in many ways.

Firstly, they see the appearance of the heavenly figures during the prayer experience (9:32). This is not the case in the Mount of Olives scene, where only Jesus sees the heavenly figure (22:43): Jesus' decision to distance himself from his disciples on the Mount of Olives made him experience most of what occurred on that mountain alone. For instance, in the Mount of Olives scene, the disciples do not see the heavenly figures. It is an indication that

their participation in that prayer is limited. However, it is not the case in Jesus' transfiguration: Peter, James and John do not only see the heavenly figures (Moses and Elijah), but also experience the change in Jesus' appearance in this encounter.

Secondly, in Jesus' transfiguration, the disciples' reaction at the sight of the glory of Jesus, Moses, and Elijah is recorded. Their reactions can be summed up as excitement and fear. Peter's speech pertaining to the presence of the three figures who appeared in glory represents the excitement of the disciples (9:33), while their fear stems from their entering into the cloud (9:34). Peter's words are not just words of excitement but of prayer; it represents the vocalization of the prayers of the disciples on the mountain. In many passages in Luke's Gospel, Jesus vocalizes his prayers in ways that may not seem typical of prayer for modern Christians. For instance, when he rejoices in the spirit because the Father has hidden things from the wise and the intelligent (Luke 10:21-22); Jesus also vocalizes his prayers when he prays the psalms: On the cross, he commits his spirit into the Father's hands (Luke 23:46 cf. Psalm 31:5). These variations in Jesus' pattern of vocalizing his prayers show that the concept of a vocalized prayer is applicable to Peter's reaction on the mountain of the transfiguration. It is one of the ways in which he participates in this prayer experience.

As explained in this study, the disciples stayed awake throughout the prayer experience on the mountain of the transfiguration. They were able to express fear and excitement at the glory that they beheld because they stayed awake throughout the prayer experience (9:32). This is not the case on the Mount of Olives, where the disciples fall asleep and are consequently reprimanded by Jesus (22:45-46).

The analysis carried out thus far has shown that participation as an aspect of prayer is visible in Jesus' transfiguration scene in ways that are not usually discussed in scholarly circles. While Nolland's assertion that Luke distinguishes "much more sharply than Mark between the part of the narrative recounted from the perspective of the experience of Jesus

(vv 28-31) and the part that is concerned with the experience of the disciples (vv 32-36)"[214] is commendable, it minimizes the role of the disciples. This study, therefore, posits that the experience of the disciples is part of the narrative from the beginning till the end. Indeed, "the disciples had a revelation concerning Jesus' identity and mission, in which Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection were understood as mandated by God in accord with the divine plan of salvation."[215]

3.4. Chapter Summary: The goal of this chapter was to help the reader to rediscover two aspects of prayer in Luke's Gospel that are found in Jesus' transfiguration, namely, anticipation and participation. Anticipation as an aspect of prayer points to the idea that future events can be foreshadowed in the context of prayer while participation refers to the idea that when a group is at prayer every member of that group must take part in that prayer. An important distinction that this study made at the beginning was between "anticipation" and "promise and fulfilment," given that both concepts could be wrongly seen as interchangeable. Given that the two aspects of prayer in focus in this chapter were introduced in Lukan scholarship for the first time, this study demonstrated how to discover them in prayer. It was also important to show how to discover aspects of prayer in general, given the novelty of this approach to prayer passages in Luke's Gospel.

This chapter argued that anticipation and participation are important aspects of prayer in the Lukan transfiguration account. It showed that Luke presented anticipation through the exodus motif, which is the conversation that transpired between Jesus, Moses and Elijah regarding Jesus' upcoming death in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). With respect to participation, this study argued that this aspect of prayer is perceptible in three major ways: through Luke's description of how the disciples joined Jesus on the trip to the mountain, through the fact that

[214] John Nolland et al., *Luke*, 497.
[215] Barbara E. Reid, 147, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002716588.

Jesus and the disciples do not have separate prayer intentions – unlike the Mount of Olives scene – and through the disciples' witnessing and reaction to the glory on the mountain. Therefore, in Luke's transfiguration account, those aspects of prayer are discovered anew, thereby improving the reader's understanding of their importance in Luke's conception of prayer.

CONCLUSION

This study advanced the point that Luke's transfiguration account is best understood as a prayer experience. This thesis rested on a detailed study of the motifs found in the account, namely, the cloud motif, the voice from heaven motif, the motif of the two heavenly figures, and the tent motif. The detailed study of those motifs revealed the many ways in which they can be interpreted especially in light of Old Testament events, thereby improving the reader's understanding of their function in the Lukan transfiguration account. The search for a more precise understanding of how the motifs lead the reader to the theme of the Lukan account led to the discovery of the centrality of the prayer motif, which Luke repeats in his account (vv. 28-29). Consequently, the other motifs in the account were interpreted in light of the prayer motif; it shows that Luke's transfiguration account is best understood as a prayer experience.

A review of the Greek grammar was crucial to this discovery, as it served to guide the interpretation of the grammatical contexts in which the prayer motifs appear (Luke 9:28-29). The contexts in which the prayer motifs appear were treated as prepositional phrases, and the grammatical rules for interpreting such phrases were applied. Nonetheless, given that the Greek grammar does not provide every detail and nuance regarding how to accurately interpret a biblical passage, contextual interpretation also played a role in this process. Consequently, this study interpreted the first prepositional phrase (v. 28) as indicative of the

purpose of the trip, which is prayer, while the second phrase denotes the actualization of that purpose (v. 29).

This study also demonstrated that the interpretation of the Lukan transfiguration account as a prayer experience leads to the rediscovery of two aspects of prayer: anticipation and participation. Anticipation was presented as pointing to the fact that prayer prepares one for future events as it did for Jesus through the exodus motif, while participation was presented as indicating that those at prayer must get involved in that experien ce as the disciples on the mountain with Jesus did.

Interpreting Luke's transfiguration account as a prayer experience has shown that there is still much to be explored regarding prayer in Luke's Gospel. Luke varied the contexts in which he inserted teachings about prayer so as to deepen the reader's appreciation and understanding of prayer. However, to understand the multiple levels of meaning that Luke is proposing in those contexts, the reader must engage in a close reading of the texts as in the reading in this study. Many questions remain about Luke's reason for not including the content of some of Jesus' prayers as well as the reason for his choice of words in various prayer passages. These questions are meant to direct further research into Luke's understanding of prayer. When studying prayer in Luke, every detail in a prayer passage matters because it will lead to further discoveries on this subject that can expand the role of prayer for Christians.

The result of this study of prayer motifs in Luke's transfiguration narrative has significant applicability to Christian prayer. As an example of such applicability Peter's offer to erect three tents on the mountain of the transfiguration, which created the tent motif, can be compared to the outburst of emotions that some Christians experience at prayer. Luke's retention of this motif from Mark's account even after transforming his account into a prayer experience shows that he considers it relevant to prayer. Therefore, the reaction of the

Christian at prayer to what he or she sees and feels can be understood as part of prayer, given that prayer is not only about hearing and speaking to God, but also about reacting to what is heard or felt during this encounter.

Two research areas related to Luke's transfiguration account are worth exploring in a separate study. The first is a close analysis of the motifs in the transfiguration accounts of Mark and Matthew to discover how they help the reader to understand the themes of those accounts. Biblical events with parallel accounts appear in ways that allow for the detection of the central thrust of each of those accounts when studied closely. The discovery of the theme of a prayer experience in the Lukan transfiguration account in this study paves the way for similar discoveries in the parallel accounts in both Mark and Matthew. While the term "transfiguration" is helpful for identifying a particular narrative in the Synoptics, it does not reveal the theme for each of those accounts. Hence, the need to study each account closely.

The second area deserving of a more detailed analysis is the relationship between Luke's treatment of the prayer motif in his transfiguration account and his treatment of this motif in Acts. This current study did not pay sufficient attention to the accounts in Acts because it considers it a topic needing separate study. However, it remains an important area of future study. It will be beneficial to know if in Luke's second volume the author uses the prayer motif in ways that would suggest, for instance, that he is transforming an event that seems to point in different directions into a prayer experience.

This study's treatment of the Lukan transfiguration account is meant to be a contribution to research into Luke's understanding of prayer especially with respect to stories that he received from Mark.

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