

Text: Luke 9:27-36

Title: The Transfiguration

Truth: Jesus is the glorified King, Savior, and Revealer.

Date/Location: April 7, 2024 at FBC

Introduction

Remember that in the paragraphs before this, the disciples learn more about who Jesus is (the Messiah from God), and that He is going to be persecuted, die, and then rise again. They have a preview of His suffering, and in the upcoming section they will get a preview of His glory.

The title of the message comes from the parallel passages in Matthew 17 and Mark 9 where the authors use the word *transfigure*. This word comes from the word for metamorphosis, which means to change in a visible manner, as when taking plain stone and turning it into a beautiful statue.

I. Jesus the Glorified King, v. 28-29

- A. Illustrating the principle of context: read Matthew 16:24-28. Stop for a second and wonder what the Lord means by saying that some would not die until they saw the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. Now, read Mathew 6:24-28 and then immediately read 17:1-13. The answer to your inquiry is given in chapter 17! The chapter boundary does not prevent chapter 17 from explaining the end of chapter 16.
- B. Whether the event occurred six days or eight days later depends on how you count the first and last days, whether inclusively or exclusively. The “discrepancy” is not a big deal, particularly with the word “about.”
- C. Mountain. Which mountain does not really matter, although some suggest it was Mount Hermon, a very high mountain near where they were traveling at the time. God does a lot of things on mountains—do a study and see if you can find a bunch of them.
- D. The inner circle. A quick search using Bible software reveals that Peter, James, and John observed the raising of Jairus’s daughter, the Transfiguration, and Gethsemane. Andrew was able to

participate with these three in another significant episode in which they asked a question on the Mount of Olives (Mark 13:3).

- E. Pray. This was a common activity of the Lord, so nothing seemed out of the ordinary at this point. But as the prayer time unfolded, that is when things became unusual.
- F. We have already mentioned the change of appearance of the Lord. It was a metamorphosis. It was a change in appearance, not in form *per se*. The glory of the divine nature shone through so brightly that neither the human flesh nor the cloth of his raiment could contain it. Herein we have a preview of John's fearful sight of the Lord in Revelation 1:13-18.

II. Jesus the Savior, v. 30-31

- A. Moses and Elijah appeared "in glory." This means that they appeared in a glorified form, not as dead, but as very much alive. Their appearance was like that of Jesus.
- B. Earlier we read that some people thought Jesus was Elijah (or that John the Baptist was). Now we see Jesus and Elijah, along with Moses, appearing together. So now we know for certain that Jesus is neither Moses nor Elijah.
- C. These two men were outstanding representatives of the Law and the Prophets, two major sections of the Hebrew Bible. Both of their respective sections of Holy Scripture were to be fulfilled in this glorious Person who was shining before them.
- D. They conversed about Jesus's upcoming departure, meaning His death, his "exodus." He was going to experience a second Passover, not as the leader Moses but as the lamb sacrificed.
- E. This had to be a real "inside baseball" feeling for the disciples to hear this conversation, and to see the Lord's manner, unveiled now compared to His normal demeanor. The fact that they knew about it is remarkable. His death was not hidden to the people residing in heaven prior to Jesus leaving Heaven for earth.
- F. What Moses and Elijah were discussing, they and their compatriots knew in shadowy form and prophesied about centuries earlier. Much of their work, and the work of the prophets after them until

Malachi, foretold the coming and death of Messiah. Now they were talking about it again, much nearer to its fulfillment.

III. Jesus the Revealer, v. 32-35

- A. Peter, James, and John were sleepy (v. 32). Coupled with verse 37, it appears that the Transfiguration may have occurred late in the evening, after a long day of ministry. The Lord often retreated in the evening to pray.
- B. The disciples missed some of the conversation. But when they came to full attention, Peter expressed a desire to make some “tabernacles” or “booths” for the three men so that they could stay, perhaps permanently. But he did not understand the significance of this. For one thing, he was treating them as peers, which was definitely not the case. For another, although the desire to stay in such a glorious situation forever is understandable, Jesus could not do that. He had to pass through suffering first.
- C. Peter was “interrupted” by a cloud, and then the voice of God. The cloud captured the disciples’ attention so they would listen carefully when God gave them His message.
- D. The message had two parts. The first is that God identifies His Son as the beloved one. This is similar to Matthew 3:17. Jesus’s activity, conduct, manner, embracing of His difficult mission, and faith etc. all combined to make Him perfectly pleasing to the Father. (Remember, without faith it is impossible to please God.)
- E. The second part of the message is that God tells the disciples to listen to Jesus: “Hear Him!” This detail is repeated by all the synoptists (Matt. 17:5, Mark 9:7, Luke 9:35). Throughout the Lord’s ministry, people came to hear Him (Luke 6:17, 15:1, 19:48, 21:38). But what does it mean when God commands it?
 - 1. One point is clear: Moses and Elijah were messengers of a prior age. Their ministry had run its course. Now, followers of God are to listen to the well-beloved Son of God, Jesus Christ.
 - 2. This is also a clear allusion to Deut. 18:15-19. Jesus is the fulfillment of that prophecy and is superior to Moses and the other prophets. The line of prophets ended with Him.

IV. Epilogue, v. 36

- A. The command to listen to Jesus marked the end of the interaction. Suddenly the cloud was gone; Moses and Elijah were gone, evidently going with the disappearing cloud; the heavenly voice was gone, and only Jesus was there with the three disciples. Jesus was back in his normal “veiled” state, the state of His earthly humility.
- B. Mark and the apostle Matthew report that Jesus commanded the disciples not to tell anyone of what they had seen until Jesus rose from the dead. The report could cause a fervor among the people, causing them to clamor for Jesus to be their king *now* (John 6:15) instead of taking the path that the Father and Son had ordained. Namely, the path to the throne had to go through the cross first.
- C. All this would convince James, John, and Peter that there was a “kingdom not of this world” (John 18:36). It would convince them that there was life after this life.

V. Peter’s Later Reflection on The Incident, 2 Peter 1:16-18

- A. Peter reported that he was an eyewitness of the regal majesty of Jesus. He was *there* when Jesus demonstrated His royal glory.
- B. Peter was an “earwitness” as well because he heard the voice of God the Father from heaven commending His Son. He also heard God the Father command the apostles to listen to Jesus.
- C. What he saw and heard convinced him of the power of the Lord Jesus and of His second coming in glory. This is what Jesus meant when he said that some would “not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.” For Peter and the others, this incident fueled their own assurance and their preaching that Jesus would return in power and great glory (Matt. 24:30, Mark 13:26, Luke 21:27). That Christ will return to earth and rule as king is a fundamental teaching of the Christian faith.
- D. The event serves as evidence that Peter did not follow a fictional religious figure or belief system. If you doubt the Christian faith, Peter would tell you, “I know what I saw and heard!” And Peter goes on to add in 2 Peter 1:19-21 that we have the word of

prophecy of the Bible which surpasses any experience that he or the other apostles had. Human experiences are too subject to faulty interpretation due to limited understanding, sin, incorrect connections, and so on. But the word of God encoded the clear revelation of God for all of humanity to see.

Conclusion

I wonder if the Transfiguration served a purpose other than to show Jesus as glorious king and revealer of God's will. Could it be the answer to the Lord's prayer on the mountain that night? Perhaps the Father showed approval of His son by glorifying Him and making a proclamation of His Son's eminent worthiness prior to His suffering, the path of which would begin in earnest in 9:51.

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