

Luke 9:28~36

This morning we come to what has to be one of the most amazing things that the disciples had ever had the privilege of being witness to, in Jesus' entire earthly ministry... *a glimpse of Jesus in all His glory.* This passage is most commonly referred to as the "*Transfiguration.*" The term *transfiguration* means *to transform...* It is the Latin word from which we get our English word "*metamorphosis,*" speaking of the transformation that takes place when a caterpillar transforms into a butterfly. It was here that the disciples had the privilege of seeing the transformation of Jesus, out of the *human form,* to *His glorious form...* That's an interesting description of this event, simply of how Isaiah wrote, that outwardly speaking, Jesus would be nothing to look at, in the sense, outwardly speaking, you would not take this man to be anything, much less the Messiah. ²*For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.* Most of your pictures you see of Jesus in our day, portray him as a good looking, Jewish man, with long black hair. But according to Isaiah, Jesus was no such man. By Isaiah's writings, this would be the last man you would consider... (much like David). Remember that account? David was one of seven sons of Jesse, and was not even considered as a candidate by his own father. When the prophet came to Jesse's house to anoint one of Jesse's sons, his father never even considered him, because he was a scrawny little lad. The Lord revealed there to the prophet, that He does not see as man sees, based on the outward appearance. But rather, he looks on the heart... and it was David who was the one.

No doubt, Jesus was the same, nothing to look at... But here, God the Father takes away the flesh, and allows the disciples to see Him for who He was...

Luke describes Jesus' appearance by saying, "*that his whole countenance was changed, and that his clothes were so white, they were glowing...*"

Mark simply says, that *He was transfigured before them,* and that His clothing was *white as snow, and they were glowing...*

Matthew, said that *His face was shinning like the sun...and that His clothes were as white as the light...*

Given their accounts, we basically understand only that there was this "*light*" that radiated from Him... There are no facial features mentioned, no details of His appearance. Just that He "*Glowed*" as it were. It appears that rather than being able to see specific features of His looks... what they saw was only the glory that "*radiated*" from Him.

Along with seeing "*His glory,*" the disciples also saw Moses and Elijah, standing and talking with Him... This is something that **all three gospels** affirm. Interestingly, *it is only Luke* who records anything of *what the three were talking about...*

(Vs 31) ³¹*Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.*

This is significant, in that it sets the stage, as to why the three were permitted to see this event. Something we should not miss here, is the "*Spiritual truth*" that is being revealed to the disciples. Moses and Elijah, were considered the two greatest men in the O.T. It's important that we SEE them for what they are, in the "*Light of Jesus' Glory*" here. **Why these two, and why were they talking about His death?** "*Moses*" represents the Law... while "*Elijah*" represents the Prophets. Beloved, these two men are symbolic of "*the Law and the Prophets,*" a term used by the Hebrews and Jews alike, in referring to the O.T. writings. Remember, when Jesus answered the Lawyers question on what is the greatest commandment? Jesus said, "*The first and great commandment is, that you love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your might. And the second is liken unto it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.*" And then Jesus makes this statement... "*On these two commandments, hang all the law and the prophets...*"

What did He mean by that statement? Simply that you could sum up all of Holy Scripture in those two commandments. Everything that was written, was written to bring men to Love God with all their heart, soul and mind...and to love their fellow man... It is here in this divine revelation, that God reveals how all of this will be brought to pass...through the death of Jesus Christ!

Listen, here is Moses and Elijah (*Law and Prophets*) speaking with the Lord Jesus, the one to whom both of them had been witness to! Both the Law and the Prophets testified to Jesus Christ, and His death on the Cross, to deliver His people from their sins! From Genesis to Malachi, everything that was written, was written in reference to Jesus!

This really helps you to get the full scope of what Jesus meant when He said in Matthew 5:17...

¹⁷*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.*

¹⁸*For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

Beloved, everything that was written, was written concerning Him! Jesus came to fulfill all that was written of Him! Therefore, the scene here is that of a “*Divine Revelation*” given to His disciples, concerning this truth! God pulled back the curtains of heaven you might say, and allowed the disciples to see what all of Holy Scriptures were about...His Son, and how He would die for the sins of man...

Here in the account of the transfiguration of Jesus, we see these three disciples, being given this “*Spiritual revelation*” of this divine truth! Just a few days prior, (9:22), Jesus had told them this very truth Himself. Now here, God the Father affirms His claims by a divine revelation of His impending death at Jerusalem.

But Peter does not get it...but rather misunderstands what he’s seeing, and seeks to honor all three men... Though Peter had good intentions, and meant well, God rebukes Peter, simply for the fact that Moses and Elijah are not to be honored and esteemed on the same level as Jesus!

(Vs 33~35) ³³*And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. ³⁴While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. ³⁵And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. ³⁶And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone.*

Peter has such *good intentions*...but it’s his “*theology*” that is bad... He certainly meant well, but the problem was, by suggesting making a tabernacle for each one, he was placing Moses and Elijah, (*great as they were*), **on the same level** as Jesus. Something God the Father was quick to make clear, in no uncertain terms, was not the case. Though they are truly great men, they were **just men**...It is Jesus and Jesus alone, that is worthy of worship.

The fact that Peter mentions wanting to erect these three tabernacles, is very interesting...Luke gives the additional information that Peter spoke “*not realizing what he was saying*” (9:33b). Peter completely failed to comprehend the significance of the event.

New Testament chronologists have determined that the Jewish month in which the transfiguration took place was Tishri (October), the sixth month before Passover and therefore six months before Jesus’ crucifixion. During this month the Jews celebrated the feast of Tabernacles, or Booths, and it is possible that at this very time the feast was being observed In Jerusalem. During a period of seven days the people lived in small shelters, or booths, made of boughs, symbolizing the temporary dwellings of their forefathers in the wilderness. It was a memorial to God’s preserving His chosen and redeemed people (see Lev. 23:33-44).

As Luke stated, Moses and Elijah were talking with Jesus “of *His departure*,” or exodus (Luke 9:31), the soon-coming and infinitely greater deliverance of believing mankind from sin. How appropriate then, *Peter may have thought*, to celebrate the feast in that sacred place.

Peter wanted to build three shelters for these three great men to show how the Feast of Tabernacles had been fulfilled in the coming of God’s kingdom. He may have thought that God’s kingdom had come when he saw Jesus’ glory (as seen in his words *it is good for us to be here*). Perhaps Peter had overlooked Jesus’ words that suffering and death would precede glory. He saw the fulfillment of Christ’s glory for a moment and wanted the experience to continue. Regardless of his motives, he had mistakenly made all three men equal. He had missed Jesus’ true identity as God himself.

To make it clear, that Jesus, and Jesus alone was to be worshiped and honored... God the Father, in the form of a cloud, moves over Peter and the other disciples, overshadowing them. Falling on their faces in fear, they hear God’s voice, saying “*This is my beloved Son...hear Him.*” When they looked up, they saw Jesus standing by Himself...signifying that Jesus was the only one worthy of worship and honor.

We are told that God came in the form of a “*Cloud*”... This is not something new, for this was the form that He often came in, many times in the O.T... This was the cloud that had guided Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 13:21), that had appeared to the people in the wilderness (Exodus 16:10; 24:15-18; 34:5; 40:34-38), that had appeared to Moses (Exodus 19:9), and that had filled the temple with the glory of the Lord (1 Kings 8:10). It was in a cloud, that God descended on Mt. Sinai, in giving the Law to Israel. There too, God spoke as well. Given that, this becomes a contrast...Just as God’s voice in the cloud over Mount Sinai gave authority to his law (Exodus 19:9), God’s voice at the Transfiguration gave authority to Jesus’ words.

According to Matthew and Mark’s accounts, following the event, on the way back down from the mountain, Jesus told the men, not to tell anyone what they had just seen until He was risen from the dead.

(Mt. 17) ⁹And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, *Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.*

“*Son of Man*” is a Messianic term, used throughout the O.T, referring to the Messiah. It’s quite apparent, that the disciples understood what he was claiming, because upon saying this, they asked Him, about the coming of Elijah...

(Vs 10~13) ¹⁰And his disciples asked him, saying, *Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?*

The “*Scribes*” were the masters of Scripture...they were the ones who were in charge of copying the scriptures, this was their job. They were often referred to as “*Lawyers*” given their extensive knowledge of the Law.

Here the disciples question Jesus about the coming of Elijah. Which is a very good question, because the scribes were right, according to the Prophets, Elijah must come first.

(Ma.4) ⁵Behold, I will send you **Elijah** the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: ⁶And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

The scribes were absolutely right... Just prior to the coming of the Lord came to His people, He would send Elijah to make the people ready for His coming. And add to that, they had just seen “Elijah” speaking with Him on the mountain... Believing Him to be the Lord, and hearing of His impending death at Jerusalem...they asked Him about the prophecy concerning Elijah. Jesus answered...

¹¹And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. ¹²But I say unto you, **That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.** ¹³Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

Jesus affirms what the scribes were saying... Indeed, Elijah must come first, for that is the testimony of scripture. They are absolutely right! But Elijah has come already...they just didn't recognize him! And showed him no respect or honor, even mistreated him. Matthew states, that upon saying this, the disciples realized He was talking about John the Baptist... *John was Malachi's Elijah*... And that he had come and did just as Malachi said he would.

¹¹And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. ¹²But I say unto you, **That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed.**

Then notice what Jesus says next...Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

Just as they have treated "the Elijah"...they shall treat **ME**... My Father has allowed you to see this vision, so that you might know, that the Son of Man must go, as it is written of Him. The "Law and the Prophets" testify of the rejection and suffering, and even the death of the Son of Man. Just as you have SEEN here today, they both speak of my impending death, burial and resurrection.

Beloved, not only does all of scripture revolve around the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but so does all of history! Beginning in the days of Adam and Eve in the garden, God the Father testified of the coming of His Son into the world, and His impending death, (Ge. 3:15). Everything that has happened in this world, since that promise was given, revolved around that promise. History as we know it, is God's plan in motion. Beginning with Adam and Eve's two Sons, Cain and Able, the story began. And continued through Noah, through Joseph, through Abraham, and on and on... And as we speak here this morning, the plan continues to unfold. God is orchestrating the events of the world, getting thing in place, for the return of His Son! God has given us His "Divine Revelation" of these things... And unlike here in this passage, we are not to keep them quiet, but rather we are commanded by tell all men! Warning them of the judgment and wrath to come, and the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ...