

30. Jesus Was Transfigured

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to clearly explain to others the choice that every person faces. People either make the choice to follow the things of this world, or they make the choice to repent of their sin of unbelief and follow Christ. In our topic today, we will see that Jesus was transfigured before some of His disciples.

Mark 9:1-6 says, “And He said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.’ Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, ‘Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’— because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.” Here, we see that Jesus told the disciples that some of them were going to experience a very important event in their lives.

Jesus said that some of the disciples would not die until they had seen what the kingdom of God would be like. Jesus said that they would also see that kingdom with power. As a result, Jesus said that the disciples involved would have the opportunity to see the kingdom of God make a visible appearance. Just six days later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him. The four of them went alone to a high mountain. The highest mountain in that area would be Mount Hermon which is about nine thousand two hundred feet high. There on the mountain, as they were alone, Jesus was transfigured before the three disciples. The word “transfigured” means *to be changed into another form or to transform*. Suddenly, Jesus looked very different, as He had all of the glory that He had before He came to this earth and after He returned to heaven following the resurrection. We see that the clothes of Jesus became shining and very bright. They were so white, they were as bright as fresh snow. We see that they were so bright that it would be impossible for someone on earth to get them that white by washing them, because they showed the glory of God.

However, what happened next was even more amazing. Suddenly, Elijah and Moses appeared and began talking with Jesus. Elijah went to heaven without dying, while Moses had died. In the kingdom of God, there will be both people who died and people who have not died. The Jews often divided the Old Testament into two parts, the Law and the Prophets. Moses wrote the Law, while Elijah was one of the Prophets. Both the Law and the Prophets talked about the coming death of Jesus. Luke 9:30-31 says, “And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.” Here, we see that these two men talked with Jesus about His coming death, which had been prophesied in both the Law and the Prophets.

Peter and the other disciples were so amazed and fearful that they did not even know what to say. We see that Peter did manage to talk, even though he did not know what to say. As a result, he said, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” This may have been an indication that Peter thought that Jesus was

going to set up the Kingdom of God immediately. Zechariah 14:16 says, “And it shall come to pass *that* everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.” Here, we see that Zechariah prophesied that, in the future kingdom, the people will gather from throughout the world to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. At the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jews would spend the week in tents or shelters made of branches.

Since Peter did not really know what he was talking about, the Father took charge. Mark 9:7-10 says, “And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!’ Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves. Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.”

We see that the Father spoke from heaven about Jesus at least three times. At the baptism of Jesus, Mark 1:11 says, “Then a voice came from heaven, ‘You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” Then, during the week before Jesus was crucified John 12:28 says, “‘Father, glorify Your name.’ Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, ‘I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again.’” We have seen that the event mentioned in this chapter happened shortly after Jesus first told His disciples about His coming crucifixion.

Since Jesus talked with Moses and Elijah about His coming death and resurrection, the Father wanted the disciples to really listen to what Jesus was saying so they would understand what was going to happen less than a year later. Matthew 17:6-8 gives more details about what happened right after the Father spoke. Those verses say, “And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, ‘Arise, and do not be afraid.’ When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.” Here, we see that Jesus did not want them to be fearful about the things they had seen and heard. Instead, He wanted them to understand. Once they got up from the ground, Moses and Elijah were no longer there and they saw Jesus just as He had been before He was transfigured.

We see that Jesus gave the disciples some instructions as they were going down the mountain. Jesus commanded the disciples not to tell anyone what they had seen until He had risen from the dead. The disciples obeyed what Jesus had said and did not tell anyone until after His resurrection. However, we see that the three disciples had questions in their own minds. They did not understand what was meant by the resurrection of the dead. Except for the Sadducees, most of the Jews looked forward to the resurrection. Job 19:25-27 says, “For I know *that* my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this *I know*, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. *How* my heart yearns within me!” The Jews were very familiar with promises like this one in Job and looked forward to seeing God with their physical eyes.

Because the three disciples did not understand what Jesus meant by His resurrection, they asked

Jesus a question. Mark 9:11-13 says, “And they asked Him, saying, ‘Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ Then He answered and told them, ‘Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things. And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I say to you that Elijah has also come, and they did to him whatever they wished, as it is written of him.’” The scribes taught about the promise in Malachi 4:5, so the disciples were familiar with that promise. That verse says, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.” As a result, they were expecting Elijah to come.

Matthew 17:10-13 says, “And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ Jesus answered and said to them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.’ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.” In Matthew, we see that Jesus explained to the disciples that the ministry of John the Baptist, as he prepared the way for the coming of Jesus, was a partial fulfillment of the promise regarding Elijah.

However, that did not mean they understood what Jesus said about His coming death and resurrection. That was why they were questioning among themselves. The disciples had been waiting for the Messiah who would come and restore the kingdom to Israel. As a result, they could not understand when Jesus said that the Son of Man must suffer many things. Here, we see a lesson that is important for us to understand so we can help others grow in their understanding. Many Christians have never had many of the Old Testament prophecies explained to them. They may have read them, but they did not ask the Holy Spirit to help them understand. As a result, they have no understanding about what much of the Bible teaches. That is why it is so important to help our physical and spiritual children become familiar with the entire Bible, not just a few sections.

We also need to help our children understand the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 2:9-12, we read, “But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.” Here, we see that the Holy Spirit is the One who gives understanding. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.