

31. Jesus Was Transfigured

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. We also saw that we want them to learn how to explain to others the choice that each person faces in his or her life. In our topic today, we are going to see that three of the disciples had the opportunity to see what Jesus will be like in His future glory.

Luke 9:27-31 says, “‘But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God.’ Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe *became* white *and* glistening. 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.” Jesus had just told His disciples who would be disciples in His kingdom. Here, we see that Jesus gave the disciples a promise that some of them would have the opportunity to see what that kingdom would be like before they died.

About a week later, Jesus took Peter, James and John with Him as He went up on a mountain to pray. While Jesus was on the mountain, a very unusual thing happened to Him. First, we see that the outward appearance of the face of Jesus was changed. Second, we see that His robe looked like it was giving off a bright light. By these two things, we see that Jesus was showing the glory that He will have in the kingdom. Then, we see that two people were talking with Him. One was Moses and the other was Elijah. Jesus spoke with the two of them about His coming death that would happen in the very near future in the city of Jerusalem.

Luke 9:32-36 says, “‘But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, *that* Peter said to Jesus, ‘Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’—not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!’ When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.” We see that Peter, James and John had gone to sleep.

Suddenly, they woke up. When they were fully awake, they saw the glory of Jesus, and Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. Here, we see a little picture of what the kingdom of God will be like. In that kingdom, there will be people from the time of the Old Testament who will see the promises God made to Israel fulfilled. There will be people from the New Testament and from the church that will see the promises Jesus made to the church fulfilled in that kingdom. There will be people who have died, because Moses was there. There will be people who are taken directly to heaven without dying, because Elijah was there. Most of all, Jesus will be revealed in all of His glory in that kingdom.

As Moses and Elijah prepared to leave, Peter suddenly had an idea. He said that it was good that he and the other two disciples were there. Then, he said to Jesus that the three of them should

make three tabernacles: one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elijah. The word translated “tabernacles” means *a tent or a shelter made from the green branches of a tree, the skins of animals or of some other material*. Here, we see that Peter started talking before his brain started thinking so that he did not even know what he was saying. As a result, God interrupted Peter as he was talking.

We see that the mountain was covered with a very thick cloud. In the wilderness, God had revealed His presence to Israel with a thick cloud. Exodus 40:34-35 says, “Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.” The disciples were fearful as they entered into the cloud. Suddenly, in addition to the cloud, the disciples heard the voice of God coming from the cloud. The voice said, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” The word translated “hear” means *to hear so that there is understanding*. God wanted the disciples to understand about the death of Jesus.

Then, the cloud was gone. In addition, Moses and Elijah were no longer there. Jesus was the only one there. Jesus had promised that some of the disciples would see what the kingdom of God was like. These three had seen Jesus in all of His glory. However, at that time the disciples did not tell anyone what they had seen on the mountain. Jesus said to them in Matthew 17:9, “Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, ‘Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.’” That was why the disciples did not say anything to anyone at that time.

We read that the other disciples and a large crowd were waiting the next day when Jesus and the three came down from the mountain. That may mean that the transfiguration happened at night. Luke 9:37-42 says, “Now it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a great multitude met Him. Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, ‘Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child. And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him so that he foams *at the mouth*, and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him. So I implored Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.’ Then Jesus answered and said, ‘O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.’ And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed *him*. Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father.” Here, we see that the crowd included a man that had a son that was tormented by a demon.

This man came to Jesus and begged Jesus to help his son. The man said that this was his only son. Then, the man described what the demon was doing to his son. The demon would suddenly seize the son. This would cause the boy to cry out. Then, the demon would cause the boy to go into convulsions and begin to foam at the mouth. By the time the demon would stop, the boy would be injured and bruised. Here, we are reminded of the goal of Satan and his demons. John 10:10 says, “‘The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.’” We see that the goal of Satan and his demons is always to steal, to kill and to destroy.

The man said that he had begged the disciples of Jesus to cast out the demon but they could not cast him out of the boy. The disciples had been given power to cast out demons when they were sent out two by two. Luke 9:1 says, “Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases.” They did cast out demons on that ministry trip. Later, they asked Jesus why they could not cast out demons in this case. Matthew 17:19-21 says, “Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, ‘Why could we not cast it out?’ So Jesus said to them, ‘Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” Apparently, they depended on their own efforts, instead of praying in faith.

Then, Jesus told the man to bring his son to Him. The demon made one more attempt to try and destroy the child. As they were coming to Jesus the demon threw the boy down and caused him to go into convulsions. Jesus then rebuked the demon. The word translated “rebuked” means *to charge or tell the demon to leave*. The demon was forced to leave. Jesus later told the disciples in Matthew 28:18, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” Here, we see that Jesus has all authority over all things including Satan and his demons. Then, Jesus healed the child and gave the child back to the father.

The people were amazed at the miracle but Jesus took this opportunity to give His disciples a private message. Luke 9:43-45 says, “And they were all amazed at the majesty of God. But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, ‘Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men.’ But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying.” The word translated “amazed” means *to be struck with amazement or to be astonished*. They recognized the greatness of Jesus that day.

While the people were talking about the amazing thing that Jesus had just done, Jesus talked to His disciples. The word translated “sink down” means *to settle or to place*. Jesus wanted His disciples to really let these words settle into their thinking. Then, He told them that the Son of Man was about to be betrayed into the hands of men. Here, we see that Jesus told the disciples again about His coming death but again they did not understand and were afraid to ask. We are reminded that people can have knowledge of the Word of God but lack understanding. We need to keep this in mind as we help our physical and spiritual children in their spiritual growth, because sometimes they will also lack understanding. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children in their spiritual growth and understanding.